

Homo Perfidus:
An Antipathology of the Coward's Betrayal

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ABSTRACT

Homo Perfidus: An Antipathology of the Coward's Betrayal identifies and speaks to an ethical and methodological lacuna in western metaphysics with regards to betrayal. Following Levinas' call for an 'Ethics as first philosophy,' my research question is: 'How can I think of betrayal responsibly?' I offer to approach betrayal as an accusation, one that comports an excessive hatred towards the identified 'traitor.' Suspending its moral vilification, I construct a broadly phenomenological method – which I call 'antipathology' – that proposes to take this hatred seriously; not as the sign of a lack to be filled or purloined with shame, but of a *communication* to respond-to. Tracking western thought's metaphysical engagements – mainly via Kant, Hegel and Heidegger – my antipathology witnesses an exceedingly *systematic muting* of this hatred. Such a principled effacement of hatred's *signs* is the very mechanism by which western thought "de-problematizes" betrayal, appropriating its otherness for its own metaphysical ends. To those ends, betrayal ceases to be an event and becomes its 'prefiguration,' a twist on an assumed temporal and causal progression.

I focus here on the coward's betrayal, broadly defined as secession from a principle – seen to give cohesion and legitimacy to a 'Whole' – of which this traitor was nevertheless an integral part until the *event* of her betrayal. Antipathology follows young Hegel's 'antisemitic' association of the "Jewish spirit" with a principle of alienation and secession, a vain and hateful self-assertion that only "Christian spirit" can successfully negate, turning this drive for hateful dissociation to one of loving association (with progressively diminishing "remainders"). Reading modern philosophy's treatment of the skeptic I show how her doubt can be appropriated and *turned to* 'Truth' in the same way that the Jews' hateful and cowardly betrayal can be turned to absolute faith/love; what Hegel calls "negating the negation." Both 'Jew' and 'Skeptic' here become antibodies in a process through which a 'Whole' slowly becomes immune, or *insensitive to*, the threat of future interruptions: outside of this process – offering no 'Whole' of their own – their respective interruptions are seen as expressions of vanity, of a 'self' that breaks-away from the bonds of belonging and love in a fit of gratuitous hatred and doubt; all in the name of a "who knows what" that for Hegel, as well as for Kant and Heidegger, amounts to precisely 'Nothing.'

I conclude by a performative 'antipathological' reading of Dante's *Inferno* alongside Kafka's *In the Penal Colony*: while Dante, as a faithful 'Christian' witness to Divine Justice (Hell), desires to internalize the Truth of God, progressively renouncing the vain resistances of a

‘self’ not yet fully reconciled to God’s Being (the theological ‘Pleroma’ of the ‘Whole’), Kafka’s nameless traveler, as a skeptical ‘coward-witness,’ not only remains “unconverted” but also causes the violence that is *implicit* in the Dante-*esque* ‘progression’ to show itself. ‘Faith’ is here *shown as* progression from one betrayal-event to another, all of which require the believer to sacrifice another part of their resistance to the demands of the ‘Whole’ until no such resistance remains (or, at least, felt/expressed). Similarly, the Dante that begins his journey weeping for the suffering of Hell’s sinners, ends up kicking one of them in the face; deliberately, yet without hatred, as if it were a mere rock on the road.

The coward’s betrayal consists in her ‘vain witness’ to time as rupture, as event, as the opening that puts her previous beliefs and attachments in radical question. The hatred towards the coward and the accusation of ‘traitor’ *mark this question* as a threat to the ‘Whole;’ a mark that, approached antipathologically, can open a discourse concerning the violence (and self-violence) that was and is necessary to keep the ‘Whole,’ through a narrated causal-historical time, from breaking apart. Painful and dangerous, this approach is, nonetheless, the only way to keep a system that abolished all ‘positions to complain’ from being equated with a ‘wholly just’ system; or to keep a knowledge-machine that successfully tames all doubts from being absolved.

Keywords:

Emmanuel Lévinas; Friedrich Nietzsche; Georg W. F. Hegel; Antisemitism; Betrayal; Coward; Ressentiment; Responsibility; Hatred; Metaphysics; Ethics; Methodology; Protestantism; Judaism; Truth; Spirit; Witness; Time.

במידה שכל דיבור או צורה מונח בהם חוב, עבודה זו, בדיבורה הממלא את עצמו בלא תוחלת או ברירה חיצונית, נושאת עמה חוב בדמות זה שאין לו אפשרות של דמות: קאליגרם, שצר צורת היעדרות. נקיבת נוכחותו של אותו נעדר היתה, לכן, מראש בלתי אפשרית. ולכן עבודה זו בוגדת קודם כל בו, בצורתה הבסיסית ביותר, הראשונית ביותר, היסודית ביותר. זהו חוב שנותר ללא שם, מתמיר/מתיימר לדרגת נצח עדן, או שאול. זו בגידה שמהבהבת את השיתוף העמוק שלנו, בדבר עבירה, של מי שכתב (ב)טקסט זה, של אותו נעדר: הבוגד הגדול ביותר שנסתתר בעקבותיו - - עקבות המפתות את כל המתחקה אחריהן להיות לו אוהב נצחי, ובוגד נצחי.

וצורה זו מוקדשת לו.

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

- חזי לסקלי, שרידים

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ABBREVIATIONS

In all cases of citing a Multivolume work, I will adhere to the following format: [Abbreviation][][Volume number][:][Page number]

Martin Heidegger

- GA** *Gesamtausgabe*
BT *Being and Time* [MacQuarrie translation]
BW *Basic Writings*
FCM *The Fundamental Concepts of Metaphysics*
IM *Introduction to Metaphysics*
N. *Nietzsche*
SZ *Sein und Zeit*

Friedrich Wilhelm Nietzsche

- KGW** *Werke: Kritische Gesamtausgabe*
AC *The Antichrist*
EH *Ecce Homo* (in *The Genealogy of Morals; Ecce Homo*)
GM *The Genealogy of Morals* (in *The Genealogy of Morals; Ecce Homo*)
GS *The Gay Science*
LN *Writings from the Late Notebooks*
WTP *Will to Power*

Georg Wilhelm Friedrich Hegel

- GW** *Gesammelte Werke*
Enc *Encyclopaedia of Philosophical Sciences* (I: *Logic*; II: *Nature*; III: *Mind*)
ETW *Early Theological Writings*
LPR *Lectures on the Philosophy of Religion: The Lectures of 1827 (one-Volume Edition)*
LWH *Lectures on the Philosophy of World History Vol. 1*
PR *Outlines of the Philosophy of Right* [Houlgate, 2008]
PS *Phenomenology of Spirit*
S *Werke*
SL *Science of Logic*

Immanuel Kant

- Ak.** *Gesammelte Schriften*
CPR *Critique of Pure Reason*
PP *Practical Philosophy*
RRT *Religion and Rational Theology*

Emmanuel Lévinas

- BPW** *Basic Philosophical Writings*
BV *Beyond the Verse: Talmudic Readings and Lectures*
CPP *Collected Philosophical Papers*
EE *Existence and Existents*
EI *Ethics and Infinity*
GCM *Of God who Comes to Mind*
GDT *God, Death and Time*
IRB *Is it Responsible to Be: Interviews with Emmanuel Lévinas*
OB *Otherwise than Being, or Beyond Essence*
OE *On Escape*
TI *Totality and Infinity: An Essay on Exteriority*

Others

- NP** Gilles Deleuze, *Nietzsche and Philosophy*
PC John Freccerri, *Dante: The Poetics of Conversion*
PDM Jürgen Habermas, *The Philosophical Discourse of Modernity: Twelve Lectures*
SE Sigmund Freud, *The Standard Edition of the Complete Psychological Works of Sigmund Freud*
ST Saint Thomas Aquinas, *Summa Theologica*
TD Avital Ronell, *The Test Drive*
TJ John Rawls, *A Theory of Justice*
WD Jacques Derrida, *Writing and Difference*

INTRODUCTION

[...] Antigonus was not alone, then, in saying that he loved men who offered to betray, but hated those who had betrayed; nor yet Caesar, in saying [...] that he loved treachery but hated a traitor; but this is a very general feeling towards the base on the part of those who need their services, just as they need certain wild creatures for their venom and gall; for while they feel the need of them, they put up with them, but abhor their vileness when they have obtained from them what they want.

– Plutarch¹

[...] since the only witnesses are the victims, and since there are no victims but dead ones, no place can be identified as a gas chamber. He should not have said that there are none, but rather that his opponent cannot prove that there are any, and that should have been sufficient to confound the tribunal. It is up to the opponent (the victim) to adduce the proof of the wrong done to him or her!

[...] This is what a wrong [*tor*] would be: a damage accompanied by the loss of the means to prove the damage. This is the case if the victim is deprived of life, or of all his or her liberties, or of the freedom to make his or her ideas or opinions public, or simply of the right to testify to the damage, or even more simply if the testifying phrase is itself deprived of authority.

– Jean-François Lyotard²

1. The Birth of a Problem

My thinking about the problem of betrayal began with a conversation I had with my best friend. He had mentioned betrayal to me in what I saw as an outrageously immoral way – he obviously did not see it negatively. I responded with anger, almost automatically “but the traitor is the most evil and despicable creature imaginable!”. My friend asked me, with the same immoral equanimity, “Why?”. With that small question he had sent me into a tail-spin that, leaving my anger intact, took away all of its justifications. I was certain the reasons for this anger were there, as they had always been; but they were not. Since I know myself to be obsessed with justification, probably to an unhealthy degree, I was faced with a deep problem. I myself felt betrayed, in an intimate and painful manner, but found it hard to locate a guilty party. Had I betrayed myself? Was this even conceivable? Left without reasons or excuses, my friend’s immoral ‘Why?’ had *forced* me to the problem of betrayal: my own moral integrity proved to have betrayed me. It dished out an absolutely negative judgment with no reason; and I was fully prepared to act on it, righteous rage and all. Even while my conviction assured me that my reasons were “there,” they were only there so long as my moral integrity – my ability to know and direct my decisions, intentions and actions – was unquestioned. Once I suspended this certainty, my friend’s ‘Why?’ found only a chaotic wasteland.

Of course, I was not alone with my righteous rage. The legal accusation of ‘traitor’ was first instituted in the late Middle-Ages, in the Monarchies of England and France. Even then, the charge of

‘betrayal’ exceeded mere “crime.” Crime was conceived as a breach of the Sovereign’s will or law, with a measured punishment for each infraction. Treason, however, was an attack on the Sovereign’s *Body*, his physical integrity, which included its various extensions (queen, children). The punishment had been capital, very graphic and all very public. This frantic urgency of redressing betrayal – worse punishment shown for all to see – confirms the sensitive nerve that betrayal threatens. And if this was such a sensitive nerve for the one who authorizes force – whether the political sovereign or my own “moral sovereign” – can we really take this concept at face value?

I would like to emphasize that the necessity here, the urgency, was ethical: betrayal does hurt deeply and does authorize extreme force, and the least we could do is be able to justify it. Trying to erase betrayal from consciousness, private or public, would be too superficial a solution, a little bit like political correctness does very little to uproot racism and other deep hatreds. We need causes, reasons, or, if not, at least a way to approach the problem. I set on my investigation 15 years ago. It had been slow to progress. Betrayal does that: you point your finger at it but the more you analyze the more you realize that you should have also pointed your finger at your finger... There was a serious methodological problem here, especially for the old “subject studying an object” idea of scientific inquiries: if I did not even have access to my own decision about betrayal being evil, how could I pretend to have access to another’s? Surveys won’t do – it is always the person’s moral integrity, that treacherous moral integrity, that answers. Rational choice models won’t do – they assume the same integrity, and cannot conceive of anyone ever betraying themselves. Facts won’t do – they are historical narrations that can only offer correlations of evidence, not causes.

A true methodological dilemma. My only clues derived from this first encounter with the problem: that even a justification-crazed individual can vilify betrayal absolutely and unreflectively; that this vilification reacts with force, rather than reflection, when asked to justify itself; and that the *question* that exposed all this was a ‘Why?’, a search for Reason or reasons, but, importantly, a kind of immoral ‘Why?’

Betrayal unleashes, seems to authorize, such extreme force that putting it in question seemed to require something more than a moral regard; perhaps something that morality had itself presupposed. What was this justification of force that morality could not “handle”? My problem became the engagement with this force and this, its “extra-moral,” justification. Hence my research question, trying to combine the methodological problem with my ethical concerns. Not “What is betrayal?”, at least not

yet. It was not an object I had direct access to. Rather it became “How to think about betrayal in an ethically responsible manner?”

I decided to approach the matter with a phenomenological tactic. If this animosity towards the traitor was so strong and pronounced, it can be used as a basis, a hard-surface through which to reach betrayal. If irrational hatred towards the traitor is all I have, let this be my way in. Using my initial experience, I tried to devise a method that brackets or suspends the moral and ontological assumptions of intention and integrity. The “intention” to betray on the part of ‘the traitor,’ or a flaw in her moral being or character presupposed an implicitly answered ‘Why?’ to the traitor’s act. But looked at in this phenomenological vein shows that such an ascription is always done after the fact of betrayal; and, like with the Medieval King, we can’t be sure of its true motives – they are beyond the Sovereign’s own law and will.

Of course, this “phenomenological immoralism” is emphatically not an a-moralism; it follows the Nietzschean example of, as he puts it, an immoralism driven by a deep concern for moral valuation. Thus, in order to spy on my moral valuations against the traitor, specifically their force and urgency, I applied this Nietzschean “immoralism principle”, to use a physics analogy, like one experiments using a vacuum. Bracketing moral judgment is the most contrasting manner with which to witness the pressure towards the moral closure, to make this pressure appear (*phainestai*).

These concerns are what led to a provisional method that I called “antipathology.” At its most basic, it is the logos – the speech or the logic – of antipathy, of hatred towards the traitor. If my own initial animosity was to be any indication, it is that I should look at hateful discourses towards traitors. Since this was a methodological and ethical investigation, I wanted to stay as close to philosophy as possible. It was very late that I realized that it was there all along. Modern philosophy, when looked at with antipathological eyes, reveals a deep concern with the problem of betrayal. Rene Descartes’ entire method of doubt is brought to its peak with his evil genius, the one that can trick me in any and all of my certainties and assertions. Georg Hegel speaks of the “cunning of reason;” and Kant flat-out talks about the way thought betrays us. But this frustration seemed, on the face of it, to have no guilty parties, no one to receive the philosopher’s animosity. No apparent, *recognizable* ‘traitors.’

Antipathology, however, sees a different picture. In my prelude I tried to show that modern philosophy’s project was an attempt to assure Truth against betrayal. As Kant had put it (and Hegel too) it meant to put metaphysics on the secure path to science. At that time there were already significant scientific achievements, but it seemed that philosophy was unable to ground them in necessity or Truth.

Many systems and dogmas were erected, but they could not be arbitrated, and would eventually topple. The one who did the toppling was called the ‘skeptic.’ The skeptic was the one who had nothing positive to say, no dogma to offer, and yet was immensely creative in toppling other philosophical systems. Thus, while modern philosophy’s stated goal was to arrive at a foundation of Truth upon which to found modern Science, and while its external enemy was falsehood or contradiction, it found its deepest, internal enemy in the skeptic. This animosity was left out of texts for the most part, relegated to anecdotes and hidden jabs, but antipathology, obsessed with the ethics of method, could see it in the very structure. It shows that modern philosophy was in fact involved in a kind of auto-immune process against the skeptic. The problem was not ‘dogma’ as such; it was the susceptibility of dogmas to this ‘Nay-sayer.’ This was the real “scandal” of Reason.

This negative militancy of modern philosophy seemed positive and peaceful because that was its goal all along. Kant prefaces his first Critique with a lament that metaphysics had become a battlefield with no winners and no order; and, well, “*Ordnung muss sein*”... Antipathology sees this seeming peace and “positivity” as the result of a process of Nay-saying the Nay-sayers. I tried to show, through antipathology’s “eyes of hatred,” how this process of arriving negatively at the truth was, in essence, an implicit attack, a violence towards the skeptic’s utterance; that the seemingly pacific and positive ‘Truth’ of modern philosophy was a subtle, underhanded violence against its traitors. And, best of all, that this violence was traceless. No blood was spilled, no direct attack identifiable; instead of ejecting the inner enemy, risking her return, I shut her up permanently by swallowing and digesting her. That way, the violence leaves no trace and, hence, claims no responsibility: “It was only your own ‘No’ that I turned against you,” Hegel would tell the complaining skeptic. “I only wanted the Truth.”

Since modern philosophy evolved out of the monastic institutions and habit of a Christian Europe, looking for the deeper meaning of this maneuver suggested looking at Christian theology. Christianity itself, its very symbol and message, is based upon a betrayal. What made this religion so felicitous here is that it not only provided textual traces of animosity towards the traitor (figured by Judas Iskariot), but also, throughout European Medieval and modern history, very definite bursts of violence against living Jews. What the philosophers could hide and the theologians smooth-over and harmonize, the Christians themselves could not. Love of Christ necessitated love of humanity, but love of Christ’s betrayer?

It was through these two discourses, and the similarity of their genius approaches to traitors and betrayal, that antipathology started following a kind of “metaphysical antisemitism.” This connection was already supplied by the young Hegel’s “theological writings,” where he heaps accusation upon

insult on the Jews in the name of a Christian ‘spirit.’ It could also be found in Martin Luther’s ‘On the Jews and their Lies.’ These expressions were a precious gift to antipathology, since they had done something that is rarely any longer, and that Hegel himself stopped doing at some point: they spoke antisemitic hatred directly, intelligently and *immorally*. They made this hatred into a discourse, showing its logical consequences, assumptions and effects. Hegel’s entire system was modeled after the Christian theology of love; it shows the way to the Truth, and rids itself of dead formalities and empty No’s under the overall telos of ‘Reconciliation.’ His philosophy was the confirmation, as Hegel put it, of his Protestantism.

Probing this mindset that connects theology and philosophy through an ethical concern with hatred offered two guides: Friedrich Nietzsche and Emmanuel Lévinas. Nietzsche was an expert in uncovering cruelty and violence under western thought’s seemingly pacific, all-embracing or all-comprehending gesture. He was highly critical of Christianity – Protestantism in particular – while always remaining attuned to the deep hatreds he nonetheless shared with it (including antisemitism), speaking them, like young Hegel, openly and directly. Except, of course, for two main differences: the first is that Nietzsche would speak these hatreds, working them to the very end, while Hegel had systematized them, making them, like his ideal ‘Church,’ inoffensive and invisible, “cunning”; and, second, that Nietzsche used his hatreds to attack the reconciliation that they tried to tease out of the Protestant in him, performing a reversed askesis, a going-against-the-grain of the German Bildung, a methodological *Destruktion* of the dialectic. Nietzsche is setting traps for the same ‘Geist’ that Hegel had clung to with such metaphysical awe. Emmanuel Lévinas was critically useful in his own, complementary way. He was also suspicious that morality might be covering over a – deeper, more severe – violence which it does not allow to speak. Lévinas phenomenology proceeds from an “*Ethics* as first philosophy,” which means that any guarantee for ethical justification is suspended, and thus provides a methodological framework for the Nietzschean experiments and insights: the “I” that claims a will to Truth for the ethical security of its method – the moral manifestation of Hegel’s Geist – has to reckon with, find a language to communicate with the Other, the loser and victim of an antecedent will to power. Whether as a “looking down” or of “face to face,” both Nietzsche and Lévinas (respectively) understood that here is an asymmetrical communication that demands an “immorality,” a suspension of moral certitude; and Nietzsche would cut this radical gesture’s teeth in his genealogy of Christian moral values and valuation.

It is through this framework – that I call ‘Levinatzsch’ – that the question of time, giving priority to its ethical implications, can be probed. Why is the question of time so important here? In a very very

small nutshell I can say that, first, we must remember that the accusation of ‘traitor’ is, by definition, a *late* arrival, one that follows an event in time. If this event has an “identifiable agent” – an “I” that remains “the same” before the event and after it in the sense of a “subjectum” – this sameness belongs, paradoxically, only to ‘change.’³ There is a temporal “gap,” then – a splitting in time that Lévinas calls a “diachrony” – when ‘traitor’ becomes an “object” of cognition and/or recognized as the moral “subject” at the other end of the accusation: phenomenologically speaking, ‘traitor’ did not, at least not necessarily, pre-exist the event of betrayal. The intentions and causalities behind her betrayal are unknown – they *used to be* the same as ours, until they were not. That ‘traitor’ is subsequently recognized or identified, and diachrony breached or usurped, is something antipathology wholeheartedly *affirms*, and indeed where it spies the main locus of the ethico-metaphysical problematic that Nietzsche refers to as ‘will to power.’

This is also where morality – that revolves around knowledge and intention – no longer suffices, where the aforementioned affirmation needs to transgress the moral bounds, and where ethical responsibility begins to be tricky, immoral, asymmetrical. Like a ‘historical’ narration – itself an employment of force on change/time⁴ – this breach of diachrony, as a suturing of two incommensurable times, constitutes an invasion into a space that “I” – even the “I that is we” – have no (moral) right in. As a traumatic change, the event in time that is betrayal (as a judgment and accusation) is sutured through an apparent ‘cause’ or ‘intention’ that preceded it. Keeping the moral judgment suspended and the ‘Why?’ of the betrayal open, hence, does not avoid the persecution and hatred of the ‘traitor’ – which revolves around precisely such a maneuver – but it does open it up to a discourse that can be more responsible to this “forcing of time,” what Lévinas might call the violent usurpation of the Other. This force, this usurpation is, nonetheless, the only medium through which the Other can be allowed to interrupt the “I” enough so as to elicit a response, a responsibility.

It is responsibility, hence, that insists on addressing the metaphysical question, requires responsibility towards its operations, especially where and when they are made transparent. The metaphysical violence above is also, again in a nut-shell, the fundamental force behind the Christian accusation of the Jew’s betrayal of God: once the ‘Why?’ of Jewish Law was presumed as, finally, given by God – once God’s ‘spirit’ had entered through Christ to redeem the world as Mankind’s divine *example and symbol* – holding on to one’s previous chosenness (as mediator) is a betrayal; a proud stubbornness that insists on remaining “before the Law,” too vain and fearful to pass through it. The event of this divine example is what makes the Law useless, for it incarnates the ‘Why?’ behind it in a

leader and a teacher; which makes insisting on the previous “behavioral codex” literally (and morally) vain. While the sign is a fountain of difference, where meaning is forever deferred due to the separation between signifier and signified (Saussure), the symbol is already motivated, a totality that rearranges contexts to point in a certain direction. Like a secret collusion between signifier and signified, the Christian symbol becomes the ‘figure’ through which history and text offer mere “pre-figurations” – and therein lays the diachronic breach – that are, in fact, *post*-figurations; their “dead” letters/signs needed Christ as teacher and martyr, as symbol, for proper “motivation.”

The accusation of ‘traitor,’ as well as the narrative that supports it, follow the same temporal, and ethical, procedure. It means laying a claim to the totality of the betrayed relation – what holds it together as such (whether the physical body of the King of the fullness of God’s Being) – and, by virtue of this claim, to find ‘traitor’ morally accountable for her betrayal; and to do so *in principle*. The diachronic breach consists in the rewriting of the narrative so that ‘traitor’ preceded the event, in consists of reducing the becoming of the ‘traitor,’ the will to power that attends its unseemly appearance, to a ‘being’ that persisted through the event unchanged.

This claim to totality ought to be put in question in terms other than its ‘Truth’ (e.g. ‘Does the sovereign/accuser have the authority – whether legal, conceptual or divine – to lay claim to the Whole in this manner?’). Breaching the diachrony means performing a more radical, ‘ethico-metaphysical’ violence, since the activity of becoming is stipulated as ‘passive,’ and hence cannot “look down,” cannot *account* for its own violence (of “synchronizing” the two ‘traitor’s). Its victims’ legitimacy is muted, literally, *in advance*. This advance is the motivation, the comprehensive force of Geist (as ‘Bildung’), and only exposing it *as antipathology*, as a logic of hatred, can allow its contingents and dead to show their face. This face is the hateful face of the Other, a face that ‘love’ cannot abide due to the motivation of its own key symbol – the eschatological reconciliation of ‘Mankind.’ In this sense, diachronically speaking, the Jew is the quintessential deserter of ‘Mankind,’ and her mortal sin was failing to know and comprehend, hostages of the God that the Christian, as well as the philosopher, embraces.

I call the diachronic breach ‘ethical’ because, through ‘Levinatzsch,’ it shows strong political bearings. When “All Lives Matter” is pitted as a *rebuttal* of “Black Lives Matter,” this logic, this violence, becomes apparent to the antipathological witness; focusing only on the ‘Black,’ on ‘Black suffering,’ is deemed as vanity, as moral failing, as ingratitude. The hatred towards the traitor also operates in this manner: it lays claim to the totality of the *relation* – what Hegel calls an “I that is we and the we that is I” – in order to push through the betrayal, annihilating a part of itself in the process.

Annihilation is not sacrifice, since it is effaced from memory (and history) and takes no moral toll. For the “All,” which is to say for *Geist*, there is no possibility of witnessing its victims as such, as particular, as, in this case, ‘Black.’ But just because you can’t see something – or, more precisely, can’t *point* to something – does not entail having no responsibility towards it. My Antipathology of “metaphysical antisemitism” in western and Christian thought revealed itself to be an ethical problematic of witnessing.

My treatment of the coward plays out the insights gained from my antipathology of Christian antisemitism in its philosophical manifestations. Moving on to the coward-traitor, I argue that this is a witness that embodies what for Hegel (and Martin Luther) was at the core of Sin – Pride/Vanity.⁵ The more definite lessons learned there – comparing Franz Kafka’s witness with those of Dante and Hegel – are that vanity betrays the Whole by forcing its cruelty to become obscene, hence allowing it to be put in question.

The heart of my thesis lies here, in this specifically tailored methodological intervention and its ethical and metaphysical stakes. Originally intended as a performative as well as constative gesture, this intervention cannot be neatly summarized in an introduction, and, of necessity, needs to be witnessed in action. Unable, hence, to elaborate the coward’s betrayal more fully here – which is also, metaphysically speaking, the Jew’s – let me provide what I consider its key:

Responsibility for the deep, constitutive violence with which we give ourselves a sense of cohesion, through the anarchic changes of time, requires a particular kind of witness. This witnessing is hard, perhaps “unscientific,” in the sense that its ‘method’ is neither for everyone nor should it be demanded of everyone. Its results are not repeatable, since the main cause is always other; since the singular nature of the call that *awakens* the witness is incommensurable to her response. This incommensurability (‘asymmetry’ or ‘*différend*’) also commands the witness’ very existence, underwriting this ‘witness’ as the remains of her testimony. This “being of the remainder” is an ethico-metaphysical opening to the ‘otherwise’ of time – ‘future’ and ‘past’ – meaning that it functions as an opening for betrayal, stoking a susceptibility to time, to a radical interruption of knowledge and project in time. Hence, while it is understandable, perhaps even necessary, that this witness is hated and feared (as a kind of ‘ethico-metaphysical traitor’), even automatically and absolutely vilified as such, antipathology is needed here. It is needed in order to perform a methodological gesture through which this witness is still allowed to speak, to interrupt the closure of our hermeneutic and ontological

frameworks, a gesture that is, itself, a carving-out of a “position to complain” for this muted witness, this victim of its own survival.

Such responsibility befits the witness it responds to since it is, itself, a singular intervention whose findings are *not* – and this is an *ethico-metaphysical axiom* – ‘universally’ valid or repeatable in time, dependent as they are on the contours and detours of the gesture itself rather than some ultimate meaning it “aspires” to. It is the responsibility to remain: as both the assurance of its testimony’s presence, and the opening towards its becoming perjury. Such responsibility requires a chosenness, a call that is followed before being understood, an “un-inspired” obsession. It demands precisely what antisemites – e.g. Hegel and Heidegger – always hated about Jews: a persistent alienation from the world (as its historico-political ‘remainder’), which metaphysically meant an *a priori* self-separation from all totalities, including those of ‘(moral) Person,’ ‘Being,’ ‘Nature’ and, yes, ‘Truth.’ This save-his-own-skin coward *relates* to ‘Being’ *but only as this witness*, that is, one who is not free to fully internalize her testimony, embody its meaning or Truth. This unfree, “more passive than passive” existence needs to keep this *difference*, this metaphysical pathology, maintaining an obsessive, non-choosing refusal to reconcile with “something bigger” than itself; otherwise than being, and beyond essence, this witness can only boast of the problematic “existence,” and moral accountability, of a hostage. This witnessing would always appear cowardly for a western sensibility (that inherited a predominately Christian moral framework) since such witness cannot fully identify with any such totality, with any conceivable Truth or Good, with any historical or theological narrative.

This witness is chosen to be *assailed* by time, not reconciled by it (or to it). Her question is always the ‘Why?’ of justice, which is not limited to cause but evokes a deep moral skepticism: a chronic ‘Why not otherwise?’ to *every* answer, to every causal-narrative. She is a witness of limits and separations, a “genius of hatred,” as Hegel and Nietzsche called the Jew, in the sense that she can always spy *another* difference, *another* distinction, and that, moreover, hostage that she is, she *cannot* “let” any of them go. A coward and not a martyr, she *remains*, at all costs – so as to never stop differentiating or testifying to the demands of justice. She could be a hated hater, a hated witness; but this hatred, if only allowed to speak, is a much-needed bridge between this witness and the rest of the western world. This genius, that sees “will to Truth” as “metaphysical antisemitism,” could help articulate something other than more of the same “apologetics” for hatreds that occasionally surface against “Jews” and “Jewish” institutions, but to allow other remainders – of ‘Mankind,’ of ‘moral person,’ or even of ‘Nation-State’ for that matter – the communication of their suffering. Insofar as western thought deserves Heidegger’s title of

‘onto-theo-logy,’ ‘(ethico-)metaphysical antisemitism’ – irreducible to the moral categories pertaining to individuals/communities – reveals a general structure by which the reclusive, ‘Sklavenmoral’ pride can no longer see any *other*, but only a self-same, that it victimizes. With the structure exposed – which happens when antipathology, as an ethico-metaphysical “war-machine,” speaks to such shy, recoiling hatreds – other alienated victims, perhaps other immoral or “evil” traits/affects, can offer a testimony to a resistance that is neither ontologically or institutionally established, and yet neither is it merely ‘Nothing.’

This is, indeed, the most radical – painful and transformative – capacity of betrayal when approached as an ethico-metaphysical event. Hatred of ‘hateful’ witness opens to a dangerous and difficult communication with the Other – whose appropriation enabled ‘I’ and ‘we’ to appear as such, to *be*. This existence finds its ethical responsibility in the becoming of a will to power, the muted violence of a diachronic war-zone that underwrites relations and temporalities that we see, of necessity, in synthetic terms (‘reconciliation’). Rather than exterminating or annihilating its expression, rather than effacing its passionate, helpless words, perhaps the time has come for us to listen and respond to this hated coward *from within that hatred*. The face of the Other makes its appeal through precisely such unpalatable, disconcerting, morally abject gestures. It provoked a desire to kill, made all the more desperate for the imperative of “Thou shall no kill” that the face speaks. Stay with the despair and listen to this hatred. Listen to its song. It is the singing of a precious enemy that courses through our veins.

2. Existing Approaches to Betrayal

[...] Treason embraces our lives, as if it has formed its own terrible and secret realm on a plane which does not fit the older categories: peoples, nations, constitutions and communities of belief. Treason somehow interpenetrates them all, destroying or transforming them. The meaning of treason changes as the wheel of history turns. Men, hanged yesterday as traitors, are today’s heroes and martyrs. Though the interpretation changes, treason stays with us, as if it were a shadow cast by the flickering light of our era

– Margret Boveri⁶

There were several ways I could approach this topic. First, of course, there was the dictionary definition, which, as such, had to treat of betrayal as a noun whose definition was already established. This means that, as most philosophical perspectives on dictionary definitions perceive, the meaning is often begging the question or tautological (e.g. “the crime of betraying...”). Furthermore, this definition often assumes what I mean to use betrayal in order to question: the ethical legitimacy of the ‘traitor’

accusation and the moral/ontological coherence of the ‘traitor’ herself. Otherwise, the definitions offered are too vague and include too many instances (e.g., “to lead astray”).⁷

On a more conceptual level the issue revolves around my basic approach to ‘betrayal’ and ‘traitor’ word: while dictionaries confine themselves to what J. L. Austin called “constative” utterances – i.e. symbolic units whose general reference is independent of, or at least takes priority to their use/context – the approach chosen here sees ‘betrayal’ and ‘traitor’ as *accusations* first and foremost, and hence places the onus on the “performative” aspect of this utterance. More precisely, the force I am employing here seeks to tease-out, to spy after what the concept does in addition to what it merely “refers” to or states, the “performative” power of this, seemingly constative truth-claim of, ‘traitor’.⁸

Another option was to look at betrayal through legal scholarship that tracks the origins of treason Law in the western context I chose to focus on. At its origins, treason seems to be “a crime which has a vague circumference, and more than one centre”⁹ The 1352 statute 25 of Edward III depicted treason’s object as “our lord the king and his royal majesty” (ibid, p. 267 n. 2), which leaves the ‘Who’ of the sovereign – in the phrase “his royal majesty” – once again vague and open to interpretation. Furthermore, the law did not limit itself to the results or the act of betrayal as fulfilled, not as an *event*, but also to its “attempt” or “plot” (ibid, ibid). In his study White concludes that “treason was open to different, politically interested interpretations” (ibid, p. 102), thus leaving us where we left off, for the questioned turned once again on the power that a certain “interested interpretation” – referring, of course, to the sovereign’s interests – holds in this definition.

Empirical studies of historical betrayals are quite abundant, but, once again, subject to the same murky definition of ‘sovereignty’ as the ‘Who’ that has the *de facto* power to enforce a criminal proceeding or punitive measures against an identified ‘traitor.’ In her seminal study *Treason in the Twentieth Century*, Margret Boveri states this clearly from the outset: “I do not ask whether [...] a case was really treason, I have simply chosen cases in which a court, police proceedings, a state or parliamentary investigating committee or a political committee, as accused or convicted the man of treason [...]” (Boveri, p. 55). Indeed, she opines, “After all, we are still left with the uncomfortable questions: Where does treason begin? By a movement of the heart? By merely thinking about treason? The problem of definition arises in all attempted distinctions” (ibid, 16). Boveri further admits that her purpose could be nothing more than “to bring the confusion into full consciousness as a first step in overcoming it” (ibid, xiii).

In the field of psychology, there is a discourse centered around “betrayal trauma” and “betrayal trauma theory,” which unilaterally focuses on cases of abuse by a trusted caregiver, yet the definition of

betrayal is not made by its victim, as I propose to discuss it, but by the professional analyst or psychologist (based on certain information or certain symptoms in their betrayed patient). The trauma itself occurs almost exclusively in childhood, and is traumatic precisely because the child hadn't at those early years the wherewithal to construct "betrayal" as an accusation.¹⁰

In a particularly economic iteration of "Game theory" the concept of "betrayal aversion" is often used as a particularly humanist explanatory category that finds that "people are generally less willing to take a risk when the source of the risk is another person rather than nature".¹¹ To mention but one difference to my aims here, I could not introduce a viable distinction, nor do I see its necessity, between 'man' and 'nature' as the cause of betrayal, since my scope is wider and includes any relation of reliance that generates this accusation in its victim. Whether this accusation is "rational" or not, whether it directly involves a conscious attribution of intention to the betraying party is, in this case, beside the point; I wish to study the violence and pain that attend the accusation, rather than prejudge it from a humanist, or any other, perspective.

In political philosophy this has been no less of a problem than in history and Law, especially if one does not take, as Boveri does, state sovereignty and laws as the definitive litmus test of betrayal. If defined as a breach of loyalty in general, then betrayal can indeed include anything and everything, since, as John Kleinig observes, "loyalty can be developed in relation to any associational object".¹² Noted political theorist Judith Shklar identifies "treachery," indeed, as an "ordinary vice".¹³ Placing it within an existing moral framework (where ordinary vices are ranked, with "cruelty" ranked first and worst), Shklar confirms "the immediate response to the direct experience of betrayal [...] is sharp and intense. We all hate being betrayed" (ibid, p.138). The difference between my phenomenological approach and Shklar's is that, in her analysis, "there is a dissonance between feeling betrayed and actually being betrayed" (ibid, p. 141). Shklar thus assumes precisely what I try to put in question here: not merely "what is" betrayal beyond the accusation of betrayal, but also precisely to lay claim to the moral sovereignty of the traitor. Her "zero degree" paradigm of betrayal is for one person to "have both intentionally convinced another person of his future loyalty and then deliberately rejected him"; and she explicitly claim that here "motives and intentions count for much" (ibid, ibid). My phenomenological approach, because of the methodological difficulty of "directly witnessing" the 'Who' (and, *a fortiori*, its "motives"), cannot afford to judge betrayal according to "character" (ibid, p. 142, 143, 160). This would amount to presupposing the transparency of the Who – which Shklar does at least *in principle* – that I aim to spy on and provoke here.

Crystal Parikh's *An Ethics of Betrayal*¹⁴ pursues a similar ethical trajectory to mine, especially insofar as she takes Emmanuel Lévinas' ethics as first philosophy (p. 4) and his conception of responsibility towards the Other (p. 5) as constitutive of her entire conceptual framework for assessing and discussing the phenomenon of 'betrayal.' The latter, she contends, "can perform a cultural critique of the social conditions by which the minority subject comes into being" (1-2). While she is not afraid to admit that "betrayals are traumatic" and that "there is no recovering oneself from the trauma of betrayal," Parikh does not use this fact to either vilify betrayal or moralize against it; nor does she settle for treating it as a mere neutral object in the manner of the historians. Following Derrida, Parikh maintains that "justice and democracy", if they are to have any "futurity", involve a subject's responsibility to the Other, even if, and also precisely because, they "proceed through [...] often traumatic and unanticipated ruptures" that easily fit the definition of betrayal (by the 'subject' that suffers them), but are no more ethically illegitimate for that (p. 3). Hence, like mine, and unlike Shklar's, hers is "an ethics that goes beyond the conventional notion of moral imperatives" (p. 4), positing the locus of the "democracy to come" is Derrida's discussion of the promise (p. 10), and, I would add, the perjury. Though I do not always agree with her readings of Heidegger and Derrida (pp. 5, 174 n. 17, 7), and while she never advances far in what she calls "a methodology of ethical inquiry" (p. 6), I am in general agreement that approaching betrayal responsibly entails "a rearticulation of the very structure or conditions of the disjuncture" that betrayal exposes or effects (p. 8).

Parikh's study is an "ethico-political project" (6), one "of racial and national formation" (15), where the Lévinasian ethics of 'Otherness' find a ready preinscription in political bodies that are deemed "alien" in the United States. My aim, by contrast, is more theoretical, which does not mean it is necessarily more abstract, but does place it on a different set of materialities and discourses. I seek to locate similar hatreds to those Parikh's excavates, that also arise in response to an imputed betrayal, but to do so in philosophical and metaphysical discourses. These discourses, as I show, do not consist in mere "abstract ideas," but are very much related back to *the thinkers* that thought them and their private as well as political behavior (commonly considered biographical or philosophically irrelevant). While I call my focus 'ethico-metaphysical,' this attention to matter might also be called "ethico-political," except that, more imprudently than Parikh, it inserts "political" to where it is habitually not admitted: to thought and philosophy, to a supposedly detached engagement, like the one Aristotle describes as the economic independence that was necessary for metaphysical 'wonder' to arise. The spur for metaphysical thought in my engagement is closer to indignation and disappointment.

Very recently, Israeli-born philosopher Avishai Margalit takes to the task of addressing the concept of betrayal philosophically, a concept that he likens to a “shifting sand dune”.¹⁵ Margalit takes a self-professed “analytical” approach, a philosophical engagement methodologically defined as “making distinctions,” to “cut” the subject matter with an array of tools (giving the example of a swiss-army knife) (ibid, p. x). In keeping with that tradition, Margalit avoids the metaphysical question not only repeatedly, but systematically. While this kind of investigation is illuminating and important in its own way, and moreover original and brave (for sand dunes do not lend themselves willingly to the analytic knife), it cannot, indeed refuses to, comprehend the concept of betrayal as it pertains to the radical claims of monotheist religion. Since I am tracking a hatred (Christian antisemitism) that is at its core theological, Margalit’s avoidance makes the entire problematic foreign to him.¹⁶

Margalit’s definition of betrayal is a classical one: “Betrayal is damaging by unilateral act an important good-making feature that was taken by both sides to be a constitutive feature of their thick relation” (102). I say “classical” since it speaks of a relation in perfectly symmetrical terms except that one party, the ‘traitor,’ is accountable for it; in short, Margalit has no problem discussing “both sides” with the same breath. Since my methodology follows Heidegger’s phenomenological-hermeneutic vein, it could not presuppose, or have access to, “both sides” at the same time (or with the same accessibility). The advantage of phenomenology – in the way I perform it here – comes from its proceeding from an asymmetry, or, more precisely, that it sees the relation of consciousness to its “objects” in an asymmetrical fashion. Thus, using ‘traitor’ as accusation while approaching betrayal from the position of the betrayed yields different possibilities than approaching them from the position of the one accused of betrayal. It has the advantage of not presupposing “betrayal” as some unmotivated description, only awaiting its proper analysis and clarification.¹⁷

Since Margalit proffers to make distinctions, as opposed to perform a phenomenological inquiry, many normative assumptions creep into his reasoning. For example, in making a distinction between de facto “contested” and de jure “contestable” concepts of ‘traitor,’ Margalit uses the WWII example of Willy Brandt, a German national who betrayed the Nazis and joined the Norwegian underground as “an uncontestable hero” (ibid, p. 26). His treason can still be “contested,” but it is not “essentially contestable” since here a “deserving” loyalty won over an undeserving loyalty, while an essentially contestable betrayal would oscillate between two equally “deserving” loyalties (ibid). Who/What decides “deserve” (and Who/What decides Who/What decides...)? On what ground? And, more sinister, could that same ground also provide nourishment to Nazis, who are deemed here as a kind of metonymy

for “pure evil” towards whom there are, *axiomatically*, no deserving loyalties? These are questions left unasked and, more importantly, unengaged. Benedict Arnold, who is said to have had a “selfish motive” for his betrayal is considered by Margalit as another example of an “undeserving” loyalty, a loyalty that fails to incur respect across the board, even on the side that “benefits” from the betrayal (the British). Of course, access to Arnold’s true motivations are methodologically impossible for direct observation, but Margalit takes the fact that the beneficent British never contested Arnold’s being a “traitor” and the prizes they awarded Arnold upon his return to Britain as a good enough indication concerning the “selfishness” of his act. Margalit gives the examples of sex and money as selfish motives but, once again, leaves it to the normative reader to understand and move on.

My own treatment of the moral imputation that is projected into ‘traitor’ is more nuanced for two reasons: first, it does not try to ignore it as some lamentable prevarication but to affirm it as a condition of possibility of ‘traitor’ as an act of accusation that carries force;¹⁸ and second, my Nietzschean allegiances seek not to resist the moral imputation, especially because of its peculiar force, but to spy on it in order to trace what kind of “metaphysics of morals” it relies on, and who were the friends and enemies of this moral “picture” (particularly its necessity). Lobbing the accusation at ‘traitor’ as part of avenging betrayal is an “abuse” that ought to be ignored in Margalit’s eyes, but leaving “abuse” out of the concept does not coincide necessarily with doing justice to it. Indeed, I feel that the promise of betrayal is that even when proven factually and even when normatively condemned, it is still, as an accusation with (perhaps “ignorable” but still persistent) force, owed an *active* responsibility. If, and that is part of my goal here, one wishes to treat betrayal from its concreteness, one cannot afford to “ignore” something that, as Margalit himself admits “it may very well be that [...] is its [betrayal’s; SC] most common usage” (ibid, p. 17). The “common” is a sizeable chunk of what the phenomenologist has to work with, which I see as a necessary step down the stairs of Academia’s “ivory tower.”

One final comment is perhaps due here: since my question addresses the question of approaching betrayal as an ethical problem, limiting my engagement to any single discipline seemed unjustifiable: for one, my own thinking and interests had consistently been construed in Academic language as “trans-disciplinary”; for the other, I do not believe that metaphysical frameworks of judgment, and even perception (e.g., Gestalt psychology), are restricted only to the discipline of ‘Philosophy’ (especially as it is nowadays being more and more narrowly understood). My general strategy, hence, was to show the prevalence of this ethico-metaphysical framework throughout the span time and space of Nietzsche’s

‘ressentiment.’ Christian Europe – from “the Apostle to the Gentiles” through “the Philosopher” to modernity’s Copernican revolutions, from the Holy Empire through the Crusades to Colonialism – is the basis of a *Weltanschauung* that is not disciplinarily limited to ‘philosophy,’ nor merely to ‘theology,’ but exerts a cultural and political (and ‘scientific’) influence that we are still struggling to cope with to this day. I seek here to point out not only how prevalent the logic I am speaking to is but also how its original impetus, its “pre-historic” passion and strife, were made to seem natural or universal, “innocent.” This is a process that took Centuries to arrive at this stage, and its agents are so prevalent, so “at home” in our hearts and minds, that they are seldom recognized as such.

For these reasons my choice of examples tried to balance a systematic argument on the one hand, and an eclectic choice of discourses and examples on the other. This was, in a way, a performance of how a phenomenology that takes metaphysics seriously must proceed, what closures it cannot abide and what responsibilities it has to claim. Though only philosophy and theology can be made to show the ‘system’ I am teasing-out, the rest of European *Bildung* or ‘culture’ – from Dante’s Epic to Hollywood’s Blockbuster – help to give relevance, “flesh,” to these insights so as to encourage a new, antipathological outlook in the reader who is not necessarily a philosopher or theologian.

There is indeed a kind of “dilettantism” at play here, in the sense of following the subject matter wherever it will lead me. Such irreverence to disciplinary boundaries was once the prerogative of but the “queen” of knowledge/science, precisely ‘metaphysics,’ and perhaps it is time to traverse its realms again, beyond the disciplinary yokes it had been made to wear for its humility. This humility might not be as innocent as we would believe. It might be covering-over a systemic failing whose signs can only be repressed through compartmentalizing and “disciplining” metaphysics’ irreverent nature.

3. A Short Breakdown of Chapters

In consensus, in possible transparency, the secret is never broached/breached. If I am to share something, to communicate, objectify, thematize, the condition is that there be something non-thematizable, non-objectifiable, non-sharable. And this ‘something’ is an absolute secret, it is the *absolutum* itself in the etymological sense of the term, i.e., that which is cut off from any bond, detached, and which cannot itself bind; it is the condition of any bond but it cannot bind itself to anything - this is the absolute, and if there is something absolute it is secret.

– Jacques Derrida¹⁹

I begin this dissertation with a short Prelude about philosophy’s treatments of the problem known as ‘skepticism.’ It begins from the end, in modern-European philosophy’s quest of finding secure foundations to a project it defines as ‘Science,’ a search for universal and necessary truths that persist

regardless of any historical contingencies. Owing to this project's metaphysical "pre-history," however, this project finds itself threatened by dissolution and difference, which this project then acquires the need to either avoid or internalize and reconcile. This threat and urgency of need are most telling when this project is considered vis-à-vis its treatment of the skeptic and her utterances. Hence, I identify this need as the 'Why?' that drives this entire tradition's approach to the problem of difference, which turns out, in Hegel, to be seen as the absolute drive of Reason towards (self-)reconciliation. This "positive" drive relies solely upon a negative work, and is in fact projected as an end result, recognized through the inability of any skeptic to contest the Truth (of Reason).

This *covert* war against the skeptic – who is used but never proclaimed as an 'enemy' – gives the first hint of another, "darker" motivation that underwrites the commonality of Science and Truth in European modernity. This chapter argues, in a nutshell, that while Descartes tries to avoid the skeptic's threat, Kant finds a way to "put her on salary" so to speak, in the service of 'Science,' while Hegel radicalizes Kant's gesture – following upon Kant's original 'Why' or 'spirit' – in working this skeptic to death, to non-existence, fulfilling the 'spirit' of Science in what he calls 'Absolute Knowledge.' I use this as a prelude since it identifies a form of philosophical appropriation of the skeptic as an inside-outside figure that is used in view of its disappearance (or annihilation). This is done by systematically forcing a skeptic to take a position and then employing a skeptical maneuver on that position so that it can "rise above" this (deliberately motivated) "opposition." Only once all skeptics have "killed each other off" in this manner, then will we know that Truth is finally here.

In the first chapter, titled 'Phenomenology and Antipathology,' I begin to sketch the methodological and metaphysical implications of looking at betrayal phenomenologically. I begin by introducing the problem of metaphysics from the phenomenological perspective of Martin Heidegger project of "fundamental ontology." I show Heidegger's move as an ontological inflection of the Greek metaphysical question ('Why?'), which reorients it towards an *ontological* account of thought. Heidegger's phenomenology is here used as a negative example to shore-up what I consider Emmanuel Lévinas and Friedrich Nietzsche's contributions to an ethico-metaphysical account of thought, which does not stop at Being or Truth but looks beyond them, facing the Otherness of time and change (which is what, I will argue, constitutes the traitor's "gift" to the betrayed). Heidegger is also important in the sense that I show him to be himself embroiled with the 'theology' he sought to rid ontology of, at least in its ethico-metaphysical register. I do this by, on the one hand, showing how quickly his rhetoric could accommodate that of German National Socialism (1933-34), especially in an almost involuntary usage

of the language of Geist (a Hegelian term I focus on in the following); while, on the other hand, show how Heidegger's own ethico-metaphysical convictions led him to treat of 'the Jews' in a strikingly similar manner to Christian-theological antisemitism. That this could happen to a philosopher of such stature and will shows something of the engrained, unconscious hatred towards the Jew as 'traitor' to God, as permanently alienated (and alienating) from Being, which is a decidedly Christian-theological conception of God.

Emmanuel Lévinas' 'ethics as first philosophy' is the best direct engagement with Heidegger's "fundamental ontology" in this respect, especially since Lévinas operates from and within *Jewish* ethical thought – Heidegger's despised "other." Heidegger's conception of 'Dasein' hence betrays what Lévinas refers to as an 'egology': wherein thought, as '*being-there*', exhausts its horizons/meaning with its own death, producing an "ontological conscience" that is constitutively deaf to the death of others (that, as Lévinas argues, are phenomenologically *and ethically* prior). Fundamental ontology thus stipulates that *Dasein* cannot have any more "cares" once dead, and so her death becomes the absolute limit of her truth (and, a fortiori, her responsibility). By contrast, the Lévinasian 'Why?' goes beyond ontological care to an ethical obsession with the death of the other. Thus, against the *ontological* difference that Heidegger deems so fundamental, Lévinas introduces an *ethico-metaphysical* difference that asserts its primacy over-and-against the ontological. This difference, what Lévinas calls 'the Other,' involves a philosophy of time that conceives of it in terms of interruption or break, underwriting and undermining the closures of Heidegger's view of time as projection or thrownness, as well as his concept of 'transcendence.'

This chapter also begins to introduce the amalgam or assemblage I here call 'Levinatzsch,' which I begin alluding to in my prelude: there the connection hinges on Nietzsche's and Lévinas' shared insistence on the "philosophical rights" of the skeptic *against* modern philosophical attacks and appropriations, specifically since both reject the primacy of either Being or Truth as ultimate justifications of thought. After dealing with the Lévinasian critique of Heidegger, I close the circle with Heidegger's own hostility towards Nietzsche's "skepticism" towards Truth, showing that he, too, shares in modern philosophy's 'spirit' of obviating the ability of the skeptic to speak to philosophy. Here, Nietzsche's 'will to power' and its undermining of the absolute ontological grounding of Truth (Being replaced by Becoming; 'Truth' redefined as Truth "for me") meets Lévinas' primacy of the "death of the other" here: both address a 'pathology' of Being that Being cannot address: either the *becoming* of 'Being' in Nietzsche's 'will to power,' wielding the exteriority of time as a radical futurity, or the

Lévinasian ‘*il y a*’ as the “crust” of Being, wielding the ethical exteriority to Being in its conception of the death of the other.

The second chapter, titled ‘Levinatzschean Encounters,’ begins to construct a positive methodology for dealing with this, elusive, ethico-metaphysical difference. Here I pick up some of the Prelude’s arguments by tracking the veiled animosity towards the empty non-position of the skeptic as both a moral and a metaphysical accusation – identified as ‘vanity’ – that Hegel’s absolute telos of ‘reconciliation’ has to overcome. Contrasting Hegel’s own disdain of ‘vanity’ (*Eitelkeit*), I show Nietzsche’s own approach to thought as one that affirms *his own singular responsibility*, a responsibility towards that which, in Hegel’s terms, is precisely vain and substanceless, an empty shell. This contrast helps show, on the one hand, Nietzsche’s proximity to Lévinas, who also conceived of ethical responsibility as a singularizing event addressed to (a passive) “me” without which there could be no ‘I’ (or, to use Nietzsche’s language, ‘will’); and, on the other hand, Nietzsche’s ‘metaphysics of will’ as corresponding to the Lévinasian ‘egology’ critique. Poised against Hegel in this manner, ‘Levinatzsche’ brings the ethical dimension of time to bear on Hegel’s System, and I show this in their respective phenomenologies of will to power and the ‘diachronic’ encounter with the Other.

What was for Lévinas the essence of Jewish ethico-metaphysical thought was an ethical conception of difference that *refuses* to reduce it to Being. This refusal is deemed by Lévinas to be addressed against the western philosophical tradition as a whole (i.e., ‘egology’), but Nietzsche helps to trace this tradition’s more nefarious, aggressive purposes with this seemingly benign, “philosophical” move. Thus ‘ressentiment’ appears as not only the enemy of ethico-metaphysical difference – a difference in height that subtends the difference that is (moral) value – but a particularly antisemitic one. An equality born of universal humility or humiliation, Nietzsche traces the religion of love as the most profound expression of ressentiment; more specifically, as how the Euro-Christian moral training of thought is in fact built on an antisemitic structure. The prescribed ‘love’ is, hence, no more the absence of hatred as ‘Truth’ is the absence of skeptics; Hegel’s system absolves knowledge by, de facto, turning hatred upon itself just as it turned the skeptics against themselves. These vain ‘Nos’ will finally cancel each other out; the dead will bury the dead.

Nietzsche’s diagnosis of ressentiment in Europe – both as a psychological and as an ethico-metaphysical condition of European philosophy – will provide my key to unearthing the violence of a system of thought that consistently claims a universal (be it ‘truth’ or ‘necessity’) for the justification of its path. The clandestine censure-operations of this “universal” are shown as specifically designed, not to

avoid violence and social forms of domination, but only to demand that they efface all external signs to themselves. What both Hegel and Nietzsche called the Jewish genius of hatred referred to a self-separation that was immune, in principle, to any reconciliation; a ‘vanity’ for any holistic approach to thought since it has no ontologically articulable ‘Why?’ to its name. Jewish “hatred” was hence essentially *visible* in the separate Jews themselves. It was an outward-directed refusal, while ressentiment takes this very drive of self-distinction and forces it to hate itself, to consider this, its “genius” to be a sin, the most fundamental of sins (Pride/Vanity). This is how a system that claims Truth and Love can be shown to be a systematic (skeptical) negation of (skeptical) negation, or the hatred of hatred respectively.

Nietzsche understands that the best way to spy on ressentiment, since it keeps calling itself a ‘universal love,’ is in the animosities that its attending ‘spirit’ cannot seem to “shake,” i.e., antisemitism. The antipathological example I take from Nietzsche lies in the “immoral” way he treats of his own antisemitism: he lets it “run wild,” refusing to let guilt set-in and censure it (i.e., to “hate” this hatred and turn it back on itself). The very passivity of both ‘higher’ and ‘lower’ – which, I show, was the origin of the first moral valuation for Nietzsche – is taken hold of, collapses into itself, leaving only an aggressive, willed, *directed* “passivity;” that of an ‘I’ that seeks to save a ‘soul’ that is not, metaphysically (and hence also ethically) speaking, only his own. The passive-aggressive violence of the already-self-justified victim was thereby wrought upon a world that can no longer recognize its violence as such (but can still feel it).

The universal endeavors of history and science that proceed from this “universal fetish” as it were, are a continuation of this ethico-metaphysical war-by-other-means; Nietzsche is really only trying to show the dear price that is paid for this supposed love, this purported non-violence. The very idea that ‘history’ or ‘science’ might be an employment of power/domination was methodologically and metaphysically denied by ressentiment, that acknowledges no irreconcilable heights. This is why Nietzsche forwards his ‘will to power,’ for the latter at least owns up and affirms its own domination and selection, thus at least giving the defeated forces and definitions some metaphysical purchase, an otherwise-than-ontological “locus” where they can be affirmed (as defeated and lower). In a Levinatschean construction, then, but based on Nietzsche’s own statements, I see this as a paradigmatic instance (and method) of responsibility for the Other that does not, as in the Christian system, efface its otherness by reducing the Other in/to an egalitarianism of the Same. This, ultimately, is the violence of the Hegelian system of self-absolution.

As a way to introduce this chapter, I give a glimpse for how this violence operates through three contemporary examples from western discourse and politics: the one concerning how Hitler's antisemitism and the Holocaust of WWII in the introduction to the English edition of *Mein Kampf*, another through the reception of German film director Lars von Trier "I am a Nazi" speech (which I contrast with Heidegger's silence), and an analysis on how the universal egalitarianism and its Christian origins betrays its silencing violence in the way that the "Black Lives Matter" movement was received and discussed in the United States. I also provide a short sub-section on Edward Snowden's "whistleblowing" as the first instance of what I here call the betrayal of the coward-witness, and how it is judged by State Secretary John Kerry in precisely the terms I discuss hitherto.

The 'Segue' to the concluding chapter in a way repeats the gesture of the 'Prelude,' in the sense that it follows a seemingly unrelated narrative/history in order to expose a shared logic, a shared outlook on the ethics of witnessing and speaking. If the Prelude featured the history of modern philosophy as the appropriation and consumption of the skeptic, the segue's analysis of Doug Liman's *Edge of Tomorrow* shows the coward-training of its protagonist as a precise repetition of the same ethico-metaphysical maneuver I have been tracking. Condensed in a ready-made moral narrative – one that features some ethico-metaphysical aspects of *time* – this contemporary Hollywood production further indicates, beyond this summarizing capacity, the pervasiveness and the seemingly benign nature of the Christian narrative-structure. It makes palpable how, for a western-minded audience, the message of this film should seem triumphant, uplifting. The process by which Major William Cage sheds his cowardice and becomes a hero, a tried-and-true martyr, is attended-to by an antipathological witness that complains about the systematic torture and death of cowardice.

My concluding chapter is entitled 'The Coward's Betrayal,' and it is designed to put the insights of my antipathology of Christian antisemitism to work. The chapter goes to the "heart and guts" of an affective training-system that I read as Nietzsche's resentment, which is superimposed against Hegel's speculative dialectic as a cosmological 'Bildung.' The issue will revolve, for Hegel, on "the tragedy of the Absolute," where every internal 'particularity' becomes constrained to a position, enabling a dialectic with a counter-position that would finally shed said particularity in a higher universal. What was shed was merely a show, a shell, with no workable or actualizable (*wirklich*) substance, a 'vanity.' This 'vanity' consists in the resistance of each 'particularity' to become thematized in a position, a resistance that must be – and this is Hegel's foremost ethico-metaphysical axiom – *reconciled*, civilized (*ausgebildet*).

Here, however, the Levinatzschean witness spies a split, which is also a split within tragedy itself. I introduce this split first in Greek tragedy, contrasting Hegel's favorite tragic figure, Antigone, with one he never mentions, Cassandra. The split comes down to a showdown between she who acts in the deep and she who talks on the surface; she who goes all the way (down) with her law/god and she who refuses to. This split shows a remainder to Hegel's (and his philosophical Christianity's) appropriation of the Greeks, which in turn betrays the way in which Greek tragedy is *used* – precisely through guilt, as Hegel confirms – to direct the affects thus bestowing upon them a Christian *Bildung*.

In the next section, this split becomes manifest in a lot less wieldy crowd, the Jews, whose tragedy – for Hegel's appropriation of the term – could never be a “Greek” tragedy. Rather like Shakespeare's Macbeth, the Jews have chosen an alien God, whose ‘transcendence,’ for Hegel, means emptiness and complete lack of Substance. A vain faith, like Cassandra's, and like Cassandra's it is the fate of those who went astray, who refused to “go all the way.” Cassandra, in *not allowing the penetration* of Apollo into her, yet *remaining* his priestess to the last; and the children of Abraham, for remaining stuck on their chosenness as witnesses to God's Law, refusing to go all the way to its fulfillment (πλήρωμα) and reconcile with the rest of ‘Mankind.’ Both tragedies share the fate of exile, of alienation from the land and its people, of abject non-belonging, and both – obsessively, irrationally – emit non-internalizable signs, their *word* deemed dead and empty. The Jew, hence, marks the most resilient remainder to the Christian *Bildung*, as if an incarnation of the Greek Cassandra that had come to claim her rightful place in the ‘tragedy’ of the Absolute. Whatever befalls the Jews, Hegel avers, can arouse no pity in the heart of the Christian, only horror, but this horror, this “inability” to empathize, is the outcome of a moral training. Since they never embody *any* ‘position’ – beholden to an abstract Nothingness – they cannot be negated, nor can they be redeemed by a Final or Truthful one.

In the following section, I will trace this logic all the way back to the Late Middle Ages and Dante Alighier's *Inferno* (c. 1308 AD). Through a reading of Dante Alighieri's *Inferno* as what John Freccero calls “a poetics of conversion.” Dante's *Commedia* is a kind of theological epic, to which the *Inferno* is the gravest obstacle or ‘scandal.’ Since Dante is a good, compassionate Christian, about to travel through the realm of God's eternal damnation, the danger of doubting God's Divine Love and the Justice of His Divine Plan become suddenly very real and very urgent in the inferno. I show Dante to go through a process whereby he finds it a necessity to shed all doubt; following, up to a point, the same Hegelian tactic towards the skeptic. The *Inferno* repeatedly faces Dante with a choice: either succumb to fear and vanity, but then get stuck in Hell without being able to tell his story (failing the conversion), or

to kill the cowardice and doubt within him, and be able to come out the other end, with a strengthened faith and testify to Divine Truth.

What Hegel says above about the “inability” to feel pity for the Jew is here betrayed as a ‘Bildung,’ an active process of an “internal,” affective training: through various rhetorical and psychological means, Dante is tutored by his guide, Vergil, to gradually *feel* less and less pity for the suffering souls in Hell. Vergil summarizes it beautifully as Dante’s having to learn to not interject “his own passion” (his own suffering) in the place where it is only Jesus’ that matters. The symbol of God on the Cross, which Nietzsche saw as so dangerous and potent, here reveals the affective price of Divine Compassion; here is the “sacrifice” Dante has to make if he is to testify to his experience. Just like the Hegelian Absolute has to self-sacrifice and shed its particularities, just like any skeptic, any doubt, must be thematized in a position and turned on itself (negated), so must Dante internalize the spirit of Jesus and comprehend the *true meaning* of the suffering he witnesses.

In Dante’s *Inferno*, as well, when ‘cowardice’ finally dies (as Vergil repeatedly admonishes Dante to do), it dies *in a process to which Dante was not a witness*; the greatest fear and the biggest threat was confronted by a Heavenly messenger, in a scene where Dante had to close his eyes to, denoting a lapse in his testimony. This confrontation, like all of Christianity’s more radical battles, was wholly invisible; it gave no indication or sign. Some things one must pass over in silence, if one wants to have his testimony being granted an audience. The coward, in this instance, as one who panics and doubts too much to close his eyes in a blind trust, the one who would perish in that scene, his existence and whatever signs he managed to emit remaining locked, muffled, unheeded; his testimony cannot make it *through* to the world as Dante’s can.

This direction and appropriation of the (Jewish witness’) sign by (Christian martyr’s) symbol is exemplified in the use the early Church Fathers made of the Greco-Roman ‘*figura*,’ a hermeneutic device meant to cultivate the living Christian Spirit’s Truth out of the dead letter(s) of Judaic Law. The *figura* was the device by which the Sign was sublated; where the Old Letter/Testament was *reconceived* as a ‘pre-figuration’ of the ‘Spirit’ of the New Testament. This is the hermeneutic version of the same Christian *Bildung*: the symbol of Jesus Christ on the Cross – the Jewish God incarnated on Earth and dying for the Salvation Mankind’s Sin(s) – is its *Bild* (image).

This textual warfare provides the key by which to read the juxtaposition with which I conclude. I turn to interpret Kafka’s story ‘In the Penal Colony’ as the dysfunctional alternative to Dante’s *Inferno*. Both are stories of punishment mechanisms, but involve a necessity of witnessing, but, whereas Dante’s

witness leaves this mechanism intact and justified, Kafka's mechanism is left in ruins, its witness abandoning everything, all ties of faith and meaning, including promises and ideals he himself had held in high regard. The Levinatzschean witness I am promoting here finds in Kafka's story a clear, structural homology with Dante's Christian narrative, where the guilty enters into an all-but-automated machine that inscribes him with justice (a universal maxim), and redeems him finally of his guilt. In both stories a witness was necessary, except that the *Bildung* that was dramatized in Dante's story here becomes formalized; as in an actual *Bild*, a mold of needles called 'The Harrow,' that can "*ausgebildet*" all that come under it via a process of comprehension-through-torture. Both are machines that inflict a justified suffering, comprehending 'Justice,' and yet, as Kafka's story shows, *their fate hinges on the kind of witness they receive*.

Kafka's witness, unlike Dante's, is a "non-believer" of the 'justice-machine' that he witnesses but this does not affect the machine; even in the Inferno, the witness Dante is in doubt and does not (yet) possess the true faith, which still needs to go through the forge of Hell. Both Kafka's 'Apparatus' and Dante's Hell can work with non-believers. The difference between them is that Kafka's cannot work, indeed "unworks" itself, in the face of the "anti-believer." And the test is, in both cases, the test of witnessing suffering: Dante goes through his war with Christian pity/piety by "doubling down" on his faith (with help both from Vergil as the 'voice of Reason' and a Divine Messenger as the '(invisible) hand of God'); while Kafka's traveler passes through a spectrum that begins with conviction in his own "European values" (while paying little heed to the colony's mystical-barbaric justice-procedures) and ends with him betraying those values (while watching in horror as the machine unworks itself). Kafka's witness' betrayal of his own values is enabled by the lack of a unifying 'spirit' or a 'faith' that binds them. The traveler cannot "get over" a contradiction – upon his witnessing-event – within his own justification system or framework; he does not "double down," nor does he adopt the justice his values had previously disclaimed, but, finally, abandons everyone and everything, his own values and promises trampled underfoot and left behind. This is the *de facto* "anti-belief" witness: a coward-traitor who had not "willfully" chosen his betrayal, but was, in a way, "chosen" for it, a chosenness impervious to moral constructs that effectively unworks the secret collusions between faith and Truth; a "chosenness" to be witness above all else, including fidelity and truth. His testimony implicates him directly and incommensurably, in the singular; he is thus not only forced, by some unknown power, to abandon the colony, but also to abandon his own moral self. Saving only his own skin, not even taking any other witnesses or evidence with him to support some his future testimony as "true," this creature of radical

separation is the only one that can testify to the violence that no one else cares to see, *that no one else can witness*, in the justice-machine.

This last juxtaposition hence summarizes my findings: the horror of the Christian-philosophical justice machine, the one thing it cannot digest and cannot comprehend – which makes it betray itself and expose the hatred that it had locked and put to work deep within it – is precisely the coward-witness, the one who *remains*, unconverted by it. This machine's proper operation runs on faith, and it is only faith that can help it hide its violence from itself and its other witnesses. The secret of antisemitism, hence, lies here, in the Jewish witness to God's Revelation, deemed a cowardly witness in the eyes of the Christian *Geist*. It is a witness that refuses to be *affected*, refuses to "take in" what was witnessed and let it convert her to its Truth. This witness will always remain at the level of signification, of testimony, which is why it will complain of violence and suffering in the face of every justification-machine, every divine narrative. She meets every internal Truth that binds "us" together as a potential usurpation of the Other, one that, as mere witness (and not a hero), it only seeks to speak in affirmation.

The Jewish witness, this metaphysical skeptic, is not after Truth; she is persecuted by the demand for Justice. Neither a hypostatized 'I' nor a contained 'Being,' it dares not look to Truth before having satisfied Justice, remaining as a 'me' to which no 'I' can fully do justice. She harps on the letter; not the meaning of the story, but its *re-interpretation*, *the other* story, *always* the other story. Her suppression was essential for the motivation of the Christian-philosophical project: sublating God's mediations (Law), becoming God's message, bravely self-sacrificing one's own pride and particularity – the vanities only a 'spiritual coward' would prize. After all, minus the Christian message, minus the spiritual substance, the testimony is mere signs; without a necessary direction, they could break apart, lead anywhere – become unwieldy, irreconcilable. The coward-witness, hence, speaks for the irreconcilables of any system's justifications of its own violence, which is why "we" hate her; she ruins "it" for everyone, exposing what is best left hidden, harping on the obstacles that "we" are trying to pass over in silence while focusing on the essence, on the goal. The coward witness, the "militant coward," refuses to pass violence over in silence, even when self-evident, even when agreed by "all."

PRELUDE: The Spiritual Cultivation of the Skeptic

[...] A universal resolve to doubt everything is of no use whatsoever; it is wholly absurd [;] but there are few men, or we could probably even say none, who would be inclined to such a childish and harmful addiction to doubt.

– Immanuel Kant²⁰

[...] In its first manifestation, a new creation usually behaves towards the entrenched systematization of the earlier principle with fanatical hostility; in fear of losing itself in the expansion of the particular, it also shuns the labor that goes with scientific cultivation [*wissenschaftlichen Ausbildung*] and, nevertheless in need of it, it grasps at first at an empty formalism. The demand for the elaboration and cultivation of the material becomes at that point all the more pressing. There is a period in the formation of an epoch [*Bildung einer Zeit*] in which, just as in the formation of the individual [*Bildung des Individuums*], the foremost concern is the acquisition and reinforcement of the principle in its undeveloped intensity. But the higher demand [*höhere Forderung*] is that such a principle should be made into science [*Wissenschaft*].

– G. W. F. Hegel²¹

One should not let oneself be misled: great intellects are sceptics. Zarathustra is a sceptic. The vigour of a mind, its *freedom* through strength and superior strength, is *proved* by scepticism. Men of conviction simply do not come into consideration where the fundamentals of value and disvalue are concerned. Convictions are prisons. They do not [...] see things *beneath* them

– Friedrich Nietzsche²²

1. 'In the No:' The Spirit of German Idealism

The *understanding* [*Verstand*] determines, and holds the determination [*Bestimmung*] fixed. Reason [*Vernunft*] is negative and *dialectical*, since it dissolves [*auföst*] the determinations of the understanding into nothing; it is *positive*, since it generates the *universal* [*Allgemeine*], and comprehends [*begreift*] the particular [*das Besondere*] therein. Just as the understanding is usually taken as something separate from reason in general, so also dialectical reason is taken as something separate from positive reason. In its truth reason is however *spirit*, which is higher than both reason bound to the understanding and understanding bound to reason. It is the negative, that which constitutes the quality of both the dialectical reason and the understanding: it negates the simple, thereby posits the determinate difference of the understanding; but it equally dissolves this difference, and so it is dialectical. But spirit does not stay at the nothing of this result but is in it rather equally positive, and thereby restores the first simplicity, but as universal, such as it is concrete in itself; a given particular is not subsumed under this universal but, on the contrary, it has already been determined together with the determining of the difference and the dissolution of this determining. This spiritual [*geistige*] movement, which in its simplicity gives itself its determinateness, and in this determinateness gives itself its self-equality – this movement, which is thus the immanent development [*immanente Entwicklung*] of the concept [*Begriff*], is the absolute method of the concept, the absolute method of cognition and at the same time the immanent soul of the content. – On this self-constructing path alone, I say, is philosophy capable of being objective, demonstrative science [*Wissenschaft*]. (Hegel, Preface to the First Edition of *The Science of Logic*, p. 10 [Giovanni]/GW 21:8 [emphasis original])

Immanuel Kant's philosophical revolution is not only well known in modern philosophical thought, but very far-reaching. As Kant scholars Paul Guyer and Alan Wood write of Kant's *Critique of Pure Reason*, "to tell the whole story of the book's influence would be to write the history of philosophy since Kant".²³ My approach to Kant's critical endeavor is to be limited here to his own reasons for writing this critique in the first place, both as intimately connected with a skeptic's *interruption*, but also as one that is determined to make sure this interruption not occur again.

It is in my opinion not sufficiently brought to light that Kant's critical impetus came not from his identification of the problem of philosophical Reason; his critique was not necessitated by the "betrayal" (CPR, Bxv) or "scandal" (ibid, Bxxxviii note) of a reason that is "burdened with questions which it cannot dismiss [...] but which it also cannot answer" (ibid, Avii). Kant in fact proceeds, already in the first edition of his Critique (1781), from a recognition of the abjection to which metaphysics has fallen, wherein various dogmas are engaged in interminable struggles that result in what once was the queen of the sciences to be considered their "mother of chaos and night" (CPR Aviii-x). Kant proceeds, hence, from an *indignation* at this situation, whence he is called-upon "to institute a court of justice, by which reason may secure its rightful claims" (ibid, Axi). In the second edition, Kant already hones in on a more

general articulation of the impetus, appearing in the very first line of its Preface as assuring metaphysics/Reason travel “the secure course of a science,” a process determined by two tell-tale signs: the first is the science’s coherent ability to advance itself (i.e. without having to turn back and correct any of its categorical assumptions), and the second, tied to the first, is one whereby the philosophers-scientists “achieve unanimity” – since this is a joint endeavor – and share a “common aim” (CPR, Bvii). As it stood until his Critique, Kant identifies that metaphysics cannot seem to find this path since “in it reason continuously gets stuck” (ibid, Bxiv) and since, furthermore, “is so far from reaching unanimity in the assertions of its adherents that it is rather a battlefield” where “no combatant has ever gained the least bit of ground, nor has been able to base any lasting possession of his victory” (ibid, Bxv).

I underscore this Kantian impetus at this early stage in order to show the positive indication of the series of negative indications to follow in this dissertation, namely of how Hegel had, indeed, followed in Kant’s ‘spirit’ while dismissing his philosophy’s formal structure, what Hegel calls its “letter.” That the Kantian enterprise was driven by an indignation at metaphysics’ inability to achieve unanimity, that Kant’s only claim against the dogmatists would come down to their inability to secure their respective victories for very long, implicitly follows what Hegel had made into an explicit absolute principle of Reason: that it should arrive at a reconciliation of itself. This reconciliation follows the spirit of the Kantian disdain of the lack of uniformity and principle of deciding the various controversies between metaphysical dogma(tist)s, which was the very reason, the Why?, from which he set out to his endeavor in the first place.

If Kant had effected a philosophical reconciliation in his critique of metaphysics (roughly, between the respective dogmatisms of empiricism and rationalism), he did so while having skepticism in mind. The equanimity (in Greek *ataraxia*) of the solipsistic Pyrrhonian skeptic – who employed an *époche* (a suspension of judgment) on all truths as such – was highly efficient in clearing a space of *aporia* and doubt against any-and-all metaphysical systems/dogmas. Of course, the skeptics are few in number, a fact which Kant – though acknowledging that this situation allows the dogmatists to clutter metaphysics one again with their unprovable assertions (about the “unconditioned”) – indeed finds fortunate (CPR Aix). The skeptics appeared, then, as “a kind of nomads who abhor all permanent cultivation of the soil” (CPR Aix), whose “polemicizing is properly directed only against the dogmatists” (CPR A763/B791).

Like any tool, skepticism had two qualities that even its various wielders found quite unpalatable: first, it has no loyalty, no anchoring or ground that can be used against it – one can always use a skeptical argument against anyone or anything (including oneself); second, while offering so much

power to philosophical argumentation, the skeptic, literally, has nothing to contribute to metaphysics *once it becomes a Science*. She often comes on the scene as an annoying, meaningless nit-picker that just “doesn’t get what we’re trying to do here;” her “points” being at best beside-the-point, at worst *against any ‘point.’* For Kant, this constituted both the utility of skepticism, and its own insufficiency, as was indeed his assessment of David Hume’s skeptical move: “he merely *limits* our understanding without drawing *boundaries* to it” (CPR A767/B795). Once that space is opened or legitimized (by having no legitimate “boundaries”), once that demon is loose, it will, for certain, wreak havoc and destruction upon any positive philosophical assertion by questioning its grounds of legitimacy, its *justification*, from without.

Kant – himself called to his critical stance by Humean skepticism²⁴ – had sought to establish a new philosophical world order. Kant wanted to give skepticism its place so as to prevent its further (ab)use in philosophy, in many ways similar (in impetus) to Descartes’ focusing on *doubt* so as to arrive at imperviousness to doubt (clear and distinct truths). Like a regulator in a market where ‘credit’ has run amuck, Kant wanted to settle this debt once and for all so that philosophy will no longer be compromised in (metaphysical) overspending. This explosive censoring of all rational principles, as that of all claims to an unconditioned/non-relative truth, is a necessary step to deflect the despotism of dogma; a kind of “halfway house” that allows philosophy to see beyond the clutter of the various dogmas, and proceed to the permanent resting place of complete certainty that culminated in Kant’s drawing the boundaries to Reason itself (rather than, like the skeptics, censoring this or that dogmatic claim that arises within it).²⁵

Hence, skepticism’s annoying character consists in that – if it is not *contained* (within its solipsistic self) – it keeps screaming a ‘no justification!’ that spreads like wildfire, consuming everything, including her and her statement. The only constant or *reliable* factor in the skeptic’s complaint is, indeed, *the fact that she is there*, and that she is screaming something – always, and by necessity, *incoherent* – about justice and truth (i.e. justification). The only justification for skeptics to appear would be, according to Kant, limited to the presence of dogmatists; the latter’s uncritical certainty will then be purged by a healthy direction of the skeptic doubt, so that the certainty remains, but remains unassailable.

It is to this end that Kant had devised his transcendental idealism. It was not only *das Ding an sich* that was “cut off” in Kant’s critical reform(ation) of metaphysics, but indeed the very legitimacy of the skeptic to re-enter metaphysics-cum-science. No longer could the skeptic conjure an unspecified

otherness sowing discord and confusion amongst philosophers, thus and derailing philosophy from any “secure path to Science” it might have claimed. This interruption needs to be turned-back to the oblivion whence it came: either considered as a wholly private affair leaving the skeptic to endlessly talk to herself – the ‘unreasonable’ position of madness/psychosis – thus sparing philosophy, as a ‘public’ discourse, from her spurious-yet-deadly charms; or it is deemed a wholly transcendent one, beyond the reach of human understanding and therefore (by a certain implication) beyond human *concern*. Kant’s use of the skeptic’s force was akin to a State’s use of its border-patrol agents: the latter makes sure that no undesirables (i.e. no dogmatists) enter into the confines of Reason; like the pedagogical tactic of charging the most disturbed kid with assuring all the other kids proper behavior both neutralizes the aversive effects of the former and assuring the continued good behavior on the part of the latter.

Hegel understands that the Kantian system was not as independent of *das Ding an sich* as it fancied itself to be. Merely stipulating it away from ‘the transcendental’ – and doing so, moreover, *while using skeptical arguments* (i.e. the Antinomies) – leaves the system completely vulnerable to interruption by those same arguments (and, by implication, by that same *Ding*). Hegel identified in the Kantian maneuver an “Ostrich” character, a transcendental universality that is very far from reconciling Reason with itself – as Kant wanted to think – but in fact castrates the latter, leaving it impotent and frozen in the face of all transcendent interruptions. Metaphysically speaking, then, Hegel realized the skeptic’s interruption comported a radical exteriority – without which the skeptic loses all force and, a fortiori, is already *preempted any interruption* – that needed to be domesticated inside a philosophical system or equal (but opposed) radicality. The Kantian master of the (philosophical) house, then, was only so *de jure*, but needed to also be made so not *de facto*; he built his sovereignty as subservience to an external power that he thought untamable, justifying a boundary, an enclosed transcendental identity/subjectivity, through it.

Kant’s maneuver is precisely what Hegel calls – in a (not-so) different context – a “peace of necessity” or, more poignantly, a “politics of cunning weakness:” subjectivity cannot be fully reconciled unless the radical transcendence that it flees from, is reconciled with(in) it. Instead of running and hiding from the transcendent *Ding an sich*, philosophy need to own it; otherwise, any and all claims for universality of Reason will be particularized by dogmatic claims that can never be absolved of this initial capitulation (and thus will forever be vulnerable to particular demands made in its name; i.e. the cries of the skeptic). For Reason to be reconciled with itself, it must fully comprehend (*begreifen* – grasp) itself. As Wittgenstein famously remarked, no limit can be posited in/by thought without thought

having already transcended it, for a limit(ation) is plausibly argued or defended only when *both* its “sides” are perceived or grasped: thus, Reason cannot abide by a limit that it posits to/in itself – what in Kantian transcendental philosophy assured the transcendence of *das Ding* – without being blind to its own implicit claim of having already comprehended the Ding in advance.

Hegel had discovered the problem with the project whose ‘spirit’ he shared with Kant: it was the above-mentioned blindness that allows for “particulars” (like ‘philosophical position;’ ‘dogma;’ etc.) to wreak havoc – in the name of the spectral, denied presence, of the transcendent “Ding”/Other – in the philosophical-system-cum-metaphysics. In order to fully justify philosophy from within, in order to allow it to arrive at the stage where its self-knowing is absolute, Kant’s ‘transcendental’ was a step, but did not go far enough, in the right direction. Kant’s stipulated limit meant that a particular, teeming with skeptics, is claimed as belonging to a system, but is nevertheless impervious to universalization (whether as the wholly private/interior or the wholly transcendent/exterior), thus compromising – allowing this transcendent Other to wreak its havoc on – the entire system from within.

The Kantian assumption – that nevertheless could not be reconciled with the philosophy over which it kept watch – both claims a Ding an sich and denies its accessibility to human understanding; a republic that wins its security by virtue of a holy lie. Hegel, however, really believe that Truth shall set free. To reach complete absolution, *the particular had to have the Other progressively choked right out of it*; only in this manner can the universality of philosophy be *absolutely* justified/’comprehended.’

And yet, Kant’s transcendental system left behind a problem: if anyone was to reside and think within its domain – i.e., to philosophize in the newly-formed “transcendental tradition” – whatever they propose can, *once again*, be suspected as “dogmas,” and, hence, this system was still not sufficiently defended against the all-consuming skepticism that Kant left at the border. It would seem that in making sure it rid its dominion of the skeptic, philosophy had rather turned her into a haunting spectre that is all the more dangerous for skepticism’s diffuse, ungraspable presence. What was supposed to be a one-time revolution of the metaphysical system (cf. CPR, Bxv-xvi), is liable to become – at least so long as there are any other philosophers but “Kant scholars” (and even then) – a *constant revolution* of self-purging and accusation that threatens, once again, to break apart the reconciled project that the old master had envisioned.

The boundary proved unstable so long as there is still philosophical discourse in the world: it had to be constantly policed, but there was no way to arbitrate if the police was indeed doing its job correctly or sufficiently (or if, God forbid, they had been “turned”). The Kantian boundary hence betrays an

oscillation, already alluded to earlier, between the transcendent and the wholly private; between the incoherent Absolute Other/Truth, and the annoying, self-centered philosopher that appeals in its name. As long as the house of philosophy was still hospitable to philosophers, the latter's very *presence* within it will forever threatens to smuggle some dogmatic content into it, thus opening the door for the nomadic hord of the skeptics.

Thus the border-patrol began demanding a secret police. The problem that arises for the Kantian project becomes, indeed, to assure the safety of the newly-drawn boundaries not only from without, but also, perhaps mainly, from within; i.e., indeed, from both sides of the border. Perhaps Kant had already sensed the problematic nature of this joint endeavor, how no agent of reason can really be trusted, since the following passage avails itself to a grammatical sign of affect that Kant only uses a handful of time in the critique, and even more rarely in his own voice. A level-headed scholar with a measured style, it is finally a problem of betrayal that elicits from Kant one of the only exclamation points of the First Critique:

Now why is it that here the secure path of science still could not be found? Is it perhaps impossible? Why then has nature afflicted our reason with the restless striving for such a path, as if it were one of reason's most important occupations? Still more, how little cause have we to place trust in our reason if in one of the most important parts of our desire for knowledge it does not merely forsake us but even entices us with delusions and in the end betrays us! (CPR, Bxv)

Hegel, I argue, identifies precisely this urgency in Kant, this indignation and moral judgment/concern towards the practice and standing of metaphysics, and jumps right into the breach. He will radicalize the Kantian system and radically transform it, by following, as he put it, Kant's 'spirit' rather than his 'letter.' Hegel will, hence, not employ the skeptics only at the *boundary* of (metaphysical) 'Science,' but, rather, redefine Reason as one big *mechanism* that consumes skeptics so as to eliminate dogmas; instead of employing the skeptics as border-patrol officers that will forever be there and forever be needed, Hegel suggests to, literally, *work them to death*. The "scandal" or "betrayal" of Reason is, in this sense, not avoided but appropriated; philosophical dignity is found not in being attuned to and following a formal law/boundary, but in internalizing it as an agent of inner purgation. Instead of a border patrol on the outside and a secret police on the inside, Hegel abolishes the inside/outside distinction by appropriating precisely that which "scandalizes" it: everyone is secret police in Hegel's philosophical community, everyone is, *equally*, a traitor and a victim of betrayal.

The bewailed Kantian "addiction to doubt" is here offered Hegel's own brand of methadone. To this end – that of truly radicalizing the "motivational" force of Kant's project – Hegel would work out a

brilliant tactic: if Kant's revolution brought about a further-yet-insufficient reconciliation of Reason with itself – as was apparent from Kant's transcendental usurpation of the entire empiricism vs. rationalism debate – the Hegelian system, as process, will *universalize precisely this revolution*. The full reconciliation of Reason with itself – the essence of the Kantian project – will only move forward through an absolute faith in its very procedure, but a faith that was, at least on the philosophico-scientific level, open to other philosophical positions/dogmas (even if this openness was more like that of a mouth than that of a hand outstretched for a shake). By postulating a process of perpetual revolution, Reason could finally be allowed to self-absolve, to self-comprehend. The particular cannot be ceded any rights whatsoever, for, at any opportunity, it will once again allow the parasites back to gnaw at Reason's claims to truth/justification with its frustrating teeth of transcendent doubt. We are, thus, no longer dealing with a traditional architectonic whereby the foundations are laid and upon them an edifice is erected, but rather an edifice which is its own foundation.

The particular's purgatorial rise to the universal is, then, the very *Bildung* of the Absolute, its rise to (the challenge of) self-knowledge. They entertain between themselves, I think, a certain strife, one that resembles, though not quite identical to, the Hegelian struggle for recognition. Even though this is true for the entirety of the Hegelian system, it is infinitely important in our context, that is, the context of the particular that stubbornly holds fast to the name, or the Idea, of a radically transcendent Other, and doing so without philosophical justification whatsoever.

This struggle in relation to the problem of doubt manifests as what Derrida often referred to as the unstable, fragile limit between the 'who' and the 'what:' the former is given to historical accidents, to inessential contingencies whose meaning is, perhaps awaited, perhaps ignored, perhaps surviving and, what is the most strange in Derrida's approach (that is, most often ignored), perhaps annihilated without a trace or memory. Hegel's philosophy – *perhaps* like all philosophy, *perhaps* as philosophy should – submits the contingency of the 'who,' the 'who' as contingency, to the demands, or indeed the 'spirit,' of the 'what.' The Hegelian systematic treatment and accommodation of skepticism, is always prepared for the skeptic threat; *it sees the Other coming* in the skeptic, and prepares itself accordingly.

Kant had already employed this appropriative procedure of the particular, but only, as Hegel often repeats, in a formal way. Hence, the *skeptic* can once again return to trouble the Kantian system, even if only in a formal manner of keeping the borders safe from dogmatists. This boundary, however, suggests a trace that remains like a stain on spirit insofar as it is deemed absolutely necessary for metaphysical philosophy to become a Science. However, since this philosophy encompasses "all there is" – in

thought, in reality in everywhere and everything – it must not admit any *fundamental* limit that it cannot explain or comprehend; only superficial ones that can be sublated and then ignored.

By giving the skeptic a fundamental position, Kant had only gotten half-way in eliminating her actual threat: her particularity is indeed negated by assigning her a position (skeptic-ism) – no *skeptic*, once identified, is ever allowed in transcendental philosophy again – but it is still a fundamental (i.e. critical) position that would always, hence, *issue a sign or a trace of its continued function*. A noise to the otherwise divine silence of the spiritual operation. The skeptic's interruption of the philosophical system – *embodied* in the very *particularity* of the skeptic (as we will soon see) – is allowed a trace that, once more, threatens to overthrow everything “we” (i.e. Kant and Hegel) worked so hard to keep on the right path.

2. Neutralizing the Skeptic: Hegel's Tactical Passivity

[...] the wild desire to preserve everything, to gather everything together in its idiom [...] [...] does not mean renouncing the specificity of the philosophical genre, the specifically philosophical demand – what it attests to is the desire, while taking philosophical responsibility to its limits, to show that such responsibility cannot be other than the responsibility of *someone*. Formalizing this to the extreme, I would say that for me the great question is always the question *Who*. Call it biographical, autobiographical or existential, the form of the question *Who* is what matters to me, [...]. Who? Who asks the question who? Where? How? When? Who arrives? It is always the most difficult question, the irreducibility of Who to What, or the place where between who and what the limit trembles [...]

– Jacques Derrida²⁶

The skeptic provokes a response from the sleeping dogmatist, usually a violent one. In the history of (modern) philosophy, one can avoid the skeptic's gnawing doubt in one of three ways, the first two were employed by Kant, the third – by Hegel. The first such defense is to eliminate the skeptic whenever she arrives on the scene, usually done by exposing the skeptic lack of a *coherent* thesis, and having everyone agree that this is enough to delegitimize her claims. This was Kant's attitude towards the radical claims of Pyrrhonian skepticism that attacked all beliefs – rather than merely the metaphysical ones – as illegitimate or untrue, calling for a radical suspension of judgment in *all things*.²⁷ It never suffices, however: for one, skepticism proved itself to be philosophy's chronic condition, and the skeptic keeps coming back despite past/imminent refutations lying in wait for her; secondly, Kant had neglected to recognize that this *totalizing* argument of the Pyrrhonian skeptic is *itself speculative-metaphysical* in

its comprehensive reach/claim (he just couldn't fathom that philosophical gadflies can grow to such monstrous proportions).²⁸

The second defense is, hence, to reorganize or reform the field(s) of knowledge/philosophy: to redraw the boundaries/concepts used, perhaps even cede a certain territory – usually a literal ‘no man’s land’ – to the occasional skeptic. It means redefining the “we” so as to make her “not our problem,” a kind of “cold accommodation” of the skeptic’s interference – *assigning the empty spot to the empty thesis*. This requires ‘critical’ procedures of constant anxiety and vigilance, a constant cutting-off – or uprooting and relocation – of “skeptical tumors,” thus implying, either the progressive-eschatological promise to, *eventually*, “fill all the (fillable) gaps” as it were, or the threat of an all-consuming regression, gradually shrinking philosophy/knowledge until none are left (a procedure whose endgame is known as ‘relativism’/‘nihilism’), or *both*, working a kind of “tug of war” whereby relativist nihilism is stayed (perhaps indefinitely) by an appeal to the philosophical tradition – polishing/reinventing and cross-pollinating *past* epistemological debates – that were yet strong or naïve enough to directly rise to the challenge of this critical Angst (which is also why traditional philosophers show a veritable *phobia* of ‘relativism’). Kant’s more serious and sustained answer to the threats of skepticism consisted, I believe, in the hopes of the eschatology of the first option insofar as he instituted a critical project for metaphysics as a whole and proposed a method for its sure advancement.

Traditionally speaking, however, Pyrrho – whose name brands this Ancient type of radical skepticism – did not *forward* any sort of absolute claim (something which he denounced the dogmatists for), not even a claim like “there is no truth.” This skepticism was self-oriented and highly individualized; it only allowed for ‘positions’ or dogmas begrudgingly – taken to be a weakness, a problem of personal *askesis*, something to work in order to rid *oneself* of (as opposed to ridding *others* of). So long as the skeptic interferes in the philosophical debate, she ceases to be Pyrrhonian in the strict sense of the term/tradition for her very act of interference breaches the solipsistic totality of her wholly consistent (non-)discourse. There seems to be, then, an unsurpassable boundary between the dogmatics that affirm, via public/‘universal’ discourse, some kind of primary or unconditioned truth/validity, and the Pyrrhonian skeptic who denies, via private/‘particular’ discourse, that any such truth could exist. If ever the former arrives at the latter, the dogmatist can always be shown – via the Pyrrhonian “equipollence” argument – that her truth can just as plausibly be negated as it is asserted, while when the latter arrives at the former, she can always be accused of self-contradiction for having arrived at the

realm of dogma in the first place; in other words, the skeptic's "assertion" is seen, by the dogmatist, as a general/universal axiom or 'position' of the "there is no truth" variety.

Kant's solution to this problem was to erect a critical discourse which affirms (and polices) this boundary, settling the score with the *particular* in order to safeguard the *universal* in philosophy, or, more precisely, in metaphysics. Kant's Antinomies of the First Critique, then, identified the tunnels through which a skeptic can infiltrate the philosophical/universal discourse on metaphysics, introducing skeptical antibodies into them so as to keep metaphysics immune to the skeptic interruption. The Antinomies, hence, *use skeptical arguments* so as to mark the *boundaries* of 'objective knowledge,' decidedly leaving the question of the absolute – which could spell an absolute *exposure* to skepticism – *outside*. The trouble was that the only way Kant could do this was to already let the skeptic in via this skeptical *procedure*. In order to arrive at a more "tranquil" metaphysics, Kant had to avail himself to a skeptical method, thus making his transcendental idealism both affirm and deny the skeptic in order to neutralize her threat. It was this method or procedure, and above all the 'Why?' of its use, that Hegel had, later, picked up on and systematized.²⁹

Thus, we come to the third way of defending metaphysics from the skeptic's doubts. On the one hand, Hegel would recognize the importance – indeed the 'spirit' – of the Kantian revolution as Kant's use of the skeptical method so as to defend against skepticism, but, on the other hand, he also realizes that this revolution was employed to designate a *boundary* which – like any other position/dogma – is itself still vulnerable to skepticism.³⁰ Hegel's 'sublation' of Kant's attempts, hence, is to systematize the Kantian method/revolution, the Kantian 'spirit.' He will erect a *system* that *appropriates* (rather than defends against) the skeptic's function as such, making skepticism contingent upon the attaining of a – metaphysical – end or *telos*, all the while leaving the latter as an unspecified 'dogma.'

Rather than keeping the skeptic at bay by reflecting her skepticism on itself (once her procedure was introduced to immunize the philosophical system), Hegel *systematizes* it in/as the very *process* of *Geist*. Hence, if the skeptic needs a 'this' to say 'this could be untrue,' then we can still trap her, choke her in consecutive circles – various positions, various 'this's – where every such statement is tamed, its interruptive "sting" removed, and becomes *qualifiedly* 'correct.' The skeptic's interruption is thus systematically accepted – not just "at the borders," but *in essence*; as if there were a huge machine-organization that has a special door marked "Complaints," and leads straight down into the machine's gas tank.³¹ Hegel understood that the true threat of the skeptic to his (and Kant's) 'spirit' was not the constant negations or nay-saying, but a certain ethical – what I will call below ethico-metaphysical –

freedom that the system sees in/as the contingent or the unnecessary. In Kant's 'formal' solution the skeptics could still plot an overthrow; Hegel's speculative machine was a real solution in this sense: it simply dissolved the problem. The skeptic might be accepted, but only at the price of losing its unique freedom, which Hegel's system abhors like no other: the freedom of the contingent, which, I will show, Hegel cannot help but prejudice, *in the 'spirit' of Christian morality, as the vanity of the particular*.

Hegel is instituting here a counter-insurgency technique in response to a threat that Kant's 'spirit' had already identified as nomadic hordes that leave only destruction in their wake. If Kant *channels* this force but thereby keeps it present at the borders (still full of contingent freedoms that might erupt at any time), Hegel swallows it whole: not a diversion, but a very clever and silent trap. To this tactic, *skepticism's emptiness is its point*: wherever the skeptic arises, there is "something missing," and true knowledge (or knowledge of the true) is postponed until... when? Since there are no external stipulation for the arrival at Absolute Knowledge, and since the latter lives and moves by consuming negations, then AK's most faithful indicator of "fulfillment" is when there are no more historical/contingent *skeptics* left. While Kant's critical philosophy only did this *once* – so as to critique metaphysics once and for all and make it abide by its (critiqued, and thus forever assured) boundaries – Hegel understands that this needs to be done eternally, repetitively, through the feigned, *tactical passivity* of a trap.

Hegel affirms this self-(ful)filling circularity at the end of his *Science of Logic*:

It is in this manner that each step of the *advance* in the process of further determination, while getting away from the indeterminate beginning, is also a *getting back closer* to it; consequently, that what may at first appear to be different, the *retrogressive grounding* of the beginning and the *progressive further determination* of it, run into one another and are the same. The method, [...] thus coils [*schlingt*; from *Schlingen* – hug, embrace; SC] in a circle [*Kreis*] [...]. Whatever might be adduced against it – about the limitations of human cognition; about the need to reflect critically on the instrument of cognition before getting to the fact itself – all these are themselves *presuppositions, concrete determinations* that as such carry with them the demand [*Forderung*] for mediation and grounding. [...] The method of truth also knows that the beginning is incomplete, because it is a beginning; but at the same time it knows that this incompleteness is necessary, because truth is but the coming-to-oneself through the negativity of immediacy. The impatience [*Ungeduld*; we will see shortly that the *Bildung* of Spirit demands patient suffering; SC] that would merely transcend the determinate – be it called beginning, object, the finite, or in whatever other form [i.e. any 'position' (or 'dogma'); SC] it is otherwise taken – in order that one would find oneself immediately in the absolute, has nothing before it as cognition but the empty [*leere*] negative, the abstract infinite.

By virtue of the nature of the method just indicated, the science presents itself as a circle [*Kreis*] that winds around [*geschlungenen*; again from *Schlingen*; SC] itself, where the mediation winds the end back to the beginning which is the simple ground; the circle is thus a circle of circles [*ein Kreis von Kreisen*], for each single member ensouled [*Beseeltes*; inspired, animated; SC] by the method is reflected

into itself so that, in returning to the beginning it is at the same time the beginning of a new member. (Hegel, *Science of Logic*, pp. 750-751/GW 21:251-252 [my underline])

In other words, Hegel realizes that wherever there arises any such closure/totality, the skeptic can return, and so the work/spirit of Kantian metaphysics – ridding itself of the *threat* of skepticism – was still unfulfilled. The systematic metaphysician should not use the skeptic as a *separate* tool, but insert its function into her metaphysical system. This, in a nutshell, is the basis of Hegel’s disdain of traditional epistemology: the ‘subject’ (or its ‘cognition’) cannot use a “tool” to grasp the ‘object,’ for the very tool that assures this grasp undermines both the subject’s autonomy and the object’s ‘reality’ *at every turn*. The *incorporation* of the tool, then, would allow both subjective autonomy and objective reality to coexist; to be absolutely reconciled in *Geist* (whose process/*Bildung* is precisely the obviation of the Subject/Object divide).

As mentioned above, there is a kind of *tactical passivity* involved here that systematizes the skeptic’s passive solipsism (and, particularly, its *force*); once the former’s resistance (to any dogma to-come) is roped-in so as to battle any dogma (that may come) within the *Bildung* of *Geist*.³² Hegel’s system, seen in this context, is a disappearing act, a tactic that brings in the skeptic every time, endorsing her about one issue (the relevant dogma – a ‘this’ – which is the skeptic’s prison/home in the Hegelian system), while suspending the rest of the system’s elaboration until the skeptic had her say about this ‘this.’ She is never allowed to exit her cell to say something about the whole, because, *by definition*, any ‘this’ within the Hegelian system – as given through its *representation* – is not-yet the whole; nothing and no-one can *point* to Absolute Knowledge – only *it* can (and does, constantly) point to itself.

Hegel’s speculative system’s brand of *Bildung* thus *systematizes* Kant’s pedagogical trick. In this manner Hegel can *always-already preempt the skeptic*, for he *gives* her the role of ‘exception’ *in* his system *before* she *takes* exception to his system; thus forcing the skeptic to either take exception to her own exception, or affirm it – but only at the price of her domestication within his speculative system.³³ If Kant had been awoken from his dogmatic slumber by the skeptic’s infiltration, Hegel identified that his critique was driven by the (unconscious) need/spirit to return to this slumber without further interruptions, which is the “demand” of Reason itself. Hegel’s metaphysical system of *Geist* is formed, I maintained, precisely so as to secure this slumber, not *ad finitum*, as in Kant, but – as is befitting a metaphysics of Absolute Knowledge – *ad infinitum*. Skepticism triggers a dream within the absolute slumber of the Hegelian system that cannot allow itself to wake from any single dogma, but “let them run their course;” Hegel’s tactical passivity in this sense is analogous to the dream’s flexibility in

accommodating external interruptions so as to continue sleeping (like incorporating the sound of the alarm, for example). Hegel found a way for Kant to keep sleeping – such was his gift to (as well as his betrayal of) Kant’s project.

In Absolute Knowledge, then, the Subject-Substance totality sleeps on, forever expurgated of interruption, finally – as was its goal all along –, divested of dreams (and, *a fortiori*, of the external/transcendent interruption). The problem of metaphysics as a philosophical *science* was never dogmatism – for the solipsism of the Pyrrhonian was as dogmatic as the abstract universalism of the ‘positive’ philosophers – but dogma. Hegel seems to have found a way to universalize and systematize – and hence absolutize – *a dogmatism without dogma*; to incorporate skeptical solipsism to philosophical absolutism. Any philosophical statement within Hegel’s system is reducible to a representation of something (a dogma), and, (self-)subjecting it to a counter representation (i.e. the representation of an *opposing* dogma), to a shift in representation, towards the representation of some other thing (dogma).

I will elaborate on this maneuver *ad nauseam* when we start to discuss Lévinas’ philosophy of the Other, but for now let us just note that the ‘other’ in Hegel’s system is always already tied – owing its existence/appearance – to *dogma* (i.e. to a determination or *identity*). The Hegelian system rids itself of dogma so as to rid itself of the other, seen here as a kind of a parasite attaching itself – through dogma – to a healthy philosophical Subject.³⁴ The dogmatic structure and aim – the Spirit – of philosophy remain intact in the Hegelian enterprise; it is only Spirit’s susceptibility to external/inessential intrusions/doubts (a susceptibility introduced via assertions of dogma) that is being slowly “weaned off.”

At least such is the promise of – if one has faith in – the Hegelian Absolute. To put this relation to Kant’s philosophy in Hegelian terms, the (Kantian) Understanding (*Verstand*) works its way up the ladder of *Absoluter Geist* by stepping on the dogma-skepticism *unity* (which comprises a rung of the spirit’s ladder), thereby making one more incremental step towards Reason (*Vernunft*). Hegel’s ‘dogmatism without dogma’ is a process beholden to the *telos* of Reason, specifically – and this should already invoke Kant’s critical impetus in our minds – to *the reconciliation of Reason with itself*. In many ways, perhaps too many, this dissertation elaborates the ethico-metaphysical implications of Hegel’s faith vis-à-vis his tactical maneuvers to appropriate the Otherness of betrayal in advance.

3. Spiritualized *Skepsis*: Putting the Negative to Work

[...] Religion is the truth for all men: faith rests on the witness of the spirit, which as witnessing is the spirit in man. This witness – the underlying essence in all humanity – takes, when driven to expound itself, its first definite form under those under those acquired habits of thought which his secular consciousness and intellect otherwise employs. In this way the truth becomes liable to the terms and conditions of finitude in general. This does not prevent the spirit, even in employing sensuous ideas and finite categories of thought, from retaining its content (which as religion is essentially speculative) with a tenacity that does violence [*Gewalt*] to them, and acts *inconsistently* towards them. By this inconsistency it corrects their defects. Nothing easier therefore for the ‘Rationalist’ than to point out contradictions in the exposition of the faith, and then to prepare triumphs for its principle of formal identity. If the spirit yields to this finite reflection, which has usurped the title of reason and philosophy [...] it strips religious truth of its infinity and makes it in reality nought. Religion in that case is completely in the right in guarding herself against such reason and philosophy and treating them as enemies (Hegel, Enc III, §573, p. 303/GW 20:556)

In Hegel’s system, the skeptic becomes *the negative example*, tracing the contours of, and hence *exposing*, the dogmatic devil as such. I do not use this word randomly: there is a radical ex-position of skepticism at play here, which, to recall, is the only argument of the German Idealist “spirit” against the dogmatist. The ‘position’ and Hegel’s own attitude towards it are perhaps visible in their rawest form in his “Positivity” essay, but can be spied throughout his work – especially in its rhetoric, as it will “antipathologically” turns out – in his metaphysically-reconciling disdain of op-position (which every ‘position’ invariably attracts – the Pyrrhonian skeptic’s move). In the case of the early essay, positive religion was understood as both an unnatural (as opposed to the Greek ‘religion of beauty’) and hypocritical (as opposed to, potentially, the “*purely moral*” ‘religion of love’). The Ur-example is the Jewish religion, and Hegel will consistently direct his philosophical and religious critique at the empty positivity of this religion, one in which he sees in the Jewish people’s “slavish obedience to laws not laid down by themselves” (ETW, 69/GW 1:282), a people “whose spirit [is] [...] overwhelmed by a burden of statutory commands” (ETW, 68/GW 1:282)³⁵.

Hegel, in fact, brings the project of “building a metaphysics that is impervious to the threat of the skeptic” to its utmost radicality, a machine that runs on its own polluted byproducts. Hegel’s is a domestication of doubt, begun with Descartes’ method³⁶, and forming the essence of the Hegelian gambit, a move that de-subjectivized the Cartesian move so as to enlist – rather than (subjective) autobiography – a spiritual/philosophical historiography.

Why spiritual? Beyond the allusion to Hegel’s *Geist*, it is spiritual in that it assigns the skeptic a place within the tradition of metaphysics; it provides the skeptic with (a) *reason* and *justification*, a

‘Why?’. If, for example, the Pyrrhonian skeptic takes an assertion and, in a characteristic fashion, employs his maneuver of ‘equipollence’ on it, to Hegel this means that a reconciling *aufhebung* is just around the corner, about to be (per)formed. This *aufhebung* is, then, the usurpation of the skeptic’s ‘why’ – the skeptic does her annoying bit “in order to” effect an *aufhebung* (which is why, in the *Encyclopedia Logic*, Hegel refers to skepticism as the negative side of a positive dialectic).³⁷

In the *Phenomenology of Spirit*, as Michael Forster argues in his *Hegel and Skepticism*, “[Hegel] understands there to be an intimate relation between the divided consciousness of Christianity and the skeptical ideas which precede it historically”³⁸. It is, in fact, this divide – what Hegel’s early theological writings called its ‘positivity’ (the excess baggage that it inherited from its birth in a Jewish context) – that makes (Christian) consciousness ‘unhappy;’ like a lump stuck in its throat, dividing mouth from stomach. The fact that the ‘Unhappy Consciousness’ is fundamentally Christian is, I maintain, not accidental to the “intimacy” of this relation. This Christian consciousness is, as Forster confirms, “an inevitable outcome or realization of this self-contradictory condition of skepticism: the Unhappy Consciousness merely makes explicit, or “brings together” the two sides of, this self-contradiction implicit in Skepticism” (ibid, pp. 78-79). Thus, when Hegel says that “Skepticism’s lack of thought about itself must vanish, because it is in fact *one* consciousness which contains within itself these two modes” (PS §206), this “must,” this necessity, revolves around Hegel’s own appropriation of this consciousness as fundamentally Christian; in other words, the split consciousness must recall – reconcile – itself to the demand of unification, the demand of the One. Hence the need to “bring together” the alienated “sides,” and hence also the stipulation of “oneness” in a “skeptical consciousness” construct. Hence, also, the need to dispose of something inessential, ‘positive;’ the need to sacrifice a certain particularity so that the universal can arrive at its own (spiritual) concreteness. The skeptic’s interruption is hence undercut by this “skeptical consciousness” construct, which functions as the skeptical utterance’s “subjectum” – a basis and a closure – upon which an *Aufhebung* will be cultivated, *ausgebildet*.

In his 1827 *Lectures on the Philosophy of Religion*, the section devoted to Christianity is hailed by Hegel as the beginning of religion’s consummation; the final stage of philosophical science where it would finally reconcile itself (with philosophy and art) and arrive at the full elaboration of its – which is also the world’s – *Geist*.³⁹ “Religion,” Hegel says, “is [...] spirit that realizes itself in consciousness” (LPR, p. 178/87). Indeed, Hegel divides his Lectures on this fundamental pattern. The first stage, or “moment,” is the appearance of religion as a “simple concept” – a mere content without (self-)comprehension, a pure activity/certainty (parallel to the stage of ‘sense certainty’ in the

Phenomenology). It is missing any determination or particularity (ibid, 178): “God,” there, is still “a general, abstract name”, whereas “only the philosophy of religion is the scientific development and cognition of what God is” (LPR, p. 367). The concept of religion itself, for Hegel – its truth – lies in the self-elaboration of God as the absolute truth of all things (ibid, p. 366). The abstract or alienated notion of ‘God’ – as a scientifically under-developed “positivity” – is to be reconciled, given *fullness* in the course of Hegel’s Lectures/Science of religion (ibid, p. 368).

The second moment is the moment that – in the context under discussion here – corresponds to that of the ‘unhappy consciousness.’ Here is where “what is called religion makes its appearance” in successive moments of feeling/certainty, representation and finally thought, and where consciousness recognizes a relationship to God precisely on the basis of the separation from it (the appearance of ‘God’ as distinct – whether felt, represented or thought – must presuppose some distinction between God and the consciousness to which ‘God’ appears as ‘positive’) (ibid, pp. 178-179). The third moment Hegel calls ‘*cultus*,’ which is the moment of ‘sublation’ [*aufhebung*] of the separation between ‘subject’ and God: “Its effect is that as a human being one feels and knows God internally, in one’s own subjectivity, that as this subject one elevates oneself to God, gives oneself the certainty, the pleasure, and the joyfulness of having God in one’s heart, of being united with God”; it is, Hegel continues “devotion in general,” though “what is best known within devotion is the mystical attitude, the *unio mystica*” (ibid, 180).

As is characteristic in the Hegelian system, the second moment – also known as the “antithetical” moment – is the moment of splitting and differentiation. It is where the overdetermined (but still abstract and, as such, unknown, *unfulfilled*) Concept gives way to a long process of (self-)splitting, whereby it knows itself via successive identification with various positions/propositions, yet, precisely because they are *positive* (i.e. determinate [*bestimmte*]), and *opposable*, they seem to be always doomed to fail. Their unhappiness consists precisely in their failure to achieve full self-retrieval and self-recognition – a literal ‘recollection’ (*Erinnerung*) – whereby they can return, triumphant to the embrace of the original Concept, only this time “full” of content and knowledge; a fully “realized” (*wirkliche*) *Geist*. It is this need for fulfillment that drives *Geist* into this process – this (self-)formation or *Bildung* – and it is equally the mystical wholeness, the afore-quoted “*unio mystica*,” that is its reward when it finally arrives at Absolute Knowledge; there is a drive, a burst, on the one hand and an expectation, a path, a “ladder” on the other.

There, in Absolute Knowing, consciousness finally realizes that difference was never its essence, but only its path; or, more precisely, that its spiritual essence was this path insofar as it divested *Geist* of

all residual finitudes, all spurious contents, to arrive at the full – actual and substantial – reality of God. Of course, this spiritual self-knowledge is not called “absolute” for nothing; it (retroactively *and* anticipatorily) justifies and *absolves* the unhappy tribulations of consciousness through its various spiritual moments. Hegel refers to this process here in *pedagogical* terms (*Bildung*; *Entwicklung*):

[...] The child is not yet the rational human being, for it has merely a capacity, is to begin with merely implicit reason, implicit spirit. Only through its formation [*Bildung*] and development [*Entwicklung*] does it first become spirit, for spirit is only genuine spirit insofar as it is the final stage. This is also called self-determination, entering into existence, being for an other, bringing its moments into actual distinction, and spreading itself out. These distinctions are nothing else but the determinations that the concept itself contains within itself” (ibid, p. 182).⁴⁰

This *Bildung*, and its spiritual nature, are famously championed in the text that Hegel intended to introduce his System, namely the *Phenomenology of Spirit*. There Hegel follows the path of Spirit from/by its various representations, showing how at each stage (that is not yet the final stage) they give rise to counter-representations, thus bifurcating that which – as universal and actual – is supposed to be One, if Hegel’s System deserves to be called a Science. Here the famous saying from the *Phenomenology*, that “the True is the Whole,” comes to show the work, the *sacrifice*, it entails.

Hegel’s *Phenomenology* is, hence, an elaboration of method, a demonstration of the eventual futility and insufficiency of any represented position; a way of divesting philosophy – systematically (through a coherent *dynamic* that was missing in Kant’s critical philosophy) – of anything whatsoever which might be exposed to the skeptic’s doubt. That is why the labor of the negative, as Hegel puts it, is a way of doubt and despair – for it has to subject itself to the pain (and ascribe itself to the humility) of letting-go of the vulnerable, finite and unreconciled ‘position’ in order to make actual the Idea of Spirit. Hegel, also quite famously, depicts this process in allusion to the self-sacrifice of God (that is, the God of Christianity, which in this case is God the Son – Jesus Christ), the *via dolorosa* wherein every such position is a station on Jesus’ journey to His final (self-)absolution and (self-)sacrifice. The skeptic is like the Devil: whatever she touches is the ‘evil’ that is to be discarded-through-sublation in the process of Thought’s self-purgation, its self-purification from its ‘configurations’ of Spirit – finite, and thus doomed in the eyes of Absolute Knowledge, literally *unabsolvable* – as it comes to (infinite) Life by consigning the unspiritual to (finite) Death:

[...] because it [Hegel is referring to his own text here] has only phenomenal knowledge [*erscheidene Wissen*] for its object [*Gegenstande*], this exposition seems not to be Science [*Wissenschaft*], free and self-moving in its own peculiar shape [*eigenthümlichen Gestalt*]; yet from this standpoint it can be regarded as the path [*Weg*] of the natural consciousness which presses forward to true knowledge; or

as the way of the Soul [Weg der Seele] which journeys through the series of its own configurations [Gestaltungen] as though they were the stations [Stationen] appointed for it by its own nature, so that it may purify [läutere] itself for the life of the Spirit, and achieve finally, through a completed experience [vollständige Erfahrung] of itself, the awareness [Kenntniß] of what it really is in itself.

Natural consciousness will show itself to be only the Notion of knowledge, or in other words, not to be real [reales] knowledge. But since it directly [unmittelbar] takes itself [sich hält] to be real knowledge [reales Wissen], this path has a negative significance [negative Bedeutung] for it, and what is in fact the realization of the Notion [realisierung des Begriffs], counts for it rather as the loss [Verlust] of its own self; for it does lose [verlieren] its truth on this path. The road can therefore be regarded as the pathway of doubt, or more precisely as the way of despair [Weg der verzweiflung]. [...]

The series of configurations [Gestaltungen] which consciousness goes through along this road is, in reality, the detailed history of the education of consciousness [Geschichte der Bildung des Bewußtseyns] itself to the standpoint of Science. That zealous resolve [Vorsatz] represents [stellt] this education [Bildung] simplistically as something directly [unmittelbar] over and done with in the making of the resolution; but the way of the Soul is the actual fulfilment [wirkliche Ausführung] of the resolution, in contrast to the untruth [gegen diese Unwahrheit] of that view. (Hegel, PS, §§77-78, pp. 49-50/GW 9:55-56 [my underline])

Science, for Hegel, is the self-justifying movement of Spirit's purification. In correspondence and (partial) agreement with Enlightenment ideals, this science will accept no external authority in the achieving of its results; in arriving at the True.⁴¹ We can hear here also a hint of the spirit of the Protestant reformation/revolution, which rejected – though I think, more precisely, *usurped* – the *centralized*, absolute authority of the Catholic Church.⁴² True authority, for Luther and Hegel alike, only comes from the (Holy) Spirit, whose 'Curch' ought not be 'positive' and external but *real* and, hence, internal(ized), invisible.

In the passages above Hegel is directly referring to this problem of authority, accepting the (Lutheran) rejection of external authority, but radicalizing it to a rejection of all finite authority. Thus, even "personal conviction" – insofar as it affirms a human subject as its bearer – will also be denied Absolute/Scientific authority, for it is still based in a finite being and, as such, exposed to the threat of the skeptic (the skeptic can use this finitude against that 'being' to expose its inner-contradiction; e.g. if all reality is 'subjective' then it is contradictory to assume any (external) reality to something like 'object'/'Ding' – what Hegel did to Descartes and Kant). Even though personal conviction is still – in some manner – "more scientific" (for it refuses, as is made quite clear in the characteristically famous Kantian motto for the Enlightenment ('*Sapere aude!* have courage to use your own reason'), following another's authority without making certain for oneself), it is still in danger of espousing something

finite, i.e. of becoming a dogmatism with a dogma (and, hence, with a vulnerability to the threat of the skeptic).

What Hegel says in these lines is all the more important for its underlying assumption. ‘Natural consciousness’ – the phenomenon whose ‘stations’ Hegel will be following throughout his *Phenomenology* – will proceed through a path of deceit and error, and yet, will thereby show the path to Truth. Its failures have a meaning for Hegel, a significance (*Bedeutung*). Its meaning is, of course, what it drives towards, its (self-)direction, which for Hegel is reducible to “immediate” and “real knowledge”.⁴³ Consciousness, in this assumption, has but one goal, one spirit, one driving force, which is indeed consistent with Hegel’s idea of the entire *telos* of philosophy: immediate self knowledge.⁴⁴ It is this that constitutes the entire reason for the Hegelian system of philosophical sciences, and which is the driving force – the life – of the Hegelian *Geist*. God, as Spirit, arrives at self-knowledge through incarnating himself in the finite forms of the world, bringing them all to the (self-)realization that in their finitude they are mere gropings – but not yet graspings, not yet *Begriffs* – of the absolute, whose love is sought and with whom unification is, literally, missed.

Consciousness, as Hegel’s systematic philosophy puts it, wants to arrive at this complete absolution, at full justification. It is not an easy road, for in the passage to the divine the soul has to pass through so many (finite) representations of the (infinite) divine, which, literally, fill and hamper its path to salvation/absolution. These finitudes, then, as ‘phenomenal’ – i.e. not *real* – knowledge, are to be put to doubt, and, eventually, to death. Their value is only negative, a kind of self-divestment of the inessential, whose various ‘manifestations’ offer their deceitful shine (Hegel likes to use *Schein* for these finite appearances) to the stumbling consciousness that carries on its back the Cross of absolute self-knowledge, which is its sacred mission. This process of *Bildung* which we have been tracing here, and hence the process of Spirit’s (self-)purification of the error of the finite and inessential, contains within itself the absolute justification, the entire rhyme-and-reason of this pain and suffering. The Soul needs to divest itself of all zealous resolve, of all immature enthusiasms and dogmatic identifications, and arrive at its Minervian dusk with the proper attitude, one which no longer feels the pain for it has learned – through this *Bildung* – to let go of the inessential. Indeed, for spirit, this inessential is, as Hegel says, ethereal, transparent.

I cannot stress the importance of this point enough, and neither can – in his characteristic honesty – Hegel. This point will help us further on when we look at the ethico-metaphysical implications of *Nietzsche’s* ‘affirmation’ as contrasted with Hegel’s ‘actualization,’ and the violence involved in this

“divestment training” of thought as divulged in Dante’s *Inferno*. We can see this most clearly in the *Lectures on the Philosophy of Religion* again, precisely where Hegel defends himself from being taken for a pantheist. The latter, Hegel maintains, is, literally engaged in an abstract practice of affirming everything as essential – both phenomenal and real knowledge. This abstractly-affirmative view is, according to Hegel, decidedly *unspiritual*:

[...] The usual representation of pantheism derives from the practice of focusing on the abstract unity rather than the spiritual unity, and from entirely forgetting that – in a religious representation in which only the substance or the One has the value of genuine actuality – individual things, in this very contrast with the One, have disappeared and no actuality is ascribed to them. (LPR, p. 376)

Pantheistic affirmation is, indeed, all embracing, but this “all” is – when abstract/alienated – still an empty concept, given from the standpoint of a wholly abstract(ed) Subject, never resolving to self-actualize so as to become real and concrete (which for Hegel is an essential condition(ing) of absolute spirit, of knowledge and philosophy arriving at their absolute justification). The *Bildung* of *Geist* is not an easy task, but one which is full of doubt, despair; a “labor of the negative.” Such labor is not for the reclusive, lazy or the faint of heart. Such abstract subjectivity is also not ready, not reconciled to, this suffering anguish, and will all-too-easily affirm any and all appearance(s) as true, as, to be precise, *absolutely legitimate*. Because refusing to become substantial in this manner, it fails to recognize that this knowledge – as merely phenomenal (not yet purified by the ‘*Arbeit des Negativen*’) – remains (absolutely) subjective and thus utterly devoid of any real ‘life,’ of any (divine) *Substance*:

[...] the living Substance is being which is in truth *Subject*, or, what is the same, is in truth actual [*wirklich*] only in so far as it is the movement of positing [*Setzen*] itself, or is the mediation of its self-othering with itself [*Vermittlung des sich anders mit sich selbst*]. This Substance is, as Subject, pure, *simple negativity* [*einfache Negativität*], and is for this very reason the bifurcation of the simple; it is the doubling which sets up opposition [*entgegensetzende*], and then again the negation of this indifferent diversity [*gleichgültigen Verschiedenheit*] and of its antithesis [the immediate simplicity]. Only this self-restoring sameness, or this reflection in otherness [*Andersseyn*] within itself [...] is the True [*Wahre*]. It is the process of its own becoming, the circle [*Kreis*] that presupposes its end as its goal [*Zweck*], having its end [*Ende*] also as its beginning [*Anfange*]; and only by being worked out [*Ausführung* – achieved, fulfilled; SC] to its end, is it actual.

Thus the life of God and divine cognition [*göttliche Erkennen*] may well be spoken of as a disporting of Love with itself [*Spielen der Liebe mit sich selbst*]; but this idea sinks [*sinkt*] into mere edification [*Erbanlichkeit*], and even insipidity, if it lacks the seriousness [*Ernst*], the suffering [*Schmerz*], the patience [*Geduld*], and the labour of the negative [*Arbeit des Negativen*].” (PS, Preface, §§18-19, p. 10/GW 9:18 [my underline])

Here we finally arrive at what will be elaborated hence as the crux of my ‘antipathology,’ specifically as an offering, or gift, to the Hegelian system.⁴⁵ As a system built around the metaphysical assumption that thought be treated Reason’s reconciliation with itself – a project, to recall, shared by the ‘Kantian spirit’ – we are here confronted, not only by what Hegel calls an ‘absolute command,’ but also *a wholly self-justified metaphysical blindness*. The One, as Absolute, cannot even see the unactual-ized/-izable *particular*. The Spirit has to move through these ‘phenomenal objects,’ and be, literally, *punished* upon every attachment to them. The process of *Bildung* as a spiritual purification of consciousness arrives at its *telos* there where “individual things” – as mere inessential contingencies – have disappeared. Love, as the underlying *condition* of *Geist*, the unification that underwrites it in its entirety, may “play with itself” (*Spielen mit sich selbst*) through these phenomenal inessentials, but its implicit absolute knowledge already signals – through *pain*, of course – that this is merely a “*Spiel*” or illusion (see below in the quote from LPR).

Such is the (hard) “truth for all men” which is divulged in/through religion to philosophy (so that the latter can reach its final “moment”). One only needs to allow for true faith (in spirit) to come forth; to hold on to this faith despite the pain and work of the negative, and regardless of its various complaints or cries. To those, *as spiritual*, the self-knowing knower *ought to be* immune. This is not merely a “spiritual exercise” of “God with itself,” but is ethico-metaphysical⁴⁶ in the strongest sense of the term – it pertains to humans and human faith; and, most importantly, to *violence* and the *justification of violence towards all that is deemed spiritually ‘inessential:*’

[...] faith rests on the witness of the spirit, which as witnessing is the spirit in man. This witness – the underlying essence in all humanity – takes, when driven to expound itself, its first definite form under those under those acquired habits of thought which his secular consciousness and intellect otherwise employs. In this way the truth becomes liable to the terms and conditions of finitude in general. This does not prevent the spirit, even in employing sensuous ideas and finite categories of thought, from retaining its content (which as religion is essentially speculative) with a tenacity that does violence [Gewalt] to them, and acts *inconsistently* towards them. By this inconsistency it corrects [korrigiert] their defects [Mangelhafte]. (Enc III, §573/GW 20:556 [my underline])

Such is the “disporting” of “faithful love,” of the Hegelian, metaphysical concept of reconciliation. Retaining the speculative content, *Geist* always already accepts the eventual disappearance of the inessential.⁴⁷ This inessential, as particularity, has no room in Hegel’s metaphysical system, except as the counterforce that the spirit’s foot needs in order to ascend its ladder to (self-)absolution. Hegel recognizes that this is a violence (*Gewalt*), that the attachment to these inessentials can only be “cured” through tenacious, unremitting and painful, work. However, for Hegel this violence is for the highest

good, the good of arriving at what is truly important, what is truly essential. All of the ‘*Mängel*’ – the lacks, the “defects” of ‘fullness’ – need to be, literally, sorted *out*. Philosophy, after all, deals in the concrete universal (and Hegel makes it a point to emphasize this on many occasions).

To make my final point about the transparency of this violence, I will continue the quote given earlier, in which Hegel distinguishes his own religion/philosophy from being abstract ‘pantheism:’

[...] all distinctions remain enclosed within the universal. It is also not an inert, abstract universal, however, but rather the absolute womb or the infinite fountainhead out of which everything emerges, into which everything returns, and in which it is eternally maintained. The basic determination is therefore the definition of God as substance. The universal therefore never steps forth out of this aether [*Äther*] of equality [*Gleichheit*] with itself and of presence to itself. As this universal, God can never come to the point of being a fact along with an other whose subsistence is more than a play of illusion [*Spiel des Scheins*]. Compared with this pure unity and clear transparency [*Durchsichtigkeit*], matter is nothing impenetrable, and spirit or the I does not have the rigidity to possess true substantiality [*wahrhafte Substantialität*] on its own account (LPR, p. 374/272 [my underline])

The ‘aether’ of the universal’s “equality with itself” – which is, quite literally, its spiritual *equanimity* in the face of the particular/inessential (and its complaints/demands/cries-of-pain)⁴⁸ – allows it to hold to its own spiritual engine, the engine of speculative thought. Looking ahead, it not even see that which it passes through; the rungs of the ladder that are stepped on in this, wholly-justified, ascent. If there had been a pain, if had been a violence – and Hegel’s characteristic honesty not only admits, but *necessitates* this – they were all, to use the words of St. Ignatius, ‘*ad maiorem Dei gloriam inque hominum salutem*’ (“to the greater glory of God and the salvation of humanity”).

The *strife* that is depicted here, it is important to note, is only *recognized* insofar as it is caused by the inessential, the unspiritual. That which has no “substantiality,” then, has no reason to protest this violence, nor, for that matter, will it be ever recognized as such. Whereas the abstract universal subsumes the particular under an empty heading – a mere ‘name,’ an empty, all-encompassing concept that knows not what it is, *actually*, comprehending – this concrete, spiritual(ized) universal instead knows its content and worth, and proceeds through all inessential phenomena as so many “plays of illusion.” Spirit’s drive to a *unio mystica* with itself as the essence of (its) experience [*Erfahrung*], its Love and Life, will have always already authorized its capacity to violently “correct” the content and meaning of *human* experience; a violence that, seen from the standpoint of Love, is a mere ‘sport.’ Spirit – as concretized in human faith/knowledge, as ‘*Science*’ – must not take these demands of ‘positivity’

too seriously, *but this “must not” is itself of the utmost seriousness [Ernst]* – it wields absolute authority in Hegel’s metaphysical Science.

This is summarized quite succinctly in Hegel’s *Phenomenology*; there, we – scientific philosophers – need to achieve this spiritual “seeing” – which is a seeing-through (*durch-sehen*; from *Durchsichtigkeit* – transparency) all (op)positions – and achieve, not to say own, philosophy as Science; claim a right both on its ‘Ground’ (as universal presupposition) and its ‘Soil’ (as actual(izing its) demand/claim):

[...] *Pure* self-recognition in absolute otherness, this Aether as such, is the ground and soil [*Grund und Boden*] of Science or *knowledge in general*. The beginning of philosophy makes the presupposition [Voraussetzung] or claim [Forderung] that consciousness should find itself [sich finde; closest to the French ‘se trouve’; SC] in this element. But this element itself has its own perfection [*Vollendung* – also consummation (*voll*=full); SC] and transparency [*Durchsichtigkeit*] only through the movement of its becoming. It is pure spirituality [*reine Geistigkeit*] as the universal [*das Allgemeine*] that has the manner [*Weise*] of simple immediacy [*einfachen Unmittelbarkeit*]. This simple being [Einfache], in its existence [Existenz], is the soil [Boden], it is thinking which has its being in Spirit alone. Because this element, this immediacy of Spirit, is the very substance [Substanz] of Spirit, it is the transfigured essence [verklärte Wesenheit – Klärung also meaning “cleared” (resolved and done-with), as in ‘clearing a security-checkpoint’; *verklärung* also means ‘whitewashing’ something; also cf. the epigraph to this chapter to see the word’s clear religious allusion to Christ; SC], reflection which is itself simple, and which is for itself immediacy as such, being that is reflected into itself. Science on its part requires [verlangt – also craves; desires; SC] that self-consciousness should have raised itself [sich erhoben] into this Aether in order to be able to live – knowing and living – with Science and in Science. Conversely, the individual [Individuum] has the right [Recht] to demand [fordern] that Science should at least provide him with the ladder [Leiter] to this standpoint [...].” (PS, §26 p. 14/GW 9:22-23 [translation modified; my underline])

Perhaps it will not strain the Hegelian analogy too much if we say here that the ladder to *absolutes Wissen* rests on its lower point on the *Grund* and arrives at its highest point to the *Boden*. As in Kafka’s *Der Process*, Hegel’s ladder is itself its own verdict or result; the defendant/individual is “cleared” one she has gone through a radical transfiguration that separated her illusions from her essence. The former were merely fodder to the ladder. The defendant only has the right to be put on these tracks that allow for her self-elevation to the Aether – there where abstract presuppositions gain the absolute necessity of true soil, a purified realm of simple immediacy where all differences are merely internal and reconciled to, and with, the Whole. Even though not (yet) the (self-)consciousness of God, the scientific philosopher’s version of absolute knowledge is still “aetherial,” still risen to where immediate transparency rules.

This image that Hegel offers – the *ver-klärung* of *Geist* – is more radical than the *Auf-klärung* that the Enlightenment had to offer; for Hegel does not appeal to a light from above (*auf*), and will not *keep himself* – as scientific philosopher – *beholden* to it.⁴⁹ This position is too static and subservient; it lacks the freedom of the true spirit, that is, its full *incarnation* (what Hegel ‘scientifically’ calls ‘*Wirklichkeit*’). Hegel’s *verklärung* – as the German ‘ver’ indicates – will *traverse (those) bounds*: its clarity comes from within, and *the light is not reflected off the (objects in) world but instead shines from within it/them*. That is why Plato’s ‘cave’ was still too “Enlightened” a metaphor: Hegel is after a more radical Enlightenment, one which can only arrive when transparency – an *uninhibited light* – replaces what he denigrates in his *Phenomenology* as the ‘spurious infinite’ or the abstract absolute: the night in which all cows are black (even if the Enlightenment would claim that this ‘night’ – this *Ding an sich* – is the source of the light of human *Vernunft*, Hegel will only grant it the secondary, reflective light of *Verstand*).⁵⁰ Hegel wants all cows to be pure essences, transparent and lucid with zero refraction; zero *resistance* to the light.

This search for truth/knowledge is for Hegel, explicitly, a *religious war*. We will follow this war more systematically throughout this dissertation, but for now allow me to leave the following passage to reverberate and link – to re-bind (*re-ligare*) – the themes (and maneuvers) discussed up to now. It is a passage from Hegel’s Foreword to his System’s *Logic*, not from any explicitly religious text; and it is precisely this *religiosity of method* that I wish to highlight in the following chapters:

[...] the spiritual, fully thoughtful, and scientific expansion [*die geistige, vollends dedenke und wissenschaftliche Expansion*] would upset, and even forbid or wipe out, the self-conceit [*Eigendünkel*] of [in this context, the Christian dogmatists’; SC] subjective boasting [*subjectiven Pochens*] which relies on the spiritless [*geistlose*] and fruitless assurance – rich only in evil fruits [*bösen Früchten*] – that they are in possession [*Besitz*] of Christianity, and have it exclusively for their very own. – In the scriptures, the ‘spiritual expansion’ that I mentioned is distinguished from mere ‘faith’ [*bloßen Glauben*] [...]. Faith only comes to be truth through its expansion. [...] Christ spoke here about the Spirit which they that believed in him should [*sollten*] receive; for the Holy Spirit was not yet there, because Jesus was not yet glorified [*noch nicht verklärt*]. The still unglorified shape [*unverklärte Gestalt*] of Christ [...] is the immediate object [*unmittelbare Gegenstand*] of the faith. In this [historical] presence Christ himself revealed his external nature to his disciples [...]. He revealed his own vocation to reconcile [*Versöhnung*] God with himself, and man with him – the order [*ordnung*] of salvation [*Heil*] and the doctrine of ethics [*Sitten*]. And the faith that the disciples had in him [...]. [...] is declared to be only the beginning and the fundamental condition [*bedingende Grundlage*] for what was still incomplete [*Unvollendete erklärt*]. Those who believed in that way still did not have the Spirit [...]. [...] and that certainty, being itself only subjective, brings forth only the subjective fruit of formal assurances, and thereby further that of pride [*Hochmuths*], calumny [*Verunglimpfung*], and anathema [*Verdammung*]. In

defiance of Scripture, [the aforementioned dogmatists] hold fast only to the certainty, and against the spirit [gegen den Geist], which is the expansion of cognition [Expansion der Erkenntniß], and only then [erst] the truth [Wahrheit]. (Hegel, Enc I, pp. 19-20/ GW 20:29-30 [my underline])

4. The Cult(ure) of Absolute Knowledge: Reconciliation in the Extreme

This radicalization of Enlightenment, the securing of its essence and spirit, requires a certain steadfastness, a kind of courage. The *telos* of absolute knowledge might seem endless, and yet in the process of attaining it, ‘we’ (the scientific philosophers that is) can finally arrive at more clarity of vision, more transparency of thought and (self-)recognition. All it takes is for Spirit to rid itself of various resistances and disturbances: instead of latching onto them as if they were absolute truth, it needs to recognize that these ‘positions’ – as such – are not unassailable; as attractive as they might seem, *Geist* needs to learn to let them go, despairing of their (false) promises. These partial truths, these contingencies of thought, must be brought to their necessity and fullness in the actualized Concept (*Begriff*); only there will they finally be reconciled. Spirit, then, in order to arrive at this absolution of (its self-)knowledge – the reconciliation of Reason with itself – must press onwards; it must, in short, have faith in its advance. *Bildung* is the testing of this faith by the Spirit’s experience (*Erfahrung*), the painful (but necessary) process of its actualization (*Wirklichkeit*). It is, in essence, akin to a religious *praxis*.

Philosophy, as Hegel often says, is always already religious; indeed, as I am trying to show, it is a faith that, as inherently Christian, commands (*Gebot*) a painful sacrifice, a courage, as an absolute necessity of becoming *Science*. If *Geist* ‘recognizes’ something, it is only its own essence – ‘the other in the/its self/same’ – while the rest will, by this absolute *fiat*, be merely unrecognizable difficulty or lack, a retardation of its necessary movement. The salvation of Man(kind) will arrive when it had absolved itself of the illusory finite – especially the finite posing as the infinite, what Hegel often calls the “bad infinite” (*die Schlechte Unendlichkeit*) – and attain the reconciliation of knowledge and faith *vis-à-vis* God: no longer accepting ‘God’ upon mere authority or empty ‘name,’ and no more supposing that experience/existence is wholly bereft of an absolute. Salvation (L. *salvare*) here is the *work* of absolution (L. *ab-solvere*), *belief/faith’s* loosening-from the bad/spurious (‘*schlechte*’) authority wielded by finite impostors (clergy; dogmatists; skeptics); those can only bespeak a partial – and therefore false/’bad’ – infinity.

As the agent of doubt, the skeptic is brought in to provide some “expert advice” on how best to identify and neutralize such “imposture” – much like a thief is consulted on how best to defend against theft – in the service of a system that will, eventually, know no such intrusions on its sovereignty (the coherent self-knowledge that is its absolute goal and *raison d’être*). From the Wholeness of AK, the skeptic will no longer be seen as such, for she will have been preemptively negated, or, more precisely, *used up* (as a “moment” in a set narrative). As a staunch advocate of the workable, the *wirkliche*/actual – and known despiser of the abstract and reclusive (here again we see the germs of the Catholic-Protestant divide) – Hegel’s system cannot know that it had attained absolute knowledge except when all such finite interruptions are no longer arrive (we will follow the serious ethico-metaphysical implications of this move throughout). The transparency in which this System or Science sees itself and its world (no distinction there), is only as absolute as it provides a complete, *eternally uninterrupted* Virtual Reality environment: when the spiritual program had already been fully developed and set, and no glitches, no interferences to the system – that are not already in the system – are any longer felt or perceived.

The reconciliation that the true faith provides, however, does in fact make certain demands on the believer – requires certain conditions – for it to come (or *as it comes*) about. In a characteristically Hegelian manner, for AK to be allowed to fulfill itself a certain practice/worship is required, something which Hegel refers to as religion’s ‘*cultus*.’ In his 1824 *Lectures on the Philosophy of Religion*, Hegel writes the following:

The standpoint of religion is this: that reconciliation [*Versöhnung*] is achieved [*vollbracht*; *voll*=full; SC] in and for itself absolutely; it is accomplished in God as the absolute unity [*absoluten Einheit*]. I am to [*Ich soll*; *soll* denotes an ethical ‘ought’; SC] make myself such that the spirit dwells in me, that I should be spiritual [*geistige*]. This is opposed to the merely moral standpoint of Kant and Fichte, according to which the good must first be brought about and realized within [this was transcendental idealism’s ‘subjectivism’ in Hegel’s view; SC] – as though it were not already there in and for itself [...]. The sphere of my moral activity is actually a limited [*beschränkter*; from *schrinken*: shrunk, shying-away] one. In religion the good [*das Gute*] is found in and for itself: God is good and reconciliation [*Versöhnung*] is achieved absolutely and in and for itself; the divine unity of the spiritual and the natural worlds is presupposed (and the particular self-consciousness belongs to the latter [i.e. the ‘natural’]). The question is only about me: I have to rid [*abtun*; from *abtuend*: to dismiss, discount; SC] myself of my subjectivity [*Subjectivität*], do my share and play my part [*meinen Anteil*] in this good, in this work [*Werke*], which is accomplished [*vollbringt*: fulfilled (*voll*: full); SC] eternally and divinely, of itself. On this view the highest good [*höchste Gut*] is no mere prescription [like in Kant (and Fichte)] but eternal truth, divine power and truth [*göttliche Macht und Wahrheit*], on which account it is the business of the singular subject to realize itself through the negation of its singularity [*Einzelheit*].

The cultus thus contains a negative moment, but in such a way that it is a practical activity of the subject upon itself, namely to surrender [auszugeben] and let go [entlassen] its subjectivity. This moment of renunciation [Entsagung; a term also used to depict Christian asceticism; SC] occurs concretely in positive religion in the shape of sacrifices [Opfern]; admittedly the negation is more concerned with externals [Äußere] here, but **there is an essential reference to the inner [Innere] life** [this is where ‘subjectivity’ needs to be “let go” (*entlassen*); SC], as the inner life comes increasingly to the fore in confession, purification, repentance, and so on. (LPR I (1824), pp. 349-350/249-250 [my emphasis in underline and bold])⁵¹

As a living exponent of divine knowledge, Reason must be allowed to perform its negations, must “descend,” as it were, to the realm of the ‘positive,’ much like God, so Hegel, had to descend into human form (Jesus as the incarnation, the en-fleshment or actualization, of the Divine). This, in metaphysical terms, comprehends Hegel’s metaphysical treatment of history, art, philosophy – everything. For Hegel’s philosophical Christianity, such “descending so as to ascend” is *best* exemplified or enacted in the *cultus* of the Christian religion. As we’ve seen, in order to raise itself to the ‘Aether’ of transparency that is (in) *absolute Wissen*, consciousness – which here perfectly parallels the human believer – must divest itself of contingencies and illusions by “going into them” and exploding them from within, as it were..

This divestment is, I will show, a fundamental ethico-metaphysical condition of AK. It sets a limit to Law, to any sort of prescription that ‘I’ need to enact – or accept such enactment from without – on myself. This *Bildung* of religion, as a necessary stage on the cusp of Absolute Knowledge, is more radical than morality for it allows no such absolute command to... well... take the place of *another* absolute command (only this time – forged in the fiery crucible of the skeptic’s weapons – an unassailable one; one that comes *from within* the *Geist* of philosophical science itself, rather than an external imposition on it):

The knowledge of Spirit is the highest [*börste*] and hardest [*schwerste*], just because it is the most concrete [*concreteste*] of sciences. The significance of that absolute commandment [*absolute Gebot*], Know thyself [*Erkenne dich selbst*] [...] is not to promote mere self-knowledge in respect of the particular [*particulären*] capacities, character, propensities and foibles of the single self. The knowledge it commands means that of man’s genuine reality [*Wahrhaften des Menschen*] – of what is essentially and ultimately true and real – of Spirit as the true and essential being. (*Enc I*, §377, p. 1/GW 20:379 [translation modified; my emphasis in bold, Hegel’s in italics])

Hence, what in the previous quote Hegel calls “the business of the singular subject” is here differentiated, in the second quote, from a mere development of the capacities of a particular self. And yet, the language of the “*ich soll*” from the previous quote, and the language of the “*absolute Gebot*” that bears on the “*Wahrhaften des Menschen*” from the second, point to an interesting ‘*ich*’ in Hegel, an

‘*ich*’ that cannot, and should not, be identified with a particular self, a self whose very contingencies and idiosyncrasies it is the duty of the ‘*ich*’ of the previous quote to expurgate. As religion stands – in Hegel’s *Phenomenology* as in his *Encyclopedia* – side by side with philosophy, it commands an ‘*ich*’ that bears on Man(kind) as such, on the ‘*Menschen*’ that Hegel mentions in the quote above. This ‘*ich*’ that is given-over to the absolute commandment of *Geist* – that is the subject and substance of *Bildung* in its process of self-concretization (and, hence, of self-divestment of particularities and contingencies) – is precisely, I would claim, that famous ‘*ich*’ from the *Phenomenology of Spirit*; the transcending of the particular ‘*I*’:

[...] With this, we already have before us the Notion of Spirit. What still ties ahead for consciousness is the experience of what Spirit is – this absolute substance which is the unity of the different independent self-consciousnesses which, in their opposition, enjoy perfect freedom and independence: ‘I’ that is ‘We’ and ‘We’ that is ‘I’ [*Ich, das Wir, und Wir, das Ich ist*]. It is in self-consciousness, in the Notion of Spirit, that consciousness first finds its turning-point [*Wendungspunkt*], where it leaves behind it the colorful show [*Scheine*] of the sensuous here-and-now and the empty [*leeren*] night of the supersensible beyond, and steps out into the spiritual daylight [*geistigen Tag*] of the present. (PS, §177, pp. 110-111/GW 9:108-109 [translation modified, my underline])

It is true that this quote is given in a still early part of Hegel’s system,⁵² but it is of crucial relevance here for two related reasons: the first is that here is the decisive, primary turning-point (as Hegel himself calls it), that *takes the ‘I’ out of its particularity*, out of its (sense-)certainty, and bringing it to conceive of itself for the first time as *spiritual* – arriving, for the first time, at the stage of its ‘releasement’ into the realm of actual(ized) freedom; second, this stage in the movement of *Geist* is the entering of the self-conscious subject into what Hegel calls *Sittlichkeit*, ‘ethical life.’ It is here that man first recognizes relations with others like himself, and where his quest for self-knowledge leaves the solipsistic confines of the certainty that this or that particular sense offered him, and enters into the wider world of truth as (the possibility of) actualized universal knowledge. In short, we have here both a radical transformation of the spiritual character (and, of course, purpose) of the ‘I,’ and the entry of this ‘I’ into an *ekklesia* of (potentially absolute) knowledge.⁵³

In other words, the price of becoming a “spiritual subject” in Hegel’s metaphysics – and this is said not in abstraction, but in the concreteness which acknowledges an ethical demand and thus proceeds to manifest itself in worldly behavior (communal or ecclesiastical – ‘*Sittlich*’ – as they may be) demands that I learn to be, like spirit, able to let go of my singularity, to understand that the whole of *Geist* – as absolute unity (*absoluten Einheit*) – is my only goal, my absolute commandment. This demands a

sacrifice, a personal pain that I am to follow as *Geist* (and Jesus) followed the 12 Stations of the Cross – and yet this suffering is made, literally, for the greatest Good (*höchsten Gut*). And it is to this end that ‘I’ will employ all subsequent skepticism that may arise in the future, keeping this ‘end,’ in principle, out of the reach of the skeptic, *uninterruptable*.

This is why and how, in a nutshell, the cult(ure) of absolute knowledge – as “spiritual *Bildung*” – justifies its (self-)violence. Of course, since the ‘I’ is now a ‘we,’ “we” can no longer talk about a radically personal/singular violence, nor of a corresponding responsibility towards it, since it relies for its justification on a specific community of knowledge whose violence is justified from within as violence in the name of God and for the glory of God. This scientific community, given to the absolute command of its immanent God, will know its self (and eventually see all other(s) *in its self*), in view of the highest imaginable Good. So long as no (internal) problem arises in this community’s (self-)conception, it can proceed with its spiritual life without any radical disturbances and subject whatever (and whomever) it approaches with the same loving reconciliation to which it subjects itself. As its *Bildung* progresses, contingencies and singularities will be allowed to die, “run their natural course” perhaps, and never treated as anything substantial because nothing substantial is recognized within them.

The following passage from Hegel’s *Encyclopaedia Philosophy of Nature* depicts with brutal clarity how a member in such a ‘community’ sees (and enacts) this divine mission. It is telling, not only of the *Begriff*’s violence, but of this violence’s transparency, its ceasing to be seen as such, that is, *as a problem*. To be sure, this blindness is well *earned* – through much pain and suffering and despair, through much self-sacrifice and labor – which in effect contributes to its “aetherial” transparency: it is, alas, anything but a gratuitous violence – it is the violence of ‘Reason’.⁵⁴ This divine mission limits any and all morality to its own constrained (“shrunk”) sphere of right, while wielding *absolute right* in the comprehensiveness of its embrace. The circles that it – the absolute commandment to know – coils around its (objective *and* subjective) encounters, will see in them only the (potential of) Truth.

Only then, with this absolute telos in sight, will ‘Spirit’ (and its members/agents) be able to put the contingent nonsense – whose ability to resist, to be heard as protesting/problematising diminishes from each circle to the next – in perspective, knowing (with self-absolution) that it is “not the end of the world”; or, at least, not the world that matters (the world that is *wirkliche*, actual, True). While ‘I’ might have had reservations and recoiled from this violence – just as ‘I’ might recoil from sacrificing its own protective membrane (of a contingent ‘self’) in a “we” – the “we” had already, deliberately and meticulously (i.e., *systematically*) rid itself of the ability to treat of this pain as anything other than the

necessary suffering of a divinely ordained *Bildung*. This is how the pain – mine and others’ – becomes transparent; this is how Hegel could present it as a triumph, without flinching.

This passage has Hegel depict his systematic approach to deriving Truth from phenomena (i.e. to subtract their mere *Schein*) as Menelaus’ struggle with Proteus (the shape-shifter), after which I will bring a fuller quotation from the mythological narrative upon which Hegel based this analogy. It is in this context that I would like to introduce Hegel’s approach to questions of violence and their ethical meaning; for, while treating supposedly only of ‘Nature’ it nevertheless betrays the same structure that repeats itself throughout Hegel’s System (as I will show more thoroughly in the coming chapters):

What is Nature? It remains a problem. When we see Nature’s processes and transformations [*Verwandlungen*] we want [*wollen wir*] to grasp [*erfassen*: determine, include, encompass/embrace; SC] its simple essence [*einfaches Wesen*], to compel [*nötigen*: coerce (from ‘*Not*’: necessity; e.g. *Notwendigkeit*); bring to/under the force of ‘necessity’; SC] this Proteus to cease [*einzustellen*: come to a halt; adjust/justify itself (*einstellen*) towards (*zu*); *ein*: one; *stellen*: placement, positioning – to hold (*itself in/to its*) single position; SC] its transformations [*Verwandlungen*] and show [*zeigen*] itself to us and declare itself [*auszusprechen; aus-sprechen*: speak-out; SC] to us; so that it may not present us with a mere variety [*bloß vielfache: multiple*] of ever new forms, but in simple fashion [*einfache Weise; einfache: single*, one-way, short, simple; SC] bring to consciousness in language what it is.

– G. W. F. Hegel⁵⁵

[...] Now as soon as you see him [...], then let your hearts be filled with strength [*κάρτος*] and courage [*βίη*: *bodily force* (*bia/bios*; *βίος in Attic Law also meant rape*); SC], and hold [*ἔχειν*; from *ἔχω*: to have/hold, also to check/limit (also to “have” a woman (as lover/husband); SC] him there despite his striving [*μεμαῶτα*; also yearning; SC] and struggling [*ἑσσύμενον*; also: eager/furious yearning; SC] to escape. For try he will, and will assume all shapes of all things [*γινόμενος*: come into being; become, be born (*γέννα*: birth); SC] that move upon the earth, and of water, and of wondrous blazing fire. Yet hold [*ἔχέμεν*; from *ἔχω* again; SC] him unflinchingly [*ἀστεμφέως*: stiffly (also said in relation to traps); SC] and grip him [*πιέζειν*; squeeze, bear down on with one’s weight, exhaust; SC] more tightly still. But when at length [*ἀλλ’ ὅτε*: at an other time (*ἄλλος*: other; *ὅτε*: at the time when); SC] on his own [*αὐτός*] he speaks [*ἀνείρηται ἐπέεσσι; ἀνείρηται*: to entreat with a question; ἐπέεσσι – from *ἔπος* (*epos*): godly word, song; SC] [...], then, hero [*ἥρω*], cease [*σχέσθαι*; from *ἔχω* again] from force [*βίης*], and set free [*λῶσαι*; also ‘solve’; (from Proto-Indo-European root **s(w)e-leu*: *leu*- “to loosen, divide, cut apart, untie, separate;” this is also the origin of the Latin ‘solvere’); SC] the old man, and ask.

– Homer’s *Odyssey*⁵⁶

In the quote above we see the scientific philosopher – the ‘we’ which Hegel’s *Phenomenology* keeps addressing – arriving at an experience (of ‘Nature’) that is rife with contradictions and contingencies. He gives Nature the essence of Proteus, the Greek mythological god of the seas

(Poseidon's "right hand man"), whose extensive knowledge is unlimited by space and time (he knows everything – past, present and future – everywhere), but who is notoriously reluctant to divulge it. When asked – he refuses to answer. When caught, he changes shapes ceaselessly, making its captor either despair of his ever attaining an 'original' form again (and answer the questions put to him), or run away in fear of this or that illusory shape.

Menelaus King of Sparta, trying to return to his native country, is foiled by the gods who are angry at him for his part in the sacking of Troy. Stuck in Egypt, he had almost despaired from hope when he comes across Eidothea, the estranged daughter of Proteus. She berates Menelaus for being such a "loser" ("art thou of thine own will remiss, and hast pleasure in suffering woes?", ln. 372), and proceeds to offer her assistance to capture her father, "the unerring old man of the sea, immortal Proteus of Egypt" (ibid, ln. 384-385). Thus, Eidothea reveals how to first locate Proteus, and then *how to hold onto him*.

The above quote I provided is so replete with the original Greek for it highlights precisely what kind of approach – what kind of violence – will Proteus yield to. Proteus, as it turns out, needs to be controlled and contained *before he is addressed*. The knowledge he has hides behind endless facades, which span everything under the sky, animate and inanimate alike. The only way to extract the truth from this quintessential dissimulator, Eidothea tells Menelaus, is holding (*ekhou*) onto him using *both* power (*kratos*) and force (*bia*). Menelaus is to hold onto Proteus throughout the latter's transformations in a particular kind of stiff grip; squeezing Proteus under his own weight, Menelaus is to apply pressure on Proteus *from all sides*, and thus exhaust his – desperate – desire to escape.

While *kratos* is a word used for political relations, the addition of *bia* here – a word with in Attic law is used also to depict rape, a kind of violent coercion – is informative here, suggesting that Hegel's choice of this story is far from incidental: legitimate force (*kratos*) is *internal*, a courage or conviction of the heart that precludes despairing of the process, or fleeing from it in fear. The force is external, a means, both justified and enabled by the heart's remaining firm.⁵⁷ Only then will Proteus start, literally, singing (ἐπέεσσι); issuing an entreating question of Menelaus, and allow Menelaus to inquire into the Truth (in this case, how he can return back to Sparta and what has happened there in his absence). Thus the setting free (*lousai*) of Proteus – after the measured/controlled violence had been perpetrated against him – provides Menelaus with the knowledge that will allow him to find his way back home and back at his seat of power.

This qualified freedom of Geist in Nature is precisely the truth that Hegel is after. The *Bildung* he is describing prescribes knowledge to be self-positing and unassailable, a knowledge of essence and

necessity whereby all false appearances are “allowed” to come and go until a stable, trustworthy one comes forth. This is what is meant by Hegel’s *Begriff*: it is a systematic constraint, a successively tightening “grasp” that knows to stop only when the end/goal has been reached; that is, when no more inessential “variety” is being thrown up by phenomena, when only dry coals have remained in this bonfire of vanities. Such outcome, of course, comes neither easily nor quickly. When *Geist* descends into its finite “*Scheins*” (contingent/illusory forms) in Hegel’s System – seeking its essence and substance in the *Wirklichkeit* of the finite (before absolving itself of it in full self-knowledge) – only a harsh *Bildung* will teach it to let go of the inessential contingencies of (its) experience(s). The circle of the Absolute, after all, must be closed for this choke-hold on appearance to yield the properly ‘spiritual’ results. *Bildung*, as is appropriate, is here related to the essence, the heart, the legitimate power (*kratos*) that underwrites – both sustains and justifies – the use of violent means-*cum*-superficialities; and as alluded above in Hegel’s comments on religion, this end (Truth/Reconciliation) does not only justify the means, it *sanctifies* them.

This manner of knowledge-by-(self-)constraint is, as I intend to show, the heart and soul of Hegel’s method, of Hegel’s ‘*Bildung*.’ When faced with an uncultivated (*ungebildet*) experience, “we” need to encompass it, fasten-on to it firmly (*erfassen*), in order to, literally, bring it under the force (*nötigen*) of necessity, not unlike the “rape” of Proteus as described above. Then, the inessential “mere variety” of Nature’s contingent transformations and becomings will be compelled to settle-down and deliver a *Wirklichkeit*, something workable, something ‘substantial’.

The situation and the tactic through which it is approached bear a definite resemblance to Hegel’s treatment of the skeptic’s interruptions. Like the skeptic, Proteus is *forced to thematize itself*, yield a single position (*ein-stellung*), so as, *when the time is right* (this question of time will come to dire ethical focus with the following discussions of Lévinas) the *vielfache* will be resolved in the higher freedom of *Geist* as/in its coveted *ein-fache Weise*; the ‘simple essence’ distilled by *Geist* from the mere confused multiplicity (*bloß viel-fache*) of Nature’s appearance(s). The “I that is we” is here the “heart” that trains itself to have the power to persevere in this process of self- and other-torture, for it knows that these vanities were never meant to last, with the suffering involved in their rape/demise already pre-absolved.

The passage from Hegel’s *Philosophy of Nature* summarizes the brilliance of Hegel’s “tactical passivity” and its domestication of the skeptic’s excess quite well. The *Begriff* is here the choke-hold, the griff that encloses the skeptic, constraining her drive towards the “otherwise” to the repetitive task of articulating a particular counter-position to *any* position that experience might bring forth – thus both

using the skeptic's power of doubt (as a part of the means), and defending the System as a whole from doubt's excesses/extremities (i.e. sanctifying the ends). All excess Difference must be domesticated in this fashion, and the purely empty or *negative* 'extreme' of skepticism provides the best (ab)solution for Geist's grasp. Hegel expresses this principle most directly in his *Kritisches Journal* essay on skepticism: "The extreme [*Extrem*] cannot maintain itself without its opposite [*entgegengesetztes*]"⁵⁸ The skeptic must always be brought to a fever-pitch, forced to make a stand, taking up a position (in a pro-position: *satz* ↔ *setze*) against and towards (*entgegen*) another such pro-position in order for Geist to be able to push on to its final, holy and absolved, destination (Truth).

With this, which Hegel calls a spiritual demand [*Forderung*], the skeptic's subversive power could be both used and controlled (recall Menelaus' double meaning of 'hold'). This *Bildung* is rational, and it carries its justification within itself, literally, like no other. Hegel indeed systematizes Kant's method by allowing skepticism to exhaust itself on all – past, present *and future* (echoing Proteus' reach) – "dogmatic," or "subjective" positions. It cannot be left to itself since it abuses this freedom and attacks the foundations of every system of knowledge every time (or, at least, poses a permanent, *unsublatable* threat to this system).

The Ancient skeptic Pyrrho, in this sense, would be either too extreme or not extreme enough a skeptic, precisely for his *singular* (non-)position: he offered no real (pro-)positions, never wrote down or systematically taught any philosophy, and so seemed to be able to "de-sublate" any claim, to be *absolutely immune to knowledge* (in the "in itself" of his skepticism).

But of course, as all such skeptics that hang on to the merely contingent and vain, Pyrrho's threat dies with him, and Geist has all the time (and equanimity) in the world to await his death and the deaths of those like him. In Hegel's history of philosophy, Pyrrho had not yet been elevated above the sensible domain, above the mere *Schein* of physical appearances and on to something more substantial, more rational. The 'equipollence' mentioned above, as a method of counter-positioning, was already a later appropriation of Pyrrho's (*extreme*) "philosophy" by those who either knew him or of him. Hegel's system will take it as precisely the higher (because more 'workable') product of *Bildung*: Pyrrho's extremity had to be tamed, had to become spiritual in order to be awarded "philosophical stature:"

[...] In Pyrrho's skepticism there was not yet evident much cultivation [*Bildung*] and much orientation [*Richtung*] towards specific [*bestimmte*] thoughts, towards philosophy; his skepticism was directed more to the sensible domain. [...] For skepticism to emerge with a commensurate philosophical stature it had first to undergo development [*ausgebildet*] itself on the philosophical side

[which happened in the later skepticism of Aenesidemus and Sextus Empiricus; SC]” (Ibid, p. 305/GW 4:147)

In order to tie this section together “in the spirit of skepticism,” let me just finish with a brief mention of a famous story from the time that Hegel devoted himself to the skeptical challenge (roughly, the time he wrote the *Phenomenology of Spirit* at Jena, 1801-1806): a philosopher called Wilhelm Traugott Krug, had a particularly annoying critique of German Idealism, especially for its totalizing, *comprehensive* claims. He demanded that German Idealism “deduce his pen,” a position to which he self-ascribed the title of ‘skepticism.’ His attitude was even more “burning” (for Hegel) for being the philosopher who inherited Kant’s chair at Königsberg when Kant passed away in 1804. Hegel responded to Krug in his and Schelling’s famous *Kritisches Journal*,⁵⁹ but, as Hegel scholarship shows, a more concise – and (philosophically) mature – version is to be found in the *Encyclopaedia Philosophy of Nature*, where he writes:

[...] The contradiction [*Widerspruch*] of the Idea, arising from the fact that, as Nature, is external [*äußerlich*] to itself, is more precisely this: that on the one hand there is the necessity [*Nothwendigkeit*] of its forms which is generated by the Notion [*Begriff*], and their rational [*vernünftigen*] determination in their organic totality [*organischen Totalität*]; while on the other hand, there is their indifferent contingency [*Zufälligkeit*] and indeterminable irregularity [*Regellosigkeit*].

And Hegel continues in the ‘Remarks:’

The infinite wealth and variety of forms and, what is most irrational [*unvernünftigerweise*], the contingency [*Zufälligkeit*] which enters into external arrangement of natural things, have been extolled as the sublime freedom of Nature, even as the divinity of Nature, or at least the divinity present in it. This confusion of contingency, caprice [*Willkühr*] and disorder [*Ordnungslosigkeit*], with freedom and rationality is characteristic of sensuous and unphilosophical thinking [recall Pyrrho; SC]. This impotence [*Ohnmacht*] of Nature sets limits to philosophy and it is quite improper [*Ungehörigste: most offensive* (*ungehörig*: offensive); SC] to expect the Notion [*Begriffe*] to comprehend [*begreifen*] – or as it is said, construe or deduce – these contingent products of Nature (Enc II, §250, pp. 22-23/GW 20: 239-240 [my unledrline])

Krug’s challenge, hence – similarly to those who misunderstand the ‘actual’ contribution of skepticism to philosophical science (which is, to recall, to be achieved with the negation of skepticism’s negation, as discussed above) – is *most* offensive to philosophy, for it dares to proclaim ‘divinity’ where *true* divinity is limited by the (im)potence of Nature’s multiple contingent forms and historical accidents. This richness of forms – which is without order (*Ordnunglos*) or rule (*Regellos*) – effects a contradiction that must be sublated *if* philosophy is to retain its “stature” as a Science of Reason (*Vernunft*). Like Proteus’ dissimulations, these various forms of historical particularities – e.g. the

existence of Krug's pen – are not generated by (or at least not attributable to) the spirit's *essence*, for the Absolute, or the absolution of knowledge, deals only in necessities. Absolute necessity, hence, leaves the *Begriff* to extract this essence from Nature's "wild character" of false prevarications, the impotence of things that merely appear necessary but that, in time, 'spirit' decided "had to go."

This was, indeed, an articulation "in Kant's spirit": Just like Menelaus' tactic for capturing Proteus, Reason should constrain whatever appears in/through Nature to its own Scientific necessity; *its comprehending embrace must squeeze out its philosophical essence* (bringing it under the *constraint* of 'necessity'). That is what I called above a "tactical passivity." Only when contingency has been thus ordained by philosophical/systematic necessity can it inform the Concept as true/divine "freedom and rationality." For this to happen, however, Geist must divest itself of these contingencies; the Absolute *has to sacrifice these particularities* and let them sink back into the irrationality of Nature's erratic forms, only keeping (in view) that which is essential/necessary, thematizable, about them. In this sense, the "unphilosophical" gesture of Pyrrho (and his ilk) consists in refusing the *Bildung* of spirit, attributing it to the lowest levels of experience, stifling its rise to the divinity of Truth; *as if* the pen with which one writes a philosophy – *including the one who writes with it* – are of any real, substantive importance. Krug's pen can disintegrate and Krug and Pyrrho can die – but 'Spirit' will still be there to sublimate their essentials, leaving the rest in the waste-bin of philosophical history. For Krug to claim that either he or his pen *matter* is, hence, truly an offensive, vain expectation; they are not at the proper level of spiritual reconciliation and are, hence, empty.

This will be very important later on when we discuss young Hegel's disdain for Judaism's response to Nature's unpredictability, for there, in Judaism, it was precisely this *vain* aspect that became absolutized/absolved, effectively keeping *Geist* in perpetual retardation. Instead of entering into Nature and "encroaching" upon it to extract its necessities, Judaism construct a Deity wholly Other to Nature that dominates it *from afar*, contingencies and all. Hegel's system, as I will show, construes this as a cowardly escape from the divine or absolute task of spiritual reconciliation with Nature, a kind of passive submission to its Protean monstrosity. Here was an absolute passivity, rather than what for Hegel was merely a tactical one. However, as I will show when discussing Lévinas' 'ethics as first philosophy,' it was also the only passivity that did not preface its *address* with an act of coercion.

Furthermore, it is insightful to note here that, while Hegel provides a philosophical critique of Krug, he nevertheless adds to it a *personal* insult, implying that there are *more important* things for philosophy to do that to deduce *Krug's* pen (ibid, p. 23/ibid, ibid). This strange addition suggests, to my

reading, a certain “acting out” of Hegel’s against this (skeptical) threat, betraying somewhat of an urgency or susceptibility – a Freudian *Verneinung*? – on Hegel’s part. As Hegel scholar H. S. Harris confirms, modern (forms of) skepticism were to Hegel something which “has a greater negative (irritant) influence on the development of Hegel’s speculative idealism than Hegel himself recognizes”.⁶⁰ In the tracking of hatreds that is to follow under the name of ‘antipathology’ I will be able to focus on this negative drive of *Geist*, the aggressive underbelly of Hegelian ‘reconciliation’ and ‘love’.⁶¹ It is possible, I think, that considering the negation of negation as absolute knowledge, the pitting of skepticism against itself until it runs out of all possible ‘positions,’ is akin to considering the hatred of hatred as absolute love. But this still remains to be seen.

As a kind of prologue to the next chapter, then, allow me to leave you here with a quote by Nietzsche, from the Preface to his *Daybreak*,⁶² which I trust will serve as more than a merely associative link, perhaps a running motif between this Prelude and what is to follow. Here is what Nietzsche tells us of (Christian) morality, as a self-professed mole (*Maulwurf*)⁶³ betraying the ins and outs of its “spiritual machinations,” the cruelty that underlies the *Bildung* of its *Geist*:

[...] As long as the world has existed no authority has yet been willing to let itself become the object of criticism; and to criticise morality itself, to regard morality as a problem, as problematic: what? has that not been – *is* that not – immoral? – But morality does not merely have at its command every kind of means of frightening off critical hands and torture-instruments: its security reposes far more in a certain art of enchantment it has at its disposal – it knows how to ‘inspire’ [*begeistern*]. With this art it succeeds, often with no more than a single glance, in paralysing the critical will and even in enticing it over to its own side; there are even cases in which morality has been able to turn the critical will against itself, so that, like the scorpion, it drives its sting into its own body. (Nietzsche, *Daybreak*, Preface §3, p. 2/KGW 5.1:4-5)

CHAPTER I: Phenomenology and ‘Antipathology’

[...] Everywhere, in particular in the United States and in Europe, the self-declared philosophers, theoreticians, and ideologists of communication, dialogue, and consensus, of univocity and transparency, those who claim ceaselessly to reinstate the classical ethics of proof, discussion, and exchange, are most often those who excuse themselves from attentively reading and listening to the other, who demonstrate precipitation and dogmatism, and who no longer respect the elementary rules of philology and of interpretation, confounding science and chatter as though they had not the slightest taste for communication or rather as though they were afraid of it, at bottom. Fear of what, at bottom? Why? That is the real question.

– Jacques Derrida⁶⁴

[...] Driven by thirst, I eyed a fine icicle outside the window, within hand's reach. I opened the window and broke off the icicle but at once a large, heavy guard prowling outside brutally snatched it away from me. "*Warum?*" [Why?] I asked him in my poor German. "*Hier ist kein warum*" [there is no why here], he replied, pushing me inside with a shove.

– Primo Levi⁶⁵

0. “Out of the Question,” or Why Metaphysics

With regard to the beginning that philosophy has to make [...]. [...] what we have [...] is the free act of thinking putting itself at the standpoint where it is for its own self, producing its own ob-ject for itself thereby, and giving it to itself. Within the Science this standpoint, which in this first act appears as immediate, must make itself into the result, and (what is more) into its last result, in which it reaches its beginning again and returns into itself. In this way, philosophy shows itself as a circle that goes back into itself [...]

[...] – Thinking immediately involves *freedom*, because it is the activity of the universal, a self-relating that is therefore abstract, a being-with-itself that is undetermined in respect of subjectivity, and which in respect of its *content* is, at the same time, only in the *matter* [itself] and in its determinations. So when one speaks of humility or modesty, and of arrogance, with reference to the doing of philosophy, and when this humility or modesty consists in not attributing any *particularity* of feature or agency to one's subjectivity, then philosophising has to be absolved from arrogance at least, since thinking is only genuine with respect to its content insofar as it is immersed in the *matter*, and with respect to its form insofar so it is not a *particular* being or doing of the subject, but consists precisely in this, that consciousness conducts itself as an abstract "I," as *freed* from *all particularity* of features, states, etc., and does only what is universal, in which it is identical with all individuals.

– Georg Wilhelm Friedrich Hegel⁶⁶

0.1 The Necessity of Metaphysics: A Methodological Overview

This section will argue for the relevance of metaphysics for philosophical methodology, and will begin introducing threads that will run through the course of this dissertation as a whole. As Hegel's first quote above makes clear, philosophy begins from – which in Hegel's system means that it presupposes, or is conditioned upon – a freedom of thought, a 'spirit' by which the pathological forces of death and necessity are mined for their essence, and then overcome (*aufgehoben* – 'sublated,' "relieved"). Indeed, the *entire telos* of Hegel's system is this reconciliation (*Versöhnung*) of thought with itself, the realization or 'actuality' (*Wirklichkeit*) of its innate freedom as a spiritual freedom, as a freedom incarnated in the world through knowledge (this is how 'spirit,' for Hegel, abets in the *absolution* of thought as directed towards knowledge). This – thought's *metaphysical identity* with/as 'freedom' – would also provide the 'autonomy' from which thought is to work out its various ontologies: the latter, though always shifting (from one rung of the Hegelian "ladder" to the next), always owe their own "*raison d'être*" to this same metaphysical principle, this self-instituted or self-originating 'freedom.'

Before what I call 'Levinatzsch' can challenge this assumption – particularly as evincing a methodology wherein 'spirit's' *force* is *a priori* (teleologically and historically) absolved – I must begin with the question of metaphysics, all the while "looking awry" towards *another* kind of "freedom" that

Emmanuel Lévinas' "difficult freedom" concept and Nietzsche's 'will to power' philosophy will help me to challenge. To that effect, Hegel's – and 'western metaphysics' more generally – primary concern with freedom, must be considered, not only as the grounds, but also the *justification*, of knowledge (and its gradually expanding autonomy).

Hegel's System of Science, in this sense, provides us with a *systematic* 'antipathology' in its 'antipathology' aspect:⁶⁷ it is geared towards "inspiring" (i.e., instilling with 'spirit') *all that seems 'pathe'* – the Ancient Greek word for 'passive,' 'that which undergoes/suffers (an *external* force/influence)' – and separating off the "inspirable" (and hence not *really*, or wholly '*pathe*') from the, literally "pathetic," remainder; that which consistently refuses this inspiration, and is hence considered, treated as, "dead." Hegel's 'Spirit' "mines" every idea, every historical stage, for its life and 'substance,' eventually separating them off of their purported "shell" or "veneer," that "remainder" that Hegel called '*Schein*.' This "death" in the eyes of (Hegel's) philosophy means that whatever *difference* this remainder might lay claim or "hold on" to, is – since it had already been subjected to the spirit's "substance-mining operations" – found 'vain' (*eitel*), bereft of any substantive right to be included in 'knowledge.' Hegel's "antipathology," hence, comprises a systematic persecution and elimination of the false "rights" that this elusive difference lays claim to, a difference forever contingent, substanceless, and hence *vain*. This *system* is what makes Hegel both the best interlocutor for *my* antipathology, and its most formidable enemy (Friedrich Nietzsche, to anticipate a bit, will be its friend).

Let me go back again to the metaphysical question, to the "beginning" of philosophy and the "freedom" that it performs or presupposes. This aforementioned problem of 'vanity' (*Eitelkeit*) – what is "dead" or "un-substantial" in 'appearance,' what veils, or indeed *scandalized* (i.e. lays an obstacle before) the "living thought" (that comprehends *only* 'actuality' or 'reality') – reveals the true "enemy" of Hegel's spiritual 'system of science,' and indeed betrays the enemy of 'Western metaphysics' itself (at least "in spirit"). The 'vain' in Hegel's science of spirit operates like the lines that mark the bull's-eye on the 'real target' (Truth), the particular, historically contingent *Gestalts* of spirit; the slowly eroding *transmission* of a comprehensive, self-comprehending *substance*. These traces – whose only systemic function had been the '*Schein*' of phenomena – are creatures of shadow, and are only as useful for Hegel as there are dark spots in the narrative (of 'spirit') to (ful)fill. It is, like the Judaic Law in Christian theology, the true "pathology," that which is never to achieve absolution, that which had insisted on "difference" until it ran out of the latter (in 'reality,' in history), and was forced to forever witness and worship one big Nothing; a "negative" theology, worshipping a "*bad*" infinity. The always-already

refuted (non-)position of a “spiritual skeptic” (which is how Hegel’s philosophical rendering of Christianity will figure the Jew).

Only ‘Love,’ says Hegel, which reconciles identity and non-identity, can have the courage to “let go” of the empty ‘*Schein*’ of ‘difference,’ to negate the vanity of its negativity and “move on.” In Christian theology, or at least for Hegel’s Lutheran version, this meant overcoming the reclusive ‘externality’ of the Law, in favor of the Truth – the Law’s true meaning or ‘Spirit’ – which arises through the mediation of what Hegel calls *das Innere* (the inner/internal). It is only the latter that gives “reality rights” to freedom, while the vain/external has only ‘formal,’ ‘non-substantial’ freedom to boast of; a “negative liberty” to go with its ‘negative theology.’ The science of spirit (as Hegel conceives the totality of the Western metaphysical and philosophical project) is the interrogation of “difference witnesses” that must, ‘in-and-for themselves,’ be inessential to the process of system, its mere ‘carriers’ or ‘supplements.’

The notions of vanity and witness, specifically the figure of the vain witness, will be the longest-running themes in what is to follow. My antipathology is, hence, obsessed with the problem of the witness, specifically as an ethico-metaphysical question addressed to any system that claims the use of ‘Reason’ in the Hegelian manner. Like the vivid scene that depicted in the previous chapter – where Hegel likens Nature to Proteus, whose song/Truth has to be, literally, squeezed out of him (by the “invisible hands” of Reason) – the witness’ refusal of the immediate, full presence of her Truth/testimony, is successively sublated in Hegel’s ‘system.’ Refusing to “only ‘be,’” the witness evinces a “symbolic” insistence to “stand for,” or “stand in” for, an Other. There, the witness is treated only in terms of *evidence* regarding the ‘case’ (*Sache*) under discussion, is interrogated as to the *substance* of this Other, and – after having extracted the substance/Truth from her testimony – discarded. After all, all that remains of the witness at that point is the vain insistence on her own singularity as witness; this, its “for the Other,” is necessarily left incomplete and accused, unable to find a position in the system, and therefore effaced as a “dead letter” or shell, a mere historical contingency of *Geist*.

Questioning this effacement, one could begin to ask of ‘knowledge:’ How and why did this ‘evidence’ come to be relevant to the “case”? How and why does this person attain her “witness mission”? etc. ‘Absolute Knowledge’ might be the deepest and the richest – as Hegel says, the most “comprehensive” – but if there is one thing it had erected itself by excluding it is this ‘vanity’ of the witness, her refusal to be fully com-prehended, choked or grabbed from “all sides” as mere ‘evidence’ (the mere “carrier” or “supplement” of what is deemed substantive). Like the letter of the Law for

Hegel's Protestantism – which always invites more and more thought and argument (a praxis come to be disdainfully known as 'sophistry,' 'rhetoric' or 'phariseism' by the proponents of 'Love' and 'Spirit') – the witness maintains an irrational insistence that not all of her testimony has been comprehended; that there is still more to the letter – precisely because of its refusal – than its 'spirit' can accommodate. So speaks the pathetic "right" of the vain, but *Geist* cannot hear this claim, much less *respond* to it.

The first phenomenologist who gave this question concerning metaphysics a serious, critical examination is Martin Heidegger. Heidegger's phenomenological innovations uncover the question – forgotten and assumed-meaningless by modern science (and much of 20th Century philosophy) – concerning the ground(ing) of all philosophical inquiry. The central question for Heidegger concerns 'beings,' both in their grounding and their totality, an inquiry which, following Aristotle, requires that thought *free itself* from, either the 'fallenness' of everyday being-in-the-world (Heidegger), or from all economic necessities (Aristotle). Only then will the *first* question of philosophy/metaphysics be able to surface; there is an obstacle that needs to be overcome.

This section, as its title suggests, speaks not only to the "covered over" responsibility of attending the metaphysical assumptions of thought – trying to explain why metaphysics is *relevant* in all affairs of thinking about thought – but also to suggest that metaphysics has been and remains *a question concerning the highest justification*, a 'Why?' that always-already employs an overriding, structural *force* over, say, a "What?" or "How?". Within its realm of highest justification, the 'Why?' can include the possibility of causality, but might also exceed the latter's temporal claims so as to put them (and keep them) in question. It remains to be seen, as with all inquiries after first principles, what comes out of this, but it is this thread that will lead us to Lévinas' critique of Heidegger through the former's notion of '*ethics* as first philosophy' (and the methodological implications therein).

Phenomenology in general, as Husserl's famous "to the things themselves" suggests, follows a similar trajectory. It is in the phenomenological understanding of thought that the philosopher's 'truth' is thought of, explicitly for the first time, as an irreducible, singular *relation*. This novel approach to the philosophical method of questioning suggested that the "thing" to be thought is thought itself, thus refusing the naïve understanding of a separate, representing "mind" or "subject" whose contents ought to "correspond" to the way things "really," that is, *independently*, are. This means that the *Subject-Object* view of experience/reality is refused a primary status, and abdicating this primacy to the hyphen between them.

We can put it in the following manner: If the above division is to be rigorously thought and grounded, rather than stipulated or assumed, then the supposed ‘thinking subject’ needs to account for a basic, “topological” predicament: if thought is always the thought of *something* (another basic insight of phenomenology), how can the ‘subject’ be included in it *qua* ‘subject’? Can the subject think itself, or, differently put, “ground itself” in thought, as *both* its “subject” *and* its “object”?⁶⁸

It is this ‘self-reference’ paradox concerning thought’s self-definition’ – following this problematic of finitude, of *limits and their ‘beyond’* – which supplies the basis for the phenomenological solution: if ‘subject,’ as the progenitor of thought, cannot by itself be de-fined, delimited in its finitude, then thought itself already suggests an excess of finitude, which makes it either an infinite that both contains *and exceeds* all limits, or ‘nothingness’ which, as a pure non-being, “has nothing,” not even limits. Since, hence, neither all of ‘thought’ can be grounded in itself as such, nor can (which follows *a fortiori*) all ‘objects’ be grounded in this manner, it is ‘thought’ *as relation* that gains primacy in phenomenology: no longer are ‘subject’ and ‘object’ to be pre-defined and *only then* thought in their relation, but they become *phenomenologically* indistinguishable (for the reasons just mentioned) from this relation. Husserl’s call “to the things themselves,” hence, is precisely the call for philosophy to ground thought not on any ‘subjective’ or ‘objective’ standpoint, but on their relation. The way by which thought constructs its “objects” becomes, hence, the path for thinking (about) thought itself; a kind of “reverse engineering” of thought, if you will.

In order to think through this relation, then, a different kind of thought or method of thinking must be employed so as to avoid falling into the subject-object dichotomy, bequeathed us by language’s Subject-Predicate structure. If “normal understanding,” at least as concerns Western philosophy in its Greek heritage, thinks in terms of this dichotomy, then thinking *about* this dichotomy requires that this normal understanding or “common sense” be somewhat “restrained;” that the common “instinct” to think in Subject-Object terms be somehow “put on hold” or “suspended.”

This “suspension” is the basic meaning of phenomenology’s key methodological tool, the principle known as ‘*epoche*’ or ‘phenomenological reduction.’ It serves mainly, not so much to avoid or “disown” the everyday understanding, but to grant it a philosophical reasoning or account. The reduction, hence, studies this everyday understanding as it unfolds – as it assembles or “synthesizes” the ‘Subject’ and ‘Object’ out of a relation. Like an assembly-line worker given the (limited) freedom to leave her post and roam around the factory, the phenomenological reduction disengages thought, to a certain extent, from its everyday processes, and allows it to reflect on itself from a (certain) “distance.”

That is how what seems to the everyday understanding “self-evident” can be accounted for philosophically, “from within” as it were.⁶⁹

So far, however, I was articulating, through paradoxes, the “logical necessity” that underwrites the phenomenological approach. Yet, what of the phenomenological act itself, as an act of thought, a *method*? On what *grounds* is this act performed? What is it that *justifies* this act in the first place? These last two questions suggest a divergence with regards to this act, with how one interprets *the gesture* of phenomenology: Heidegger is the figure to take the first question, the question of ‘ground’ and the ‘grounding’ of this method, as central and primordial grounding in Being that he calls in *Being and Time* ‘fundamental ontology;’ the second question, which bears on the *ethico-metaphysical condition* of this method, positioning *this* concern as the primary duty of thought, was promoted within the phenomenological tradition most explicitly by Emmanuel Lévinas, calling this diverging (yet still related) concern an ‘ethics as first philosophy.’ Elucidating the necessity of the second question requires elucidating the necessity of the first as Heidegger conceives of it, to whose question I will now turn.

0.2 Whence ‘Metaphysics’? From Aristotle to Lévinas

From the time of the Ancient Greeks, at the very origin of ‘philosophy,’ the dominant question has concerned the ἀρχή (*archē*; higher cause or principle) of/behind ‘things,’ the true or the real in the appearance of what the Greeks called φύσις (“nature”); a ‘cosmology’ of *that which causes beings to be*. In his first book of *Metaphysics*, Aristotle had famously awarded the Milesian Thales the privilege of being the first ‘philosopher,’ that is, the first to have considered ‘nature’ or the ‘cosmos’ in terms of its ultimate *archē*, its guiding principle (which, Thales proposed, was ‘water’). It is important to note what, for Aristotle, drives this investigation after “first principles” (since then named “metaphysics”) *as the most free* ‘science’ (ἐλευθέραν τῶν ἐπιστημῶν), necessitates a turn away from “practical utility” (χρήσεώς), for, “speculation of this kind began with a view to recreation and pastime, at a time when practically all the necessities of life were already supplied” (*Metaphysics I*, 982b).⁷⁰

No longer preoccupied with the “necessities of life,” the philosopher, or metaphysician, *finds the time* to ask these “non-practical” questions. Whether driven by the nihilistic despair of the one who (otherwise) has it all, or from the boredom of inoccupation, the prevailing “mood” that the Aristotelian philosopher shows towards his subject-matter is ‘wonder’ (θαυμάζειν) – testimony to a sufficient detachment from the ‘day-to-day’ that allows the philosopher, “in his own time,” to inquire after the “other than practical”.⁷¹ ‘Wonder’ – as the turn toward the ultimate cause of ‘things’ – will ask after “the

reason why” (τὸ διὰ τί); whereby the quest for their ἀρχή, is, indeed, affirmed as the “ultimate meaning” (λόγον ἔσχατον) of this, freest of all sciences (ibid, 283a). Hence, a questioning of this freedom involves also a (re)consideration of time, of the relation of thought and Being – in and through the aforementioned “power dynamic” – to time. Grounding or justifying it involves – as Heidegger’s appropriation of Aristotle will show – a phenomenological account of time.

Aristotle marks the philosophical detachment as geared towards the *totality* (πάντα) of the ‘beings’ known, “without taking upon himself knowledge of each [ἕκαστον] one of them individually” (ibid, 982a [translation modified]). Only upon such a *refusal* – of apparent differences between the diverse beings that populate one’s ‘world’ – can the philosopher begin to seek knowledge “for its own sake,” that is, the wisdom of the “most knowable” (principles/causes): for “it is these that other [ἄλλ’] things serve [ὑπηρετούσης – servitude; subordination], and not [...] the particulars [ἕκαστον] which actualize [πρακτέον] them” (ibid, 982b [translation modified]). The suspension implied in this refusal or aversion is the key to Heidegger’s own inflection of the phenomenological method after the Aristotelian example; hence, as I will show, his phenomenology was intimately tied to metaphysics from the very first.

One spies here the core of the Aristotelian metaphysical legacy, as alluded above in the second epigraph by Hegel above, where a certain “need” or “drive” of philosophy for the ‘universal’ justifies a specific power dynamic between the particular and the philosophical thought that thinks it *in/as totality*: metaphysical thought must disabuse itself of the other aspect(s) of the particular; a necessity to which even Hegel (perhaps despite himself), gives a moral inflection/justification in the second quote given above. Attending this automatic, or presupposed, *telos*/horizon of philosophical thought – a *telos* whose condition of possibility is the philosopher’s “detachment” itself – is what I will be attending here, specifically in the ethico-metaphysical implications of this supposedly justified-because-necessary move. To anticipate a little more, this ‘detachment’ ought not to be taken here as anything resembling a condemnation. Rather, I seek to affirm it as a cruelty whose necessity for philosophy does not absolve the latter from responding to it. My argument will show the manner with which to engage such a “counter-intuitive” project (Lévinas), through Nietzsche’s genealogical insights as to exactly how and why this cruelty had been “forgotten” in the Christian-European philosophers’ appropriation of Greek-Pagan thought.

I wish to question, or go back to the question, of why philosophy must *conceive* of thought in this manner. I maintain here, with Heidegger’s ontology as my main foil, that it is only a Lévinasian insistence on taking the ethical maneuver of philosophy as *primary* – in importance, in justification, in

time – can shore this up without moral prejudgment, following a Nietzschean *amor fati*.⁷² From Lévinas’ engagement with the fundamental question of philosophy (even if it is posed *to* philosophy rather than *by* philosophy), the otherness of the particular(s) can be seen – by the *power* of philosophical detachment – *subordinated* to the ‘universal’ as the ‘highest good’ of the philosophical project (in its Christian-European face). This is why the ‘Why?’ question must be studied at this, *initial*, stage of methodology, and why it can have such far-reaching implications for Science, particularly – since it is ethics I am obsessed with here – the “human” or “social sciences.” The idea to be pursued here, for which Nietzschean help is necessary, is that the appropriation of Greek metaphysics by Christian-European philosophers ought to be put in question as such; a project nominally shared by Heidegger, but, as I will show, one that needs ‘Levinatztch’ in order to extend itself beyond Heidegger’s own ‘spirit.’

As Martin Heidegger confirms in his *Introduction to Metaphysics*, ‘Why?’ is the most fundamental question of metaphysics. For his ontological project of “overcoming” metaphysics, it is a question that concerns ‘Being’ (*Sein*), in asking after the ἀρχή of *existence*: “*Why are there beings at all instead of nothing?*” (IM, p. 1). Heidegger sees this question as “the broadest, as the deepest, and finally as the most originary question” (ibid, p. 2).⁷³ If the question takes for its objects the *totality* or whole of *beings* (*Seiendes*) – as the make-up of phenomena ‘in-the-world’ (which the philosopher “detaches” from) – then the ‘Why?’ already denotes a break with their particular appearance, as with their “common” understanding, for it seeks to *ground their existence in a totality*. This totality can only be made to appear, in its relation to Being, after the (f)act. To quote Heidegger, “[w]e are asking about the ground for the fact that beings *are*, and are what they *are*; and that there is not nothing instead. [...] We are interrogating beings [*Seiendes*] in regards to their Being [*Sein*]” (IM, p. 34/GA 40:35)

The ‘Why?’ question is unique since it proceeds through a necessary indifference to the particularity of ‘beings’.⁷⁴ Here, Heidegger says, “[w]e pass over and surpass what belongs to the order of the day” (IM, p. 13). This “surpassing” is the key to arrive at the famous ‘ontological difference’ – which Heidegger takes as the *fundamental* ‘difference’ of philosophy *tout court* – the difference between the existents (*Seiendes*, ‘beings’) and their ground/existence (*Sein*, ‘Being’). However, since Heidegger’s project is one of a *fundamental* ontology, this difference itself demands to be *questioned as to its Being* – and this means that not only the ‘totality of beings’ is to be grounded in this manner, but *also the specific*

“being” which poses the ‘Why?’ question in the first place (indeed, everything that is about to unfold concerns the “first place” as both a temporal and ethical status).

Heidegger gives the ‘questioning being’ the name of *Dasein*. Literally meaning being-there, *Dasein* is, according to Heidegger, the only being for whom Being itself is in question, and sought to be understood (SZ, p. 7). To (grossly) simplify, *Dasein* is split – corresponding to the ontological difference – between two different “Da”s: there is ‘inauthentic’ *Dasein* that is engrossed in “the ‘beings’ side” of this ‘there;’ and ‘authentic’ *Dasein* that asks the ontological question about the meaning of Being in general, from its solitude in another, detached, ‘there.’ It is the latter ‘Da’ and *Dasein* that is the “subject” of the philosophical-ontological investigation. As engaged in questioning from the “right” side of the ontological difference, authentic *Dasein* can ask not only about the meaning of *beings in their totality* (i.e. ‘Why are there beings at all and not nothing?’) but about the meaning about *Being in general*. This is, for Heidegger, how the Why question comes to “recoil” on itself, asking after the philosopher’s own ground(ing), the *reason* for her act of detachment: ‘Why (ask) ‘Why?’’. Without the difference within the ‘there,’ there would be nothing to reflect the philosophical ‘Why?’ that, in the ‘there’ of ‘beings’ (a state which Heidegger calls “fallenness”), proceeds without question via the fallen, “common understanding” of existence.

Owing to the philosopher’s self-detachment from this ‘Da’ of the common understanding of (mere) ‘beings,’ Heidegger’s philosophical ‘Why?’ thus “recoils on itself” in the solitude of ‘authentic *Dasein*’s’ questioning of Being. This question of “Whence this ‘Why?’,” or “Why the ‘Why?’” arrives to spell out the project of inquiring as to the meaning of Being *in general*, over-and-against the ‘totality of beings in the world’ from which the philosopher detaches himself. The *general* question about Being, hence, is made possible only by *stepping out* of “beings’ Da” so as to totalize them, with the latter ‘totality’ being necessary to “feed” the former “generality”.⁷⁵ It is how ‘universal knowledge’ – to allude to Hegel’s quote above and Aristotle’s aforementioned formulation – becomes *possible*. Even if Heidegger does not willingly ascribe himself to these terms, I will show, with Levinatzsch, how he at least shares with them a certain “spirit.”

The *arrival* of this question, in its uniqueness and, indeed, *force*, is an event for authentic *Dasein*, a “happening” whose nature remains obscure, unquestioned, protected by the ‘philosophical necessity’ of the aforementioned detachment, and assumed to originate from what Heidegger calls the “ground” of Being; and yet, it is a force necessary for thought to be *freed* (from particular ‘beings’) to ask after (the general question of) Being. Posing this question, for Heidegger, involves a “leap” towards an

ontologically distinct ‘Da,’ a ‘there,’ away from the common, “fallen” investment in mere readily understandable ‘beings’ in the world.

To achieve this necessary ‘indifference’ or detachment, to effect said “recoil,” one needs, according to Heidegger, “enough force of spirit [*Kraft des Geistes*];” “for,” Heidegger continues, “the recoil does not [...] produce itself on its own” (IM, p. 6/GA 40:6). For Heidegger, as for Aristotle, this questioning activity follows a single impetus or necessity: it needs to be “completely voluntary,” based on the ground of ‘human freedom’ in and of itself (IM, p. 14). If one wants to question this act in its necessity, to question the ‘freedom’ that seemingly justifies or necessitates it, the highest/metaphysical question will have to ask, *not only whence* – which for Heidegger can only be the ground of Being – but also *why*, this philosophical “need” for freedom? Recalling that the possibility of the philosopher’s detachment is what grants her access to this “free universal,” perhaps the *raison d’être* of this method, it behooves an ethical interrogation of this method to tarry over this mysterious ‘spirit;’ to *question* this necessity in *ethical terms* (force/violence), rather than ontological (Being/beings) ones. Owing to Heidegger’s, let’s say, “ontological fundamentalism,” no ‘ethics’ can ever find a place here; it has to come later, and *only on the basis* of this foundation.

It is, hence, in the grip of this force-field – between the practical knowledge of “everyday necessities” and the philosophical knowledge of “authentic ontological inquiry” – that Heidegger’s phenomenology proceeds beyond the first ‘Why (are there beings rather than nothing)?’ and recoils the ‘Why?’ on itself. This *other* ‘Why?’ that comes to/at the philosopher poses the more ontologically radical question, concerning the aforementioned ‘spiritual force;’ yet, this recoil, at least potentially (and here is where Heidegger enables the Lévinasian “loophole”), opens a path to, also, question its *ethical* legitimacy as an essential gesture of phenomenological inquiry. As a force originating in ‘spirit,’ the philosopher’s responsibility for her method is either unthought or presupposed in Heidegger’s ontological project, which is where Lévinas, thinking (over-and-)against Heidegger, questions this move as an *ethico-metaphysical* (rather than fundamentally ontological) event: not a “clearing” of Being as the arrival/departure (concealment/unconcealment) of Truth, but an accusation or interruption of Being by Justice. It follows that the muzzled ‘particularity of beings’ from which the philosopher leaps – however “necessarily” suspended and totalized – would still recall all philosophical projects, including the ‘ontological’ or ‘epistemological’ ones, back to that, immemorial, decision to usurp this particular in favor of the necessary or true (“in the name of freedom,” perhaps?). The ethical implication is important here since, in Aristotle’s treatment of metaphysics (as an *act*), the power dimension was still explicit,

and the separation of the philosopher cited for its condition-of-possibility an economic and political distinction; a distinction which in Heidegger's ontological inflection/appropriation, as 'Levinatzsch' will see and show, became 'human freedom.'

For authentic *Dasein*, the question "Why (ask) 'Why?'" can only come from this "understanding imperative," from the 'ground of Being,' held fast to (its) 'Truth' by virtue of the aforementioned 'freedom.' In principle, then, the Heideggerian question about the activity of authentic thought remains within (the question about the meaning of) Being, and re-coils on itself in a movement that never leaves the ambit of Being; authentic *Dasein* thus "allows" the ground of Being to finally ask the important, "ontologically fundamental" question. In short, it is Being, and its Truth/meaning, that justify this privilege, this "allowance."

Lévinas suggests an "ante-fundamental" question to Heidegger's, wedging itself between Aristotle's economo-political difference and Heidegger's ontological difference: whereas Heidegger sees the philosopher as freed to contemplate the limits of Being, Lévinas sees this "thinker-actor" as haunted by the anonymous murmur of that which is both "there" and "not there" as the ethical condition for any 'ontological' totality. Branching-off of Heidegger's phenomenology, Lévinas will shift the focus to the "there is" (*il y a*) of Being, the fatality that gives the authentic 'Da' its definition and closure over (*and against*) the totality of mere 'beings.' In Lévinas' formulation of the phenomenological move, it is only *in response* to this fatality that thought arises, the reason for it to break forth from its worldly engagements *in the first place* (here one begins to spy Lévinas' "ethics as first philosophy" project). The "there is," in this sense, marks not only the "event horizon" of authentic philosophical thought, but also – and for Lévinas this is crucial – *its ethical price*. Lévinas' project – and this needs to be said at the outset (and cannot be said enough, especially vis-à-vis contemporary discourse on Lévinas' 'ethics' that tries to avoid its metaphysical radicality) – does not obsess over this price in order to obviate it (and the thought that it, uniquely, enables), but to be 'responsible' towards – *not to be confused with "guilty of"* (another crucial, oft-misunderstood point) – its violence.

So long as she does not *presuppose comprehension* of the 'essence' or 'Being' of this anonymous murmur (of the "there is"), the detached philosopher will also not be able to eliminate the question concerning the 'force' that her philosophical leap requires and entails. For this Lévinasian project, hence, there is no mere 'de-finition,' no 'totality of beings' that is not, already, a reaction to this original force. The philosopher's "leap," hence, is both enabled by this 'spirit,' and – if one does not assume an

absolute legitimacy to said (philosophical) spirit – presents him with an accusation towards this position of privilege. Any understanding that thereby ensues – whether ‘universal knowledge’ or the more “Da-specific” ontological meaning – will be formulated by Lévinas as a *response* to this accusation – to a force coming at ‘me’ from without (the *il y a* as the “hard surface” of the totality of beings that allows the ‘Why?’ its philosophical “recoil”). The leap is, hence, neither voluntary nor “humanly free” for Lévinas, but effected in response to a singular interruption – one that does not emanate (and return to) the ‘ground of Being,’ but, rather, from its *il y a*.

In the history of Western philosophy, for example, this accusation was only heard through the irrational – and yet eternally recurring – complaints of the philosophical *skeptic*. For the latter, all totalities can only be comprehended at the price of a historical interpretation, one which necessarily attains its openness from the future to-come (and the skeptic to-come!) rather than the “conditions” – be they ‘historical’ or ‘rational’ – supposedly pre-existing the one who was “thrown” at/in them. This interruption does not necessarily “deepen” my relation to what “grounds” Being (as ‘authentic philosopher’), nor does it necessarily bring thought closer to ‘Truth.’ Rather, it *yanks ‘me’ out* of this ground by force, *perhaps* never to return (or, put differently, never to return (to) ‘the same’). This “complaining skeptic,” who is consistently dismissed by “professional philosophers” as “sawing the branch that s/he sits on,” questions the justice of this “spiritual force” that philosophy, in the name of its (always-already justified) ‘freedom,’ wields. On this, negative, point regarding the skeptic, Heidegger and Hegel concur.

Lévinas does not accept Heidegger’s assumption that this force originates in Being, for the radical rupture that it implies – as philosophically or ontologically “fundamental” – is precisely what he aims to put in question, to consider, *ethically and temporally*, as an act/event. To go back to Heidegger’s account, if ‘spirit’ has a ‘force,’ then, it is already, for Lévinas, a (however ‘necessarily’) *violent* response to this, pre-originary “tease” that comes from the Other; for there is nothing – neither universal agreement concerning the totality of beings (ontology), nor divine providence as the fundamental cause of beings (theology), nor an unconditioned set of ‘natural laws’ that underwrite reality (cosmology/metaphysics) – that makes ‘me’ *equal* to this demand. The *metaphysical asymmetry* of this ‘me’ is where Lévinas (and, as we will see later, Nietzsche) will introduce a break into Being and Time, reopening precisely that which held Western thought together up to and including modernity; the suppressed (or “forgotten”) impetus that, like the skeptical gadfly, keeps recalling thought back to the

“ante-foundational” asymmetry, that which engendered within it the impulse, or command, to respond (viz. to think; to speak; to act; and, yes, also to ‘be’).

Lévinas’ ‘ethics as first philosophy’ points at philosophical thought’s “recoil” – accusingly but not disparagingly – as an ethico-metaphysical event that never completely arrives at the recollection and/or presence of Being, its ‘ground’ or ‘Truth.’ ‘Why?’ here still attends a difference, yet not a “recoil” within/from totality, but rather a *breach of totality as such*. This event – so long as ‘there is’ thought and language (i.e. ‘Being’) – is metaphysically separated from any ‘ground,’ an interruption of Being (owing to, indeed, a force/violence). For Lévinas’ radical question(ing) – instead of, *pace* Hegel, going back unto or into itself (in/as ‘Spirit’), and instead of, *pace* Heidegger, assuming that this ‘force’ comes from Being – thought is necessarily “nomadic,” and cannot *absolutely* presuppose, for its justification, any “ground” to “return” to; its temporality, always untimely or “out of joint,” *repeatedly* turns, yet not necessarily as “recoil;” it turns *without the promise/projection of a re-turn*. In short, for Lévinas, the “force of spirit” that attends the phenomenological “leap” does not originate from, nor is it comprehended by, Being; it compels thought to regard Being, but “in the name” of something “otherwise than Being,” beyond the freedom that grounds thought’s essence, beyond Heidegger’s ontologico-hermeneutic *telos/imperative*. A response, Lévinas would say, to the otherness of the *il y a*; but not an answer – a response unequal to its task.

A *groundless* “force of spirit,” however, spells a threat to modern philosophy, for it undermines, or at least puts in question, the “freedom” towards which it was forever beholden, in the name of which it justifies itself. All closures/totalities – e.g. Hegel’s ‘*Vernunft*,’ Heidegger’s ‘*Sein*,’ Kant’s ‘*Apperception*’ – disdain its ‘negative infinity,’ which Hegel called “bad” (*schlechte*) for its eternally reshuffling the deck and refusing to settle on an “even spread.” These closures trust/hope that, like the occasional skeptic, this nomadism of thought would – by “realizing” the contradiction implied within it – go away on its own, negate itself by realizing that, having no claim to ‘Being,’ it must be ‘Nothing.’ “Groundlessness” here comes to mean that thought is assailed by a difference that it cannot appropriate: neither historically (Hegel), nor ‘transcendentally’ (Kant), nor ontologically (Heidegger). Hegel knew this all too well: this groundless difference – abstract or unreal, whose appearance Hegel consistently calls “vain” – can bring any position to utter ruin (and thus must be “kept in check” by ‘Knowledge’); it can break all totalities, horizons, limits and enclosures, and, what’s worse, do so (at least until death) with *absolute* impunity.

It is, indeed, *between* Heidegger and Lévinas that I place Friedrich Nietzsche (historically, arriving before ‘phenomenology’ but in many ways presaging its thought). I say “between” Heidegger and Lévinas since I find that Lévinas’ critique of Heidegger – which revolves, roughly speaking, around the latter’s placing the emphasis of phenomenology on the totalities or closures of ‘Ground’ and ‘Being’ (vis-à-vis the ‘Truth of Being’) – fits neatly as an obverse response to Heidegger’s own reading of Nietzsche. Heidegger depicted Nietzsche, as is well known, as the culmination of a certain metaphysics of ‘will’ that is still tied-down, or obsessed with, the question of value (and value-giving), and hence has not “overcome metaphysics” but, rather, stands on its cusp. Thought of in this sense – a sense I here refer to as ‘Levinatzsch’⁷⁶ – Lévinas’ insistence on *first* attending the *ethical* (rather than ontological) condition of the phenomenological or philosophical maneuver serves as Nietzsche’s own “belated response” to Heidegger (he did, after all, always write to future ears and philosophers), specifically a response to Heidegger’s critique of Nietzsche’s “metaphysics of value.”⁷⁷ In ‘Levinatzsch,’ Lévinas’ “ethics as first philosophy” and Nietzsche’s ‘will to power’ both respond to something prior to Heidegger’s ‘ontology’ and the question concerning the truth and/or history of Being.⁷⁸

The Levinatzschean methodology or methodological polemic that I advance here, is not in the least limited to the field of philosophy, though it does identify in the latter – as exemplified in the chapter on skepticism – its strongest (and therefore, in a Nietzschean sense, most *worthy*) enemies. As ensconced in the discipline of political thought, itself lodged within the modern ‘social’ or ‘human sciences,’ this methodological critique hits the more trenchant assumptions – all the more trenchant *since their discussion is, by and large, disciplinarily relegated to ‘Philosophy’* – of the philosophical treatment or grounding of ‘science’ (and hence, also, the conditions for its ethical questioning). In order to achieve this, a genealogy of modernity (as science, as philosophy) is crucial, but not just any genealogy; what is needed is a genealogy that can think through the relations and hidden collusions between this claim for freedom and the force or power that it wields-while-justifying itself (as ‘necessary’ or ‘rational’). In order to do that, I argue, only an understanding of modernity in its (however well-dyed) Christian roots – and here I mean particularly the metaphysical assumptions that only Hegel dared to, approvingly, systematize and philosophize – will suffice. Here is where a Nietzsche will help, speaking (out) of the metaphysics that science and philosophy had carried on - mostly implicitly (save Hegel) and wholly unquestionably – from a reformed, Lutheran metaphysics.⁷⁹

0.3 Is Ontology ‘Spiritual’?

In the coming days, Dr. Baumgarten's application for a fellowship will be sent to the Emergency Association (of German Science). I should like to add to the official letter of recommendation my personal request to you, esteemed Mr. Privy Councillor, to give this application your undivided attention. In what follows, I want to make more explicit [*deutlicher*] what I could only indirectly hint [*indirekt andeuten*] at in my recommendation. Nothing less is at stake than our undeferrable facing of the fact that we are confronted by a crucial choice: Either to infuse, again, our German spiritual life [*Geistesleben*] with genuine indigenous forces [*Bodenständige Kräfte*] and educators, or to leave it at the mercy, once and for all, of the growing Jewish contamination [*Verjudung*], both in a larger and a narrower sense. (Martin Heidegger, Letter to Victor Schworer, 2 October 1929)⁸⁰

In his *Of Spirit*, Jacques Derrida interrogates Heidegger's relation to the concept of ‘spirit’ (*Geist*).⁸¹ He notes how Heidegger *explicitly* wishes to avoid using ‘spirit’ – as a philosophical theme, as an ontological “player” – yet it seems to keep popping up, almost involuntarily, in key moments in Heidegger's published oeuvre.⁸² This concept gains not only an appearance, but a function, a *force*, in Heidegger's public expressions – for the public/private difference will be very methodologically instructive here – in the 1930s, with the rise of National Socialism in Germany. As the quote above suggests – taken from a private letter, pre-facing a public one – “spirit” was already very much alive and well in Heidegger before the rise of what Lévinas will later refer to as ‘Hitlerism;’ and Heidegger's Black Notebooks confirm a deep-rooted, philosophically charged antisemitism that was cultivated in Heidegger consistently throughout his life. Rejecting the claims that try to “defend” Heidegger as “an opportunist rather than a Nazi,” but also rejecting those who would dismiss his entire thought due to this affiliation, antipathology looks closely at what made Heidegger's hatred finally speak, and what can be learned from this. Hitlerism did not produce the hatreds of spirit, which would have continued operating silently, within and behind Heidegger's “conscience,” regardless (as the Notebooks and the letters suggest). Hitlerism only made the German spirit accusable, explicit; brought to where its hatreds must be demoted, again, to the “vain” level of “letters” (this is why, as many Holocaust deniers indeed claim, there is such a paucity of evidence to these WWII atrocities – ‘spirit’ really drives away from this, humiliating place of using language, a said, to self-justify; it knows it betrays itself thereby).

We are here not dealing with the testimony of this hatred – which Heidegger tried to keep private – but with its symptoms or traces; the “vanity” of hatred as the very ‘spirit’ that Heidegger tried – *decisively* rather than systematically (i.e. unlike Hegel) – to suppress. It is of the utmost importance that ‘spirit’ is intimately implicated with this curious symptomatology. When hatred gains the power of

speech, it seems, ‘spirit’ starts *appearing* as itself, as named, in the vanity of the “letter;” the speaking of hatred is, in this deep sense, the betrayal of spirit.

If not why, I believe it is at least *how* Heidegger can go on never explicitly elaborating on *Geist*, marking an almost unconscious – that is, symptomatic – ambivalence in his treatment of this, *most* “*ontotheological*” of concepts. Since, however, at some moments Heidegger does avail himself to ‘spirit,’ and does accord it with both (legitimate) force and (ontological) relevance, the question – as to *what is it that justifies spirit’s force* – remains unheeded in Heidegger’s “ontological fundamentalism”.⁸³

Yet, *Geist* does appear in Heidegger’s published/public texts, at particular moments, like his 1935 *Introduction to Metaphysics* lecture, or his 1933 “Rectorial Address” I am discussing here. Yet it is far more prominent in “private” – in his “notes” (what is now known as the ‘*Schwartzte Hefte*’), and in his letters – texts never intended for publication. As the 1929 letter cited above suggests (written 4 years before Heidegger’s infamous ‘*Rektorsrede*’), Heidegger’s “spiritual” concerns have somewhat of an antisemitic bent, one which would have probably remained “private” if it weren’t for something in the National Socialism movement that “teased it out,” as it were. This was a movement from which, as Heidegger noted (again in a letter), he had hoped for a “spiritual renewal of Western *Dasein*,” only to be disillusioned by this ‘spirit’ having less and less to do with the praxis of philosophy. Like the ‘force’ that “inspires” the philosopher from within her, authentic, ‘ground,’ National Socialism had seemed to have “inspired” Heidegger to make explicit, even philosophical, use of ‘spirit.’

It is in this *metaphysical locus* – where the ‘Why?’ question of metaphysics is inscribed and authorized in its *innermost*, self-recoiling essence – that one could encounter Heidegger’s ‘spirit’ – not least in the *conflict* it betrays in Heidegger’s own project (cf. *Of Spirit*, pp. 17-18). The political ramifications of this conflict reach deep, both in the way it colors Heidegger’s engagement with National Socialism at that time (most of Heidegger’s reverence for ‘spirit’ was concentrated in the first half of the 1930s), and in his own methodological/metaphysical reflection concerning his thought of Being (or ‘fundamental ontology’). These political and methodological – not to say ethical and metaphysical – im/com-plications are particularly crucial with regards to how philosophical activity relates to questions of *power* and *violence*. Perhaps one could say that the ‘antipathology’ of Heidegger actually owes a debt to his-day National Socialism, for it seems to have taken the latter to bring to the surface the more clandestine implications of Heidegger’s ‘avoidance’ of “spiritual matters,” not to mention everything he still shared, despite himself, with the “spirit” of Christian ‘(onto)theology.’ To paraphrase Heidegger’s antisemitic remark cited above – more of an ethos than a remark, in fact –

National Socialism had made explicit what, in “fundamental ontology,” could only be “indirectly hinted at.” This “vanity” effectively compromised – as Hegel knew all too well – the spiritual force of “Truth” and/as “Reconciliation;” it interferes, hence, with philosophical freedom at the heart of its purported ‘autonomy.’

At some point, it seems, philosophy dreams of a time, or a place, where there will no longer be a ‘Why?’, where the very separation that enables this desire for wisdom be “reconciled” in/as ‘Truth.’ For Heidegger, to recall, the ‘Why?’ question necessitates (and hence justifies) the ‘force of spirit’ that its fundamental condition demands. Like rockets that propel a spaceship to the escape-velocity needed to overcome Earth’s gravitational pull, it is only via this force that the philosopher can be beckoned – and “free” enough so as to attend this beckoning – by the question concerning the ‘ground of beings,’ something that, for Heidegger, precisely marks philosophy as a true “autonomous” possibility (IM, p. 10). But, the question remains, *why* does Heidegger make this assumption (i.e. that the question can only come from *within* Being)? What are this assumption’s metaphysical, not to say ethical, conditions or implications? Here is a limit, beyond which Heidegger – explicitly and notoriously) – remains *silent*; a ‘Why?’ to which, in a certain sense, Heidegger was “philosophically-compelled” not to respond, at least, not “vainly,” not explicitly. Of this vanity only Heidegger’s symptomatic use of ‘spirit’ remains; the force of his hatred remained, indeed, private, “internal;” not (philosophically important enough) to be seen, yet still (politically important enough) to *inform*. In a word, talk of the beyond Being – and here Heidegger also shares the “Kantian spirit” – is vain talk.

Heidegger can contend, hence, that it is the question of Being that *ought to* be the first question of philosophy, but can never bring himself to the vanity of philosophically/publically accounting for the *ethical* implications (and metaphysical assumptions) of this ‘necessity’ (and, *a fortiori*, its ‘spiritual force’). In a similar way to Kant, Heidegger *constrains* the ‘Why?’ question(s) of metaphysics to (the understanding of) Being, following an underlying imperative to uncover the meaning or ‘Truth’ of Being *as Being’s only relevant or legitimate justification*. If there was an ethical condition which was somehow associated with the question about the meaning of Being, this condition – not being ‘fundamental’ – is met with the fundamental ontologist’s silence. After all, it is of the utmost spiritual necessity that *stating* this ethical condition would undermine its justification; too vain, an externalization of a force – a “*pression*” (as they say in French) – which should remain *ex-expression-less*. For Heidegger, after all, Being is assumed to be *grounded* in/as the essence of ‘Truth,’ not, as Lévinas would argue, in a responsibility to the demands of Justice.

As Jacques Derrida already understood, it is in this symptomatology of ‘spirit’ (the latter considered as both a “force” and a *word*) that one can begin to question the “force” of (Heidegger’s) spirit. Derrida himself concludes that, “*Geist* [...] for Heidegger [...] is another name for the one [...], one of the names for collecting and gathering” (*Of Spirit*, p. 9). This collection and gathering is the essence of the spiritual force, and this has been true from scholasticism, throughout modern philosophy (and/as ontotheology), up to and including Heidegger’s “fundamentalism of Being.” In the latter, this force inheres precisely in the onto-hermeneutic regulation of the metaphysical question(s), assuming that the ‘Why?’ question, coming at ‘Being,’ *can only arrive from within Being* – gathering all thought and all metaphysics back to its originary ‘ground’ – there where ‘Truth’ resides. In this sense, it is apposite to recall that Heidegger’s infamous “Rectorial Address” – where he accepted the Rectorship at his University of Freiburg in an already Nazi-ruled German University – availed itself, precisely, to the, *informing*, force of spirit: “The assumption of the rectorate is the commitment to the *spiritual* [*geistigen*] leadership of this institution of higher learning” (I emphasize here that the emphasis is Heidegger’s)⁸⁴

Lévinas insists, however, that this constraint, however “necessary,” be made ethically questionable – not illegitimate, but whose legitimacy is *suspended* – since it involves a primordial decision whose violence calls for responsibility just as its freedom calls for its autonomy; hence, if taken seriously, the dangerous and radical nature of Lévinas’ ethico-metaphysical phenomenology. What does it mean for the ‘ground of Being’ to be, already, implicated in an ethically questionable violence?

Seeking to side-step both metaphysics/ontotheology and ethics with his ‘fundamental ontology’ – where ‘Being’ operates the twin functions of curtailing or overcoming the former and deducing or deriving (and hence delimiting) the latter – Heidegger’s appeal to the “ground” of Being is marked by two corresponding “curiosities:” the first betrayed a dangerous slippage in Heidegger’s public rhetoric during his “Nazi years,” whereby the ontological ‘*Grund*’ “gave ground” to the National *Boden*, tied to the historico-ontological mission of the (German) *Volk*; recalling, not only the National Socialist ‘*Blut und Boden*’ (“Blood and Soil”) rhetoric that *vilifies* the Jews as, indeed, “groundless” [*Bodenlöse*] ‘*Volk*’.⁸⁵ This vilification is indeed theologically mirrored in Christian antisemitism’s own vilification of Judaism; of a faith that insists on the *separation* of God from World via the vanity of the ‘Law’ and its ‘Letter,’ rejecting their ‘spiritual’ assembly/reconciliation in “the way and the truth [*ἀληθεία*] and the life” that is Jesus Christ (John 14:6).

The second, the much more “curious,” *metaphysical* implication of this “ground-and-people” relation, leads Heidegger to annex *Geist* into *Dasein*’s propriety itself; thus he uses the construction of

“spiritual-historical *Dasein*” to address the ontological essence of/in the German people and state, where spirit is precisely that which, *for a grounded ‘Volk,’* turns *Geschichte* (history) into *Geschick* (destiny),⁸⁶ thus also informing/justifying, if not the use of political power in the international scene (the assembly and polemic of the world’s “grounded” nations), at least the pedagogical power wielded by the (German) *University*.⁸⁷ This carries beyond the university, through the pervasive force of spirit, to the entire *Volk*: the “spiritual world of a people” is, then, “the power that most deeply preserves the people’s earth- and blood-bound strengths” (‘Self-Assertion,’ p. 9). The ground, hence, authorizes the use of force for its own preservation; not from usurpation necessarily, but, precisely, from the uprooting influences of modern technology, an influence that, as Heidegger’s *Black Notebooks* betray, is inherently *Jewish*.

The spirit that recollects and assembles under a ground further betrays the force of its metaphysical assumptions in a concept that Heidegger’s “fundamentalism” refers to as resolve or ‘resoluteness’ (*Entschlossenheit*). In this case, Heidegger betrays a central concept from his own “fundamentally ontological” project. Thus, what Heidegger says in 1933 about *Geist*, that it is “the primordially attuned, knowing resoluteness [*Entschlossenheit*] towards the essence of Being” (ibid, ibid), directly recalls his 1927 *Sein und Zeit*. Since “[r]esoluteness, as authentic ‘Being-one’s-Self’ is “[...] authentically nothing else than Being-in-the-world” (SZ, p. 298), Heidegger inscribes this resolve with an ontological urgency that, once again, avoids the ethical question of its force. This force, of course, is already justified, through the resoluteness of this spiritual force, by ‘truth’ as the final telos and arbiter of thought, of the phenomenological *activity*: “In resoluteness we have now arrived at that truth of *Dasein* which is most primordial because it is authentic” (SZ, p. 297 [my underline]). While *Sein und Zeit* did connect *Dasein* to ‘spirit,’ in a decidedly irreverent, not to say begrudging manner – often putting “spirit” in quotation marks (cf. ibid, 368) – Heidegger’s discourse doesn’t miss a beat in these, “inspired,” comments.

Heidegger’s *Dasein* – whose “ground” is to be protected from uprooting forces by the force of spirit – becomes precisely the “*Dasein*” of the West in general, beholden to its Greek heritage where “western man raises himself up from a popular base and [...] stands up to the totality of what is” (‘Self-Assertion,’ p. 3); just like the ‘authentic’ philosopher. If there was an underlying hatred, an unreconciled difference, to this sharing/caring structure of the spiritually-inflected (or spiritually ordained) “ground,” it is one that would always take Heidegger, despite himself, by surprise. His fundamental ontology was to “de-theologize” philosophy, and yet remained inscribed, spiritually, with the same hatred that Christian theology could never reconcile; the difference that had always threatened it and that it could never “reconcile.” This “surprise,” however, bespeaks a more general, “spiritually motivated” blindness

to a metaphysical problem, a *difference* that today has all but vanished, denied the ‘vanity’ of a direct appearance (like in the days where a Western philosopher (Hegel) or theologian (Luther) could speak it with no compunction or fear). Yet, precisely for this reason, this blindness, this structural suppression of the (metaphysically) ‘vain,’ has become all the more dangerous – its violence all the more acute and ungraspable – leaving a “back door” wide open for the next time spirit’s hatred “erupts” on the “historical scene.” This eruption, as in the past, will then be dismissed as mere “vanities” of the – “essentially” good, truthful, justified – spirit of Science or Freedom, never allowed to bring the essence/substance of the latter into (ethical) question.

Heidegger – as another (admittedly uneasy) member of this “invisible Church” of spirit – did not, or refused to, see how ontology is itself driven by a *certain* metaphysical concern, and hence wielding an *always questionable* “force of spirit;” one whose questioning evinces a susceptibility to something *other* than ‘Being’ (from which this force/spirit were imputed to emerge).

Heidegger’s antisemitism – especially in the “private” nature it took vis-à-vis his public or philosophical “expressions” – was geared against this same ungrounded essence of the vain, the alien, whose “present” was an anti-historical affront to “presence” just as its existence was an affront to Being: an ungrounded, un-workable or unreal (*unwirklich*) “vanity” that keeps harping on the hard surfaces of Being, interrupting it, in its ground and Truth, rather of reconciling or “gathering” its content to a whole. This structure repeats itself whether this ‘whole’ is conceived-of as Being (Heidegger), Reason (Hegel), or apperception (Kant); a separate, nomadic difference whose illegitimate status – vis-à-vis free, autonomous thought – is only shored up in the (now all-but-forgotten) metaphysical disputes of Judaism and Christianity.

What Heidegger shares with Kant in this respect is best seen with regards to Hegel: it was Hegel that most explicitly and unequivocally championed the workings of ‘spirit’ in his metaphysical-speculative system of Reason (*Vernunft*), while Heidegger, following Kant in many ways, stops the dialectic before the speculative stage, at the level of the Understanding (*Verstand*); that is how fundamental ontology is supposed to, eventually, “overcome” metaphysics. And yet, in all of the above we find this need or imperative of gathering or recollecting, this “spirit of unification,” with the sole difference being, it seems to me, that Hegel went on to affirm it more radically and unquestionably, while Kant and Heidegger did so more cagily and inadvertently.

With regards to Western thought in general this point is of radical, fundamental importance, for it marks the reason why *the Heidegger-Kant resistance to Hegel’s speculative system will not be enough to*

question this “spiritual” tradition. This question requires a Levinatzschean antipathology, one that goes deeper; towards the darker “center” of hatred and exclusion that animates this spirit. The skeptic can show us the traces of such an exclusion in the occident’s philosophical tradition; but only Levinatzsch will affirm it, *contra* Hegel’s persecution of this “darkness” (not “regardless” of it or in silent complicity with it), and attend to the way this spirit of coherence, of the ‘reconciliation of difference(s)’ effects its metaphysical violence against the interruption of that obscure, “quasi-existing,” Other.

I will quote here, more fully, the passage from Heidegger’s *The Self-Assertion of the German University* I cited above, leaving its totality to reverberate between what has been already interrogated by Derrida, and what is about to follow. This will help attune some ears to the murmurs of a ‘spirit’ that, as Heidegger’s case perhaps most viscerally demonstrates, is most dangerous when left unthought, not to say effaced. For, when the force of this spirit (inevitably) returns, it catches even the most subtle and sophisticated thinkers – even despite themselves – saying something like this, which reads very much like a “spiritual” call to arms; a justification of violence, coming out of hiding, and becoming explicit:

If we will the essence of science understood as the questioning, unguarded holding of one's ground in the midst of the uncertainty of the totality of what-is, this will to essence will create for our people its world, a world of the innermost and most extreme danger, i.e., its truly spiritual world. For "spirit" is neither empty cleverness, nor the noncommittal play of wit, nor the endless drift of rational distinctions, and especially not world reason [here is where Heidegger thinks he is resisting Hegel; SC]; spirit is primordially attuned, knowing resoluteness toward the essence of Being. And the *spiritual world* of a people is [...] the power that most deeply preserves the people's strengths, which are tied to earth and blood; and as such it is the power that most deeply moves and most profoundly shakes its being (Dasein). Only a spiritual world gives the people the assurance of greatness.⁸⁸

Let me sum this up directly and concretely: what Heidegger failed to think was the ethico-metaphysical condition of *an incarnated/grounded spirit* that he had borrowed from Christian metaphysics; a spiritual *justification* from which both he and Hegel – the former with silence, the latter with triumphant affirmation – approached Being and thought. This shared condition – affirmed in Hegel, denied in Heidegger, averted in Kant – is that of an underthought and poorly attended-to Christian metaphysics, “translated” or carried-over into ‘transcendental’ and ‘fundamentally ontological’ philosophy. It is not enough to identify, within Being, different “grounds” afforded by different traditions/horizons of thought, for that which accepts no ground will be silently, yet “resolutely,” persecuted by this spirit that drives all transcendent difference back to the ground. The ease with which Heidegger succumbs to ‘spirit,’ the seamless passage from the *Grund* to the *Boden*, from the *Geschichte* to the *Geschick*, from *Dasein* to *Volk* – all testify to this invisible enemy that Heidegger shared with

theology's 'spirit.' Yes, perhaps this enemy was anything but 'ontological' – and perhaps that is the point of its "invisibility" – but its hatred kept Heidegger caught in the very same theology whose ontology he tried to resist, and whose spirit he tried to avoid. It is this hatred that remains now to testify that this was not a merely, nor even "fundamentally," an "ontological matter," but an ethical one; one that overrides, not to say prescribes, all (Western) fundamental ontology, and therefore remains unheeded so long as the question of metaphysics is not allowed to arise in its full, awe-ful, accusative glory.

0.4 The Stakes of Antipathology

"You were great in your day, Superman. But it just stands to reason that, when it came time to cash in your chips, this old, diseased maniac will be your banker."

– Lex Luthor (*Superman*, 1978)⁸⁹

In this section I trace the emergence of the philosophical question in Western thought, addressed directly for the first time in Aristotle's 'Metaphysics.' Directed towards the totality of things, the question, for Aristotle, is enabled by the philosopher's privilege, her detachment or 'freedom' from the worries of everyday life. This question asks after the principle or origin (ἀρχή) of all phenomena, a "wonderous" 'Why?' that accompanies the philosopher's privilege-of-detachment: this 'origin' – a-temporal, untouched by historical contingencies – dominates the totality of 'particulars' by assigning them limits, de-fining them, *from without*. Martin Heidegger, following Aristotle, conceives of philosophical thought as emerging from a unique, 'authentic' place, there where the philosopher is no longer 'inauthentically' preoccupied with particular 'beings' in the world (*Seiendes*), and "leaps" away from it, thus gaining the 'existential freedom' to think "Being (*Sein*) in general." In Heidegger, hence, authenticity translates what in Aristotle was a socio-economic, not to say political, condition of metaphysical thought. What Heidegger conceived as the most fundamental philosophical difference – the "ontological difference" between 'Being' and 'beings' – usurps/replaces the socio-economic difference/condition in Aristotle.

Owing to his project of "destroying" Western philosophy's tradition – a Christian appropriation of Aristotle which Heidegger disparagingly calls 'onto-theology' – Heidegger's phenomenology of the Aristotelian question "ontologizes" it: he cuts off any 'principle' that might lay claim to what is beyond 'Being' – e.g. the scholastic ("ontotheological") 'God' thought as the a-temporal "unmoved mover" of phenomena – by de-fining the question itself, delimiting it between Being and Nothing. From Aristotle's

more “open,” “wonderous” ‘Why?’ the question becomes ‘Why are there beings rather than nothing?’. This maneuver allows time, for the first time (in Western thought), to play an essential, decisive role in philosophy, but at the price of the aforementioned “detheologizing” constraint: on the one hand, Heidegger’s ontological ‘Why?’ asks, through ‘beings’ – that are always perceived temporally – only about the meaning of Being; and, on the other hand, such an ontological intervention (in what had been a metaphysical question) categorically refuses any thought of time that is not ontological/projective. With the latter “anti-theological reform” of Aristotle’s question, the scholastic ‘God’ was evicted from philosophy (as a-temporal) but not without a price.

This price is made visible in Heidegger’s phenomenology of the ‘Why?’ question’s own emergence, when the ‘Why?’ is itself asked as to its own ‘Why?’. Conceiving this questioning of the question as the ‘Why?’s *recoil upon itself*, this question – already ontologically de-fined – can never again leave its ‘ontological’ ambit. Heidegger credits the ‘Why?’ of the ‘Why?’ question to a certain “force of spirit” that necessarily derives from Being (from what he calls its ‘ground’), and only directed towards, indeed *questioned by*, the ‘Truth’ of Being. Heidegger’s “anti-theological” appropriation of the Aristotelian/metaphysical ‘Why?’ question is thus not only bound, *but justified*, by ‘Being’ alone. One arrives at the authentic place of philosophy owing to ‘spirit,’ and the latter is assumed to be somehow within Being, in other words, legitimized as ontological.

It was not wholly Heidegger’s intention to justify his philosophical project in this, “spiritual,” manner. Wrapped within the Nazis’ inherently antisemitic project – a project which Heidegger himself deemed as ‘spiritual’ – he thus betrays the ethical price of his fundamental ontology, resorting to a concept that he had beforehand explicitly tries to avoid. It was, after all, the main concept of he who had been, in Heidegger’s eyes, *the ontotheologist par excellence*, Hegel; and yet, in his 1935 lectures (that became his *Introduction to Metaphysics*), ‘spirit’ becomes – like in Hegel – *the philosophically justified “force.”* Both at this historical period (National Socialism’s rise in Germany), and on this philosophical issue (of what justifies/enables Philosophy itself), Heidegger betrays a shared ‘spirit’ with the ontotheology he explicitly – not “critiques,” but – *rejects*. Heidegger’s de-theological attempt, hence, becomes supremely illustrative of the workings of ‘spirit’ – through philosophy – to self-justify its force without remainder, without any ‘exterior,’ without “vanity.”

Emmanuel Lévinas is the thinker most sensitive to these clandestine, ‘spiritual’ collusions of Heideggerian thought, particularly with regards to “Hitlerism.” His critique of Heidegger shows this Kant-like, *ex-hypothesi* refusal of *transcendence* (which Heidegger reduces to an anticipatory projection

of *Dasein*/thought) is also a refusal to properly articulate – except in vague, “spiritual” terms – the ethical responsibility of the ‘fundamental-ontological’ inquiry, specifically *in its orientation of the metaphysical question*. The only concern that Heidegger’s inquiry admits is geared towards the *Truth* of Being, leaving all ethical considerations of *Justice* secondary to, or derivative of, this ontological (and at times ‘spiritual’) de-finition. ‘Being’ might be securely barred from laying claim to any *metaphysical* transcendence, but only at the price of losing the ‘beyond Being’ that could justify (and accuse) the philosopher’s ‘Why?’ question.

What marks Lévinas’ critique of “ontology” as ethico-metaphysical in essence is that he associates this problem of justice or justification with the problematic of time. Temporality itself, when enclosed within Being (as/through Heideggerian ‘anticipation’) perhaps assures a closure that defends against assigning an a-temporal entity “beyond Being” (in the “ontotheological” manner), but it also precludes a thought of time considered in a relation of *interruption to* – rather than projection of – Being; an interruption that must admit a *difference* – and not necessarily an “entity” – that attests to, as Lévinas says, an “otherwise than Being.” This non-entity “different” is what Lévinas refers to as the ‘Other,’ the baby Heidegger had poured out with ontotheology’s bath-water, so-to-speak.

As Heidegger’s resort to “spirit” suggests, this question of the Other cannot be avoided, but already antecedes philosophical thought – the thought of principles and totality – in an ethico-metaphysical manner. Lévinas inflects both Aristotle and Heidegger with this move, orienting the former’s “open-ended” ‘wonder’ to the interruption of the ‘beyond;’ this interruption avoids the *systematization* of thought/philosophy (the telos – or ‘spirit’ – of thought itself, according to Hegel) while at the same time avoiding the Heideggerian ethical predicament. As a knowledge of God that hails back to a single principle, Christian theology (as theo-logos, God-discourse/knowledge) could become, for the first time, an ontotheology, a coherent account of the cosmos in a Christian ‘spirit.’ This spirit used the “beyond Being,” its understanding of ‘God,’ as a principle of coherence, tying the theological system together to a single origin and principle. Lévinas, however – proceeding from a Jewish relation to Divinity – makes this “beyond Being” accusative (of Being) and interruptive (of Time), something that resists ‘theology’ in its very spirit (geared towards System and closure/totality). As Heidegger exemplified, despite himself, the Christian ‘spirit’ cannot be merely rejected or avoided, it must be countered if “theology” is really to be met with and fought on its own “ground;” otherwise, well, one might get carried away, as Heidegger did, with its ‘spirit;’ where only the reconciliations of ‘Truth’ – rather than the accusations of Justice – a priori justify thought/action in and of themselves.

The Lévinasian ‘event’ of thought is conceived, hence, to be, *first*, ethico-metaphysical rather than ontological, which allows a return to, and reconsideration of, Aristotle’s own, “wondrous” account. The leap from the ‘inauthentic’ domain of particulars/‘beings’ to the philosopher’s contemplation of principles (i.e. hermeneutic consideration of the meaning of Being) gets weighed down by the limit that is thereby traversed (by the privileged philosopher), and this traversal that no longer assures, but actually *accuses* (though not condemns), the philosopher’s freedom, however ‘authentic’ (to ask her question; to claim ‘autonomy’). This philosophical “escape from Being” of Lévinas’ ‘ethics as first philosophy’ speaks to an inherently different conception of ‘freedom,’ one that is irreducible to either ontological conditions or volitional intentions, but exposes both to a transcendent question, a ‘Why ‘Why’?’ that arrives – neither as a “recoil on itself,” nor from the ‘ground of Being,’ but – from what Lévinas calls *l’Autrui* (‘the Other’), from what is *otherwise than Being*. However necessary, traversing the limit towards the philosophical question problematizes the philosopher’s freedom (from everyday necessities/understanding), making it derivative and accused, inserting a heteronomy at the heart – or at the immemorial past – of philosophical ‘autonomy,’ which is why Lévinas calls it a “*difficult* freedom.” This is a freedom not absolved by Western thought theodical ‘spirit’ of the philosophical question (in Heidegger still conceived to be originating from Being and geared towards its Truth), but accused by the Other. Only this accusation allows us to return to the question of (social, political) justice that had been so marked in Aristotle (but “ontologized-to-oblivion” by Heidegger).

This above analysis was geared towards two purposes: the first is to provide an introduction to Lévinas’ metaphysical concerns, specifically their urgent importance for any radical thought of the more obviously “ethically-inflected” discourses of politics and ‘social justice’ (it is especially addressed to the many political/social theorists who assume that ‘metaphysics’ is somehow irrelevant to their discourse); the second, is to demonstrate – at this radical, ethico-metaphysical level – the stakes/necessity of what I call ‘antipathology’ by exhuming a blind-spot in Heidegger’s thinking, insofar as his own Christian ethics (and hatreds) “unconsciously” operated (in) his ontology. Revisiting this problematic reveals that when ‘Truth’ is assumed to include its own justification, Heidegger’s philosophical ‘spirit’ is left, just like (Hegel’s) “ontotheology,” shielded from ethical question; as if the “ex” of expression, the exteriority of the spiritual force, could/should finally be dissolved into, absolved as, ‘Truth.’ For both Hegel and Heidegger, the ‘spirit’ of philosophy or the philosophical question is the very substance of thought’s ‘freedom’ and ‘autonomy,’ the latter being secured by their respective totalities/closures (the overarching ‘hermeneutic circle’ of the understanding of Being in Heidegger; the *telos* of ‘Absolute

Knowledge’ in Hegel). Building upon the previous chapter on skepticism, I show that both Hegel and Heidegger use this assumed enclosure/totality (of ‘Truth’) as a philosophical “immune mechanism” against the skeptic who will always *only* appeal to ‘Truth’ as a question and an interruption, never as justification or ‘ground.’

What is most crucial here, in the context of antipathology, is that this “immune mechanism” already repeats a prior, “theological” one, one that Christianity wields towards Judaism’s “metaphysical retardation” (as an interruption of its ‘spirit’): the skeptic’s irreverence toward any enclosure – whether a “fundamental ontology” one or an ‘Absolute Knowledge’ one – upsets ‘Truth’ at the very heart of its (presumed) justification. Much like ‘the Jew,’ who insists that God never be arrived-at or reconciled/merged with (God’s ‘Truth’ being considered a gnostic heresy and forbidden in Judaism; Jesus being refused as the Messiah/“Son of God”), the skeptic *scandalizes* all philosophical projects/truths without a coherent project/truth of her own; seemingly – again, just like the Jew in the eyes of the Christian theologians – out of sheer vanity/ill-will. This theological/philosophical animosity towards ‘vanity’ implicates both Hegel (where it is explicit) and Heidegger (where it is implicit).

This idea (of a clandestinely shared “Christian spirit”) is crucial in establishing the “antipathological” link I am trying to make between ‘modern philosophy’ and the ‘medieval theology’ it supposedly left behind (with the ‘Enlightenment’), insisting on the necessity to understand the animosities of Christianity so as to account for those that modern philosophy had learned to keep silent about, and, eventually, to be blind towards. Heidegger’s copious use of “spirit” during his “National Socialist phase” – manifesting an inner conflict with earlier statements about avoiding this (Hegelian) concept – shows this “metaphysical antisemitism”⁹⁰ more starkly in a kind of “rhetorical slippery slope;” where the *Grund* of Being slides towards the *Boden* of the German *Volk* (the Jews were always considered by their Christian neighbors, as Heidegger confirms in his *Black Notebooks, Boden-löse*), an enclosure from which all “metaphysical nomads” – e.g. Jews, skeptics – are excluded *by definition*. What antipathology uncovers here is that, while Hegel and Heidegger might not agree on what they love/affirm, they do betray a curious consonance on what they hate/negate (Jews and skeptics); a shared theological/philosophical animosity towards “vain” thought. The fact that Heidegger, who explicitly criticizes Western philosophy for being a Christian/ontotheological bastardization of Greek thought – can promulgate this ontotheology’s metaphysical persecutions/violence (i.e., repeating its theodicial spirit) without realizing it, marks both how the “deafness” with which antipathology tries to engage

operates, and what Nietzsche calls Christian *ressentiment*'s unequalled *genius* in anaesthetizing its own violence.

As Nietzsche will show in the next chapter, Christianity – carrying its Judaic progenitor as an unreconciled difference within itself – would employ its always-reconciling 'Love' against the Jewish always-resisting 'Law' in the same manner that philosophy would employ the "freedom" or "autonomy" of thought (whether "universal" or "transcendental") against the "servility" or "heteronomy" of its ("contingent" or "vain") particulars. Perhaps nowhere is this spirit's *ethos* more explicit than in the decidedly *modern* category – whose metaphysical assumptions are mostly accepted unquestionably – called, in Carl Linnaeus' famous 18th Century moniker, '*Homo Sapiens*.' More than a mere name, this *definition* implies that *with respect to Reason* (L. *sapere*) all (men) are "one and the same" (Gr. *homos*); in other words, that all that are to be considered "reasonable" are united in the Truth of Being (except the skeptics and the Jews that, vainly self-excluding, refuse both). Just as the reconciling 'Spirit' that equalizes "all" – be it the totality of 'beings,' the generality of Being, the universal category of 'Man' or Knowledge qualified as Absolute – will be made here to answer for its "reconciliatory" force, the *ideological* "egalitarianism" of the '*Homo Sapiens*,' like the all-accepting, all-embracing love of Christ(ianity), will be called to answer for the vain self-seclusion of an irreconcilable stain, its dark(ened) progenitor Jew; a '*Homo Perfidus*' that, unlike in the Gospels' narrative about the suicide of Judas Iscariot, refuses this effacement.⁹¹

1. "Whose death is it, anyway?" Lévinas Contra Heidegger

[...] Through sublimation, Christianity continues to give piety roots, nurturing itself on landscapes and memories culled from family, tribe and nation. This is why it conquered humanity. Judaism has not sublimated idols – on the contrary, it has demanded that they be destroyed. Like technology, it has demystified the universe. It has freed Nature from a spell. Because of its abstract universalism, it runs up against imaginations and passions. But it has discovered man in the nudity of his face (Emmanuel Lévinas, '*Heidegger, Gagarin and us*,' DF, pp. 234-235)

Someone who expresses himself in his nudity—the face—is one to the point of appealing to me, of placing himself under my responsibility: Henceforth, I have to respond for him. All the gestures of the other were signs addressed to me. [...] The other who expresses himself is entrusted to me (and there is no debt in regard to the other, for what is due is unpayable: one is never free of it). The other individuates me in the responsibility I have for him. The death of the other who dies affects me in my very identity as a responsible "me" [*moi*]; it affects me in my nonsubstantial identity, which is not the simple coherence of various acts of identification, but is made up of an ineffable responsibility. My being affected by the death of the other is precisely that, my relation with his

death. It is, in my relation, my deference to someone who no longer responds, already a culpability – the culpability of the survivor. (Emmanuel Lévinas, GDT, p. 12)

For Heidegger, the event of the ‘Why?’s “recoil” brings the ‘authentic’ philosopher to face the “possible impossibility” of her death; the ‘Da’ where *Dasein* can authentically attend ‘Being’ vis-à-vis the ‘Nothing’ that de-fines or delimits it. This other/recoiled ‘Why?’ is enclosed within existence, a kind of ‘Why ‘Being’ (i.e., *Dasein*) and not ‘Nothing?’ inflection. This *Sein-zum-Tode* (being-towards-death) – marked by what Heidegger calls *Angst* – is precisely where *Dasein*’s freedom is the most profound, owing to the ontological radicality of the ‘Why?’ question itself. This, “existential” freedom is conceived with respect, not only to place (‘Da’), but to time, connecting Being and time through this nexus of *Dasein*’s death: since *Dasein* exists as an *ek-stasis* of time, owing to its essential ‘futurity’ (as ‘anticipation’), *Dasein* is only ever “Da” (‘there’) *so long as it has a future* (to “anticipate”). If Being-there is “given” to *Dasein* as ‘Care’ (*Sorge*) – owing to the hermeneutic necessity by which beings-in-the-world attain their ‘Truth,’ that is, come to *mean* something for *Dasein* – death is where *Dasein* is no longer “there,” where *Dasein* no longer “cares.” This is also why Heidegger sees this death as the most “individuating” aspect of *Dasein*; it explicitly de-fines (i.e. delimiting) *Dasein*’s ‘Conscience,’ recalling the latter only to attend the Nothing that delimits its own anticipations and understanding (or anticipations *as* understanding). Ontologically “fundamentalized” in this manner, the “call of conscience” appeals to *Dasein* to attend its death as its “ownmost” (*eigenste*), that which brings *Dasein* to – understand the Truth of – its Being-in-general; and *nothing* other.

Lévinas’ ‘ethico-metaphysical’ inflection of the ‘Why?’ question calls this Heideggerian maneuver – not to say Heidegger’s own ‘conscience’ and ‘care’ – into question, along with those of the Western philosophical tradition more generally. Heidegger’s “fundamentally ontological” approach carries on this tradition of, what Lévinas calls, ‘egology,’ wherein the ‘Why Why?’ is enclosed and secured from its ‘beyond.’ Lévinas’ ‘Why?’ is not exhausted in the Being/Nothing alternative; his “conscience” not absolved by ontological ‘authenticity.’ *The other’s death* makes “philosophical” responsibility exceed the horizons of ‘anticipation,’ and the closure of ‘conscience.’ “Responsibility” breaches *Dasein*’s “care,” accusing Heidegger’s “conscience” of evincing the ethical “deafness” of ‘the Same’ (to the Other), and showing both to be derivative of a ‘Why Why?’ that *Dasein*, however ‘authentic, can neither “own” nor enclose.

Thus, *selon* Lévinas, it is the dead/dying *other* that constitutes the most essential, intimate paradigm of thought. This is the paradigm Lévinas has recourse to in his phenomenology of the Self-

Other relation, a *difference* that exceeds and precedes Heidegger's 'ontological,' Being-beings one. Usurping the primacy of my own death, Lévinas' "paradigm-shift" bespeaks, not the Nothing, but the *unforeseeable* character of the corpse's "non-response," a kind of "there ought to have been," ethical, inflection. While for Heidegger it is *my* corpse/pathology that de-fines thought/care, Lévinas' dead other's expression (*of no-response*) constitutes the extreme limit of responsibility (beyond Heidegger's 'conscience'); there where the other's 'face' speaks its destitute exposure to an impending death, for which I am responsible, and yet cannot ever "own" in any 'authentic' or 'fundamental' manner. If in Heidegger's 'authenticity' *Dasein* was "called" to witness the Nothing (in the name of Truth), in Lévinas' 'responsibility' thought is regarded as the witness to the Other's demand towards 'me' (in the name of Justice).

Lévinas will, hence, speak of the desire to *murder* as the antipode phenomenon to the "corpse-encounter," for, in its very excess and madness, this desire "proves" the "beyond Being" of the Other: it elicits violence from *Dasein*'s "accused" freedom, and furthermore "offends" this freedom by proving that it is not within this freedom's capacity to put an end to it (in murder); the Other remains, in the dead/murdered other's *expression*, more radical, more haunting and accusing, than ever. To return to Hegel, it is in this "freedom's" desire for (ab)solution that the most radical hostility or violence against the Other inheres, the attempt to "efface" the Other by arriving at the end/telos of its – rather "irrational" (and unfair) – demand. Whether this desire delimits itself to the finitude of Being, or claiming the all-encompassing absolution in the "positive infinity" of Absolute Knowledge, an Other always-already interrupts its "egology." This witnessed trace of the Other 'beyond Being' (i.e., the other's 'expression') is that same exacting anonymity that philosophical thought had left – however necessarily – behind (Heidegger's *das Man*; Hegel's 'vanity'); it is just that this 'necessity' is no longer allowed, in Lévinas' 'ethics as *first* philosophy,' to be ontologically justified or metaphysically "absolved" (via Heidegger's or Hegel's 'Truth'). The Lévinasian witness' responsibility – unlike the generalized 'guilty soul' – is neither redeemable in (my) life, nor absolvable in (my) death; *it never wholly comes to Nothing*.

The *singularity* of the Lévinasian 'me-witness' is more akin to the 'nobility' of the chosen Jew, elected to receive God's Law, than the 'humble' Christian 'soul' that implicates "*all*" in a generalized system of guilt. The clandestine relationship whereby the former poignantly accuses the latter, and the latter, in turn, builds a system based upon resenting (this) accusation and proving its 'vanity,' is the tough Ariadne's thread that antipathology tries to trace here, through the paradoxical hatred that the "religion of love" could never resolve. Tracing the *symptomatic* nature of this ancient animosity –

especially how the latter both implicates, and yet keeps “skating under the radar,” of modern philosophy – finds a paradigmatic example in Heidegger.

1.1 ‘Why (should I Care)?’

Heidegger deduces all conceivable meaning from the attitude of man toward his own death. He thinks to the very end, in all the senses of the term. He carries out his thought to its ultimate consequences, and he thinks that my death for me can be nothing but the ultimate self. I wonder if that is, in fact, for thought, the ultimate movement to the end. Is there not a manner of thinking that goes beyond my own death to the death of the other man, and does not the human consist precisely in this thinking beyond one's own death? I have no desire to exhibit some noble soul in affirming this. What I mean is, the death of the other can constitute a central experience for me, whatever the resources of our perseverance in our own being may be. 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. (Lévinas, ‘The Philosopher and Death,’ AT, pp. 161-162)

The solitude of authentic *Dasein*, owing to her unique leap into the philosophical ‘*Da*,’ has its own internal coherence and *raison d’être* in Heidegger’s fundamental ontology, especially vis-à-vis his purported “overcoming of metaphysics.” The essence of this *Dasein* consisted in the Heideggerian ‘potentiality’ of her existential freedom to become ‘authentic,’ a freedom conceived by Heidegger as the authentic philosopher’s freedom to think (about or towards) her own death. If there is a ground to Being, if there is allowed a questioning *in* thought *of* thought, it is, for Heidegger, enclosed within the philosopher’s ‘*Da*’ and the generality of Being to which s/he has privileged – that is to say, ‘*spiritual*’ – access. What defines the content of this enclosure, what is most proper (‘*Eigenste*’) for it, is, hence, that which gives it its limits – the limits of ontological thought, the limits of thinking about Being – and becomes, in Lévinas’ formulation of Heidegger’s thought (and the modern philosophical/scientific project more generally), an ‘egology;’ my thought, grounded in Being, ends when my ‘*Da*’ (and its ‘potentialities’) ends, and this limit of thought is also, *a fortiori* (for Heidegger at least), the limits of responsibility towards (philosophical) thought. For Lévinas, however, ethical responsibility extends beyond the limits of Being, beyond my freedom or my history (even, or rather *especially*, as ‘philosopher’ or ‘thinker’) – it extends beyond my death to the death of the Other. That this Other is *neither* Being *nor* ‘nothing’ is perhaps the greatest challenge to explain in Lévinas’ thought, particularly to contemporary scholars, philosophers and otherwise; and yet it is precisely what I will attempt here.

This, metaphysical question of responsibility is where I propose to introduce, with Lévinas, an interruption of Heidegger's project of 'fundamental ontology,' and especially the "voluntary freedom" that it is implicated in, or supposed to (gather or cohere in/as) 'ground.' Lévinas is particularly invested in expounding the ethical meaning of the aforementioned "spiritual force" that grounds the ontological privilege of authentic *Dasein*. The philosopher's question does not "recoil" on its-self, but places thought in a more radical question, in a true predicament. Lévinas will insist on the breach, or difference, not between Being and beings (as Heidegger would have it) – the ontological difference traversed/thought by the first 'Why?', corresponding to the difference between the 'authentic' and the 'inauthentic' – but be struck by the second, 'Why?' as an *interruption*, rather than "grounding," of Being; an interruption and accusation of the 'authentic' itself, from without, from the, groundless, Other. This interruption does not, according to Lévinas, fall back to the realm of beings and Heideggerian inauthenticity, but neither does it issue forth from the "ground" of Being or its Truth. This predicament – where authenticity is struck by a difference from *beyond Being* – is captured succinctly by Lévinas as the *singular* event whereby the 'Why Why?' is seen as an interruption by an incommensurable exteriority, rather than securing *Dasein* in a "recoil" that, by definition, never escapes Being.⁹²

It is important to stress that the Heideggerian position is not nearly as "care-free" as 'freedom' might suggest. When 'inauthentic *Dasein*' is engrossed in the "common understanding" of everyday life and its 'necessities,' it is doubly protected from contemplating the 'nothing:' first there is the 'nothing' that always surrounds and defines the totality of 'beings,' delimiting the meaning of 'beings' to me (manifesting itself to the 'common understanding,' as Heidegger says, only in liminal moments – like those of great despair – as the emptying of the world of meaning); second, inauthentic *Dasein* is also spared thought of the 'nothing' that delimits the meaning of me myself to me (manifesting in/as my own death). To Heidegger, only such a confrontation with the 'nothing's' *emptiness* can give, to the 'I' that thinks through/in freedom, access to "the meaning of Being in general".⁹³ Such is the ontologist's "comportment" to Being, while the other comportment, which Heidegger calls 'fallen' (*Verfallen*), involves only the common, "pre-ontological" understanding of beings (which, as such, the only differences it "cares" about are of an "everyday" relevance).

For Heidegger, the meaning of Being is expressed in/as 'Care' (*Sorge*). It is only through my 'care' towards (beings in) the world that the latter attains a meaning for me, that it possess 'Being.' Heidegger sees this as the pre-ontological "inertia" of the fallen state, where *Dasein* is inauthentically "absorbed" in everyday concerns (SZ, p. 184); where, to recall, it does not possess the sufficient "force

of spirit” for the ontological question(ing).⁹⁴ Why is this questioning activity so threatening to inauthentic *Dasein*? Once detached, the philosophical inquirer, as mentioned earlier, is faced with a (spiritual) challenge to its freedom, where Being in general is confronted with the ‘Nothing.’ Like trying to fix what seems in good working order, one takes the risk of completely spoiling the everyday/fallen understanding’s usual, “proper” function: I “know” or “understand” what beings are (to me, in my inauthentic existence), so I do not inquire – due to the aforementioned threat (unthought, but still *operative*) – any deeper. Instead, as Heidegger writes, I “flee” (ibid, ibid). This relevance of beings to “inauthentic me” – as I live and work with them – is given via a non-philosophical, already “involved” or “fallen” care. Authentic *Dasein*’s ‘freedom,’ on the contrary, consists in confronting this threat in thought, (re-)questioning the meaning of Being (and, *a fortiori*, of ‘beings’) rather than being unconsciously dominated by it. Hence Heidegger insistence on the autonomy and freedom that attends authentic *Dasein*: provided enough force/spirit, this *Dasein* comes to choose her own freedom more fully/authentically.

In the ontological question, then, ‘Care’ finds its “zero degree,” as it were, in what Heidegger calls ‘anxiety’ (*Angst*) (SZ, p. 184). No longer am I afforded – in the “authentic *Da*” where ‘Care’ dwells – the warmth and protection of an inertial, “fallen” state; I am brought instead to a phenomenological suspension of everyday understanding. The philosopher’s detachment brings me (as ‘authentic philosopher’) face to face with the nothingness that inauthentic *Dasein* had always presupposed, but had been too “comfortable” in its unconscious servility, too “bereft of spirit,” to inquire after. It is only as ‘philosopher’ that one can deal, *fundamentally*, with the problem of nothingness; for, as we’ve seen above, it is only when Being stands forth in itself (when inquired as to its own, *general* meaning) that the problem of the ‘Nothing’ approaches/engages thought. That is why Heidegger conceives of inauthenticity as thought’s “flight” (*Flucht*) from this horrible and difficult ‘nothing,’ considering the latter’s threat to infiltrate/undermine all beings by precisely bringing their meaning to (confront the) naught. This flight is the direct result of an operative *Angst* of man concerning said nothingness, though it is only in the authentic philosophical comportment that *Angst*, in itself, can be brought to thought. Otherwise, it continues to operate by offering an endless “chatter” (*Gerede*) – in lieu of a proper discourse/logos – where ‘beings’ are endlessly multiplied in a kind of escape from the ‘Why?’ question that asks after the meaning of ‘Being in general.’ Only ‘spirit’ can supply the philosopher with the sufficient force to achieve the frightful, dangerous leap, out of this anxious escape from the ‘nothing,’ into this recoil of ‘Why?’

Lévinas does not obviate the ontological, Being-beings difference, but would inquire as to its ethical assumptions, the (necessary) ethical indifference evinced by Heidegger vis-à-vis such a “foundational” *status*. The force that necessitates the “leap” of philosophical thought is, hence, not thought of as inert(ial), as mere passivity of “state,” but as a “hyper-passive” interruption, which is also not reducible to ‘activity,’ of the Other in/as the other’s death. In a way, it is ‘spiritual’ in the Hegelian sense, for it marks a passivity that is neither the ‘subjective-objective’ difference of modern metaphysics, nor the ‘authentic-inauthentic’ distinction that accompanies the ontological difference, but one that elicits both, as distinctions, in response to a primordial interruption.

Asking the question about Being, hence, is already thought-of as the affirmation of a *status*, as evincing a *value* – immemorial, and not merely “forgotten” – that Nietzsche’s *amor fati* and its Lévinasian partner of ‘ethics as first philosophy’ stubbornly, and consistently, attend to. In Lévinas, a difference to ‘Being’ is held on to, one which is *anterior* to the ontological primordially of the question (that, for Heidegger, arises out of the ground) of Being, and yet also otherwise than, irreducible to, ‘Nothing.’ Being, and the thought of Being (i.e. the *ontological inflection* of the metaphysical, ‘Why?’ question), are neither obviated nor belittled in this, Levinatzschean, ‘attention,’ but definitely usurped from their sovereign position, or, more precisely, made to admit this position’s responsibility and privilege (its very *distinction*). For Lévinas, this separation is not only beholden to the ‘spirit’ that “recoils” itself within Being, but is *both called-for, and stands accused by, the Other* – the latter interjecting a ‘hetero’ at the heart of ‘auto;’ wielding, like the skeptic (and Nietzsche), a contradiction at the heart of philosophy’s ‘Truth,’ as if it were philosophically legitimate.

Being, in other words, is for Lévinas already a *response* to a “prior,” what Lévinas calls ‘an-archic’ difference, “at the temporal breaking point [here conceived as the philosopher’s “leap;” SC] where Being comes to pass” (OB, p. 9).⁹⁵ No longer *fundamentally* ontological, this difference marks an ethical distinction; the violent oscillation of a border between an ‘I’ (reconceived as an always-already usurping, “distinguished” ‘I’) and its (always-already usurped) Other.⁹⁶ The freedom that Heidegger extols in the “leap” to authenticity, then, cannot be unproblematically self-justifying, and, however “ontologically fundamental,” cannot delimit the ethical responsibility of thought without a persistent, irreducible trace or remainder: “The unlimited responsibility in which I find myself comes from the hither side of my freedom, from a “prior to every memory,” [...] from the [...] non-original, the anarchical, prior to or beyond essence.” (OB, p. 10 [my underline])

Confronted with the fundamental question concerning the ‘nothing,’ then, Heidegger’s *Angst* reveals itself as concerning *my death*; de-fining ‘me,’ authentically, *as Da-sein*, as the *being* who poses the question about the meaning of Being in the face of its own (on top of the totality of ‘beings’s’) ‘nothingness’. It is hence ‘being-towards-death’ (*Sein-zum-Tode*) which marks the limit, the definition and contour, of the questioner’s inquiry – what both opens and closes the historical/temporal relevance for, the ‘there (*Da*)-being (*sein*)’ of, the questioner (cf. SZ, §53). Furthermore, Heidegger will always insist that my death is “ownmost” (*Eigenste*), what most wholly and purely *individuates Dasein* – as no other can in any way take part in it (cf. SZ, §47). For Heidegger, “[i]n anticipating the indefinite certainty of death, *Dasein* opens itself to a constant threat arising out of its own ‘there’” (SZ, p. 265 [my underline]); this speaks to a threat, not of the Other, but the threat of ‘Nothingness’ (*Nichts*).

The ‘spirit’ (and its force), for Heidegger, attain their necessity (or ontological truth/justification) – precisely from having arisen *within* Being, *grounded* in my there-being (*Da-sein*). ‘Spirit’ appears to give the philosopher – as authentic *Dasein* – the force to anticipate the ‘Nothing’ of its “there”, the implosion or collapse of the ‘Da’ in (its) death. As the prospect of my ‘ownmost,’ fundamental nothingness, my death thus de-fines my Being as *a delimitation of Dasein’s ‘Care.’* For Heidegger, my death, as *Dasein*, underwrites the ‘Why?’ question; it marks both my temporal implication (as being-there; as history; as ‘thrown’ into time/world) and the totality of its ‘horizon’ (the “region” of Being against which all meaning is perceived). Upon the death of authentic *Dasein*, after all, there is no more “there.” *Dasein’s* time screeches to a halt, and the contours or horizons that it traces in/as Being become indefinite, and cease to bestow the closures that ‘meaning’ needs in order to come (back) into Being. *Dasein* is then, in all senses of the phrase, “out of time.”

Lévinas pursues a wholly other phenomenology of the question that, in the Heideggerian “recoil,” enables the metaphysical question to arise: Lévinas sees metaphysical thought – as thought about thought – more as something which “comes to mind,” but not, or not wholly, from “within” Being. It is neither an inner call nor an inner addressee that it hails, but a catastrophizing of the inner/outer distinctions that cohere ‘Being’ itself. The metaphysical ‘Why?’ is not, hence, exhausted in the Heideggerian project concerning the meaning of Being, and its quest for justification exceeds the Heideggerian topology of Being (that assures that *both* ‘Why?’s remain, “coiled,” within Being): the latter is thought via my authentic *Angst* towards my own death-as-nothingness, de-fining my own privilege, and responsibility, with regards to this question (since my death, for Heidegger, is always the

most “non-relational,” the most “mine”).⁹⁷ Lévinas proposes, hence, *another* ‘leap,’ another traversal of limits of the metaphysical ‘Why?’, only, for Lévinas, it is not the ontological limit (Being/beings) that thought traverses, but rather Being itself, in its “ground” and in its “truth.” No longer ontological, this is an *ethico-metaphysical* “traversal of distance” that no longer means the *same* Heideggerian leap, where *Dasein* leaps over/towards a confrontation with *its own* ‘nothing’ (where *Da-Sein*’s is beholden to its own death in *Angst*),⁹⁸ but one triggered by the appeal of an exterior to Being, “originating” in the Other, striking thought as its *other* predicament, that of *an other’s death*.⁹⁹ The ontological closure that questions the philosopher only from within Being is interrupted by Lévinas’ (ethico-metaphysical conception of the) ‘Other’ (*Autrui*), traversing, if not a metaphysical difference, at least a *theological* one.

For Lévinas, hence, it is not *mere* ‘nothingness’ that allows Being to shine forth in the “happening” of the ‘Why?’ question; not *my death*, but the death *of the Other*.¹⁰⁰ The ‘Why?’ question with regards to Being, hence, is perhaps “fundamentally” ‘my’ question, but is, primarily (in a ‘*philosophia prima*’ kind of primacy) a question addressed *to me*; it is neither as “voluntary” nor “free” in the same, ‘primordial’ (*ursprünglich*) sense in which Heidegger conceives of it, nor does it secure any “autonomy” – even in this “ontological heart of hearts” – with regards to (my) philosophical act/privilege. This ‘Why?’, rather, upsets and disturbs philosophical freedom, this impetus to find the *nomos* – that might still have attested to the irreducible interruption of the metaphysical ‘Law’ – of the – “fundamentally ontological” – *autos* (of Being). Its ‘origin,’ furthermore, is not a “ground” from which to pose the question of (my ownmost) Being, but rather an Other which puts me in question, forcing me *to answer for my own responsibility* (I cannot stress this enough – Lévinas’ ‘Other’ is *never* “fair”).

This means that the metaphysical question comes at me from *without*, from the interruptive catastrophe of the death of the anonymous and destitute Other, which, like what Maurice Blanchot called “the disaster,” “ruins everything, all the while leaving everything intact”.¹⁰¹ Here is another kind of question, a far less “reconciled” to its limits, a far more indignant and *troubled* ‘Why?’: this ‘Why?’ is no longer, for Lévinas, my ownmost/authentic ‘*Why life/Being (and not death/Nothing)?*’ but a certain “pre” or “*an-authentic*” ‘*Why his/her death (and not mine)?*’¹⁰² The philosophical ‘Why?’, hence, retreats towards the trace, the testimony of a thought whose “existence” or Being also means that it had (always already) *survived the Other’s death*.¹⁰³

The ethico-metaphysical question that testifies to the other’s death is, as Derrida writes in his famous essay on Lévinas’ thought, perhaps “very little, *almost* nothing,” but it impacts ‘me’ with a

different “force of spirit” than the anticipation of my own death.¹⁰⁴ Just like it is the splitting of the ‘Da,’ the ‘ontological (Being-beings) difference,’ that underwrites Heidegger’s “leap,” there is a splitting of thought itself, in Lévinas, between the secure autonomy of the subjective ‘I’ and the persecuted destitution of the accusative ‘me.’ If, for Heidegger, this ‘autonomy’ was conceived as historically situated and interpreted (in/by the understanding of the ‘Da’ and the “horizontal” closures which de-fine its projections), and if the principle of individuation was my ownmost anticipation of my, “non-relational,” death, then Lévinas’ is a wholly other principle of “individuation.” The Other individuates the ‘I’ through a ‘me that is neither wholly ‘autonomous’ nor grounded in Being, but rather the individuation of my ‘self’ (and “there-being”) as an interlocutor or addressee of the Other: neither an ‘I’ or ‘ego’ certain of its substance/existence (Descartes’ *res cogitans*), nor a ‘Da’ certain of its death/finitude (Heidegger’s *Dasein*), nor an a-priori assured synthetic unity (Kant’s transcendental apperception), nor a ‘knowledge’ that holds within itself the secret of its own absolution (Hegel’s Absolute Knowledge); but, rather, an exposed, persecuted ‘me.’ No longer an *I* that commences to suspend her everyday existence so as to inquire after its ground, but an addressed, accused *me*; not *Angst* in the face of my death, but an indignant loss of bearings in the face of the other’s death. Rather than “learning how to die,” as the famous Greek dictum with regards to philosophy goes, philosophy is made here to attend to a different origin; learning instead, perhaps, “how to answer for, or respond to, *the other’s* death.”

This insight is truly decisive for grasping the difficult subtlety of Lévinas’ espousal of, and resistance to, Heidegger’s “fundamentally ontological” phenomenology.¹⁰⁵ Heidegger privileges *my* death (as the “possible impossibility”) in his fundamental inquiry of Being, but does this on the basis of the idea that death is a loss of Being *that cannot be experienced* (but only anticipated); the “undiscovered country from whose bourn no traveler returns,” as Hamlet’s own vacillation between Being and Nothingness goes. My death is both the closest to, and farthest from, me, just as the relation of my Being to Nothingness: it is the *indefinite* with regards to my Being-there as my ownmost certainty (*Gewißheit*).¹⁰⁶ It is certain, says Heidegger, that I – i.e. both ‘authentic’ and ‘inauthentic’ *Dasein* – die, as it is certain that my death is my own and cannot be taken away from me or experienced “for me,” as it were. This certainty – accessible only to authentic *Dasein*/thought – marks both the temporal, and hermeneutic, limits of my being, of my ‘Da’.¹⁰⁷

This ‘Da’ is based in ‘Care,’ directed at the “Whole” which is to give all beings (for, and including, *Dasein*) their “disclosedness” (i.e. their relevance/meaning) to *Dasein* (SZ, p. 182). Hence,

for Heidegger, if there is a conscience (*Gewissen*) in an ontological sense, it must be what discloses the substance and limits of ‘Care’ as the very Being of the ‘Da.’ Thus, the “call of conscience” for Heidegger inheres in calling *Dasein* “to its ownmost potentiality-for-Being-its-Self” (ibid, p. 269). Heidegger makes it a point to mention that the call of conscience “undoubtedly does not come from someone else who is with me in the world” (ibid, p. 275 [my underline]). This movement – from ‘Self,’ through potentiality and anticipation, and then back to Self (for, “[i]n conscience *Dasein* calls itself”; ibid, ibid [my underline]) – marks what Lévinas will always border on ridiculing as the “pseudo adventure” of Being/thought in Western philosophy, as an “egology” that never leaves its own (home/ground), that is *never put at risk with regards to what grounds its Being*.¹⁰⁸ Since it never leaves the ‘Da’ of Being, emerging from and returning to Being, this certainty (of my own death, my own limits of existence), holds the “conscience” of ‘autonomy’ itself.

The death of the Other appeals to me in a far more striking, “uncanny” manner than that of a mere part of my ‘there;’ as a mere ‘being’ that can be detached-from or “suspended.” However, the indefinite nature of my death (to ‘me’ as the *Dasein* in question) is only known and experienced by an other; it is only since the corpse does not speak or signal that it is made so primordially crucial in defining my Being, since I cannot have any knowledge of (or any proper language to discuss) the “experience” of death.¹⁰⁹ Rather than death as my ownmost potentiality of being, Lévinas would conceive of it as the “no response” – which is not less *interruptive* for all that – of the Other. Phenomenologically attested to *only* by another living being’s death, the “non-relational” status that Heidegger accords to my death (as my “ownmost” etc.), appears, “leaps” *towards* (my) thought, in Lévinas’ rendering, *from* the dead other’s refusal of relation. In short, to the Heideggerian *reconciliation* to the fact that no one can die my death for me, Lévinas juxtaposes the destitute *indignation* at the fact that *I cannot die the other’s death for her*. Heidegger’s ontological, ‘non-relational’ death hence bespeaks an “egological” autonomy that Lévinas’ ethico-metaphysical (and thoroughly *relational*) “death of the other” troubles and accuses as “heteronomy.”

Thought rigorously, then, any “knowledge” of death as my end must already contain this “pre-primordial” scandal that is the other’s death or end – otherwise, why not presuppose my immortality? Here, with Lévinas, one is looking away from Heidegger in several crucial respects. Not only does the death of the Other attain a primary and constitutive role (over-*and-above* being-in-the-world), but *the ethical impact of its “no response”* is made all the more striking – the horrible de-finition of (the face’s, as well as language’s) *expression* – the more the dead Other becomes de-faced, anonymous (an

encounter that Lévinas, as will be shown below, will treat in/as the ‘anonymity’ of the ‘*il y a*’ that both assures and troubles the closure/totality of Being). To put it in Heideggerian terms, the more the dead other merges – in the “phenomenon” of her ‘no-response’ – with the anonymity and indifference of ‘inauthentic’ existence of what he calls the “they self” (*das Man*),¹¹⁰ the more intensely this command (that underlies ‘Experience’/‘Being’/‘Consciousness’) is felt; the more traumatically it *interrupts Dasein* as being-in-the-world. One could hear here not only Lévinas’ philosophical critique of Heidegger, but a very cogent *political* accusation against both him (as a member and collaborator of Germany’s National Socialist Party), and his philosophy (which identified the “they self” – in life and in death – as the most ‘inauthentic’ mode of *Dasein*’s Being). Indeed, in 1945 Heidegger will use this very logic to justify his conduct during his “Nazi period,” citing his philosophical activity itself as “sufficient resistance” and maintaining that his only guilt is that of (doing what he had to do for) remaining alive. For Levinatzsch, as I intend to elaborate throughout this entire Division, there is a difference between this (Christian) conception of ‘guilt,’ and the (Jewish) concept of *responsibility*.

The ‘*das Man*,’ for Heidegger (as for Aristotle), was precisely the ‘Da’ from which the philosopher has to “leap” in order to attain the proper freedom/autonomy for the philosophical understanding of “what is;” where the philosopher is free(d) to think Being on the horizon of (his own) Nothingness. Otherwise, *Dasein* is ‘fallen’ (*Verfallen*), and cannot attain the ‘existential freedom’ to access the Truth of Being (which, like Aristotle’s ἀρχή, includes the truth of ‘*das Man*’s’ being). Freed from the “they,” Heidegger’s authentic *Dasein* contemplates his own death, arriving at the authentic ‘state-of-mind’ (*Befindlichkeit*) proper to ontology – that of *Angst* (SZ, p. 182). Lévinas, addressing Western thought in the face and aftermath of the Holocaust’s systematic (i.e. “mechanized” and anonymous) mass-murders – *where death itself has infiltrated the anonymity of the “they”* – precisely identifies the most intense questioning of Being, the most incisive calling of thought into question, beyond the call of *Dasein*’s ‘conscience,’ beyond ‘care.’ This, other “call,” which in Lévinas was the Other’s appeal to me, displaces ‘Nothingness’ – as the “horizon” upon which the ‘meaning of Being’ is projected by *Dasein*’s ontological ‘Why?’ question – just as it displaces the “ground of Being’s” (specifically, its claim to have *authored and authorized* that call) with the (groundless, “Da-less”) Other. Lévinas is working towards a thinking of thought that calls me into question – me, as thinker, as addressee, as a singular, contingent witness (nude, exposed, without the warm assurance of ‘universal reason,’ telos, ‘spirit’ or even ‘meaning/sense’) – beyond the ontological closure or secured autonomy of

Heidegger's "egological" conscience. Thought, for Lévinas, begins with this ethical urgency of this, what he calls the 'face-to-face' encounter.

This is where (and why) Lévinas advances – rather than ontology and its question of Being – an ethics and its question of Justice as "fundamental," as "first" philosophy. The metaphysical 'Why?' – through which thought necessarily proceeds – is already born in/as a response to the utter destitution, the utter divestment of being, the *existing*, and hence *possible*, impossibility of an "Other-towards-death" (a *reversal* of Heidegger's conception of *Dasein*'s death as an impossible possibility'). We have here nothing less than a catastrophe, or scandal; interjecting a heteronomy at the very heart of the "voluntary" and "free" activity of thought. The *das Man*'s death, as an anonymous pathology, is fundamental, and it spells an imperative that interrupts philosophy and philosophical praxis in a decisive manner. The Lévinasian 'Why?' question, interrupting philosophy/ontology/"egology" it with the mute suffering of its undifferentiated, "fallen" Other (whose anonymity only exasperates its demand), which Lévinas calls, as quoted in the above epigraph, an "extraordinary unknown;" an unknown that is not the fodder for an – upcoming, universal – knowledge, not an unknown in view of the concealment/unconcealment of Truth, but an interruptive demand of/for Justice.

1.2 From Wonder, through *Angst*, to Obsession: The Lévinasian 'Why?'

[...] In philosophy, the relation with my death is described as anxiety and comes back to the comprehension of nothingness. The structure of comprehension is thus preserved, in touching the question of the relation with my death. Intentionality preserves the identity of the Same; it is thinking that thinks according to its measure [...]. But being affected by death is affectivity, passivity, a being affected by the beyond-measure, an affection of the present by the nonpresent, more intimate than any intimacy, to the point of fission, an *a posteriori* more ancient than any *a priori*; it is an immemorial diachrony that one can not bring back to experience. (Lévinas, GDT, pp. 14-15)

What Aristotle and Heidegger left out of 'wonder' and '*Angst*' is precisely the ethical implication for the 'authentic,' philosophical question(ing). Both had to presuppose that this economic, mortal (all too mortal) *condition* would always be "there;" *living*, in anonymity and 'inauthenticity,' so that the philosopher could arrive (through it) at the requisite indifference that allows his philosophical wonder or *Angst*. The underlying conviction that both, as philosophers, shared, is that arriving at the truth/*archē*, of Being is a goal in no need of justification, *that this philosophical freedom, because it is necessary to attain said 'Truth,' is somehow beyond ethical question*. As the (Greek) philosopher is "freed" for the ontological question(ing), he exempts himself from the "necessities" and "utilities" of everyday life.

That's just the way it – (onto)logically, fundamentally – “is.” But, once again, the interruption of the Other speaks: ‘Why “is” (it) not otherwise?’

This question is not uttered by the philosopher, but it is a question posed to philosophy/metaphysics by the one who never arrives at that “clearing,” that position of privilege providing the freedom and equality (the ‘universality’?) of the democratic *agora* and the philosophical freedom that it, for the first time, enabled. This ‘nobility’ is, hence, not originary; and the question – however anxious or “wondrous” – that philosophy begins with comes from a decidedly “non-indifferent” experience.¹¹¹ Against Aristotelian wonder and Heideggerian *Angst* – both presupposing a detached indifference towards their ‘inauthentic’ or ‘oppressive’ conditions – Lévinas counterposes, as I will show below, the *non*-indifference of thought as an imposition of “wakefulness;” something he refers to as *obsession* – for I am obsessed by the other’s no-response, by the death of the Other that is addressed to me, as a privileged survivor, as a *witness*.¹¹² Lévinas will show the latter as the non-response of Being that, somehow, manages to arrive at thought, though neither as the thought of my own death nor as the thought of a ‘being’ in the world; it is rather the ethical thought of my excessive responsibility before the Other.

Lévinas’ own “ethically-inflected” phenomenological enquiry allows its ‘exterior’ to speak in such a way that it forces a non-indifference from ‘me,’ demanding ‘I’ speak(s)/respond(s) (to what “is”) “beyond essence.” Lévinas interjects, hence – before and within the philosopher’s free(d) thought/spirit – the incessant, overdetermining and excessive non-indifference of the *insomniac*. No longer a ‘Self’ beholden to its own horizon of death, it is now a persecuted ‘me’ that is accused; forced – by the very (en)closure of Being – to respond to the excessive, inter-ruptive demands of justice. It is in this manner that my thought responds to the death of the other (which, like the night to the insomniac, does not “speak,” and yet murmurs *something*), and arrives as response and responsibility for the Other. Drawing thought out as both suspending and usurping the latter – in the necessity of the phenomenological *epokhe*, the horizontal closure of its own ontological query – takes us far afield from the ethical indifference of the “egological” ‘wonder’ or ‘*Angst*,’ to a far more persecuted and excessive demand that underwrites (and therefore also threatening to usurp) both.

The philosopher’s freedom’s “exemption” from the Other’s question – as Heidegger’s ‘spirit’ had already intimated above – is precisely where metaphysics or philosophy admit their *political* predicament: just like in Greek democracy the ‘*agora*’ – as a demarcation of space for freedom and equality – is bought by the very ‘nobility’ and privilege of the Greek citizen (free from day-to-day

concerns that were taken on by *others*: viz. merchants; women; slaves), so the Heideggerian/Aristotelian philosopher must be freed from the *weight* of (all) ‘utility’ and ‘possibility’ (including, as mentioned, the very real possibility of the other’s death), from concerning himself with the petty (and multiple) troubles of the anonymous “they-self” (for Heidegger: in their confused rush to “handle” particular ‘beings’ rather than attending to Being in general, etc.). In the Greek *polis*, such “weight” consists of those who have had to remain – though a part of the *polis* (its lifeblood and οἶκος) – outside of this philosophico-political space: women, children, slaves, merchants – all those who cannot (for various, and quite necessary, *uncompromising* reasons) rise to the ‘privilege’ or ‘nobility’ of the citizen (who alone – provided Being blesses him with enough “force of spirit” – can then “philosophize authentically”).¹¹³

Of course, due to their pagan/polytheist framework, the Ancient Greeks had neither a conception of “justice,” nor a sense of righteous “desert” that maintain an ‘absolute’ status (Nietzsche’s *Genealogy of Morals*, as I show in the next chapter, emphasizes that the high-born Greeks were “good” only for being “happily circumstanced”, and the low-born were “bad” only for being “unhappily” so). This plurality of divinity – also manifest in their collective inability to master ‘Moira’/Fate – did not allow the *concentrated localization of blame/cause*; “justice” was just the will of a stronger or more interested deity, a function of (rather instrumental) worship rather than “moral character.” What I think comes through, in this context, in the mass murders of the Holocaust – total/“global” in aspiration, systematic and indifferent in execution (and in this sense, as Adorno and Horkheimer had famously argued, “philosophical”)¹¹⁴ – is the radical upset of this nobility. A kind of moralizing of Greek customs, German National-socialism had every German/Aryan *defined* as ‘noble,’ while every physical and moral “degenerate” was relegated to this anonymous level of a ‘*das Man*,’ an exclusion from (what/who has a legitimate human) authentic “substance.” Here it really matters little what actual criterion was used in this, *ethico-metaphysical act of definition*: the essence of the act, its target and overall *telos*, was metaphysical – and, hence, already, in a Christian Germany, theological and moral – as an attempt to use a philosophical insight to destroy philosophy; to “go all the way,” and hence to “justify” (but this time in Christian terms, not Greek ones) both Greek nobility and Christian morality/theology.

The Nazi attack on the Jews, Gypsies and Queers, hence, can be viewed in this context to be a two-stage maneuver. First, in a move that philosophy’s ‘nobility’ can still “live” with (though the Greeks would never have thought to do this), the ‘they-self’ is replaced: now the “right people” are doing all the “low” work, and don’t matter, except as enabling conditions, as an anonymous “working-force” (rather than as ‘workers’). Second, however, the egalitarian and comprehensive “universalism” of Christianity

kicks in, realizing that here is an irreconcilable difference, which – since it refuses to “take care of itself” (i.e. commit suicide, or – as a *good-willed* Kant once recommended the Jewish religion¹¹⁵ – “euthanize” itself) – needs to be effaced. That way, a complete *Aufhebung* of Greek nobility is achieved vis-à-vis Christian morality: the former’s *difference* has its privilege morally justified, and universalized (wasn’t the moral ⇔ universal Kant’s idea as well?), by the latter (this maneuver, alas, was also never meant to be merely “national,” but *global*, a ‘*Reich*’). As Heidegger will have suspected – though he directed this suspicion towards the Jews (as his Black Notebooks reveal) – when this idea is finally “actualized,” there is neither ‘nobility’ nor a ‘they-self’ any longer, and philosophy can finally rest (in peace), knowing it had served its purpose, fulfilled its “spirit:” no need to *desire* wisdom anymore, for “we” are already in it, absolved by (becoming) absolute wisdom.

This was, indeed, “going too far” for Heidegger – who (almost) immediately identified the anti-philosophical drive of the Nazi movement – but, if only he had taken his own Christian “spirit” (and Nietzsche) more seriously, he might not have been so surprised at this, essentially nihilistic, trajectory. Christian-Protestant ‘Love’ cannot maintain an affirmation of a disdained ‘they-self’ precisely due to the radical differentiation that its existence entails (as a scandal for its eschatological promise of absolution); this spirit (of ‘Love’) will always, even despite itself, seek – to flatten and equalize, to “universalize” and moralize its ‘world’ – to “*reconcile*” this difference. The ‘spirit’ that Heidegger so disdained admitting – and yet could not help having recourse to – was, alas, coming not (only) from the Greek ‘ground’ of Being, but also significantly inflected by the ‘spirit’ of this Christian, ethico-metaphysical (and anti-Judaic), maneuver; and that is why, at bottom, it proved detrimental for all philosophy and thought (the only thing that Heidegger would openly disdain concerning his Nazi engagement).

Here philosophy had been annihilated by that which, before, had only taken it hostage – and this is where Western thought betrays its tendency to, *metaphysically*, prefer ‘freedom’ (and ‘Truth’) to justice; the freedom of ‘Truth’ or towards ‘Truth’ rather than the difficult, “finite” freedom beholden to the absolute command of justice.¹¹⁶ Lévinas, whose critiques of Christianity – unlike his treatment of Heidegger – had never attained the energetic determination and subtlety of the Nietzschean genealogies, still says something very similar in this regard:

[...] the source of the bloody barbarism of National Socialism lies not in some contingent anomaly within human reasoning, nor in some accidental ideological misunderstanding. [...] [T]his source stems from the essential possibility of elemental Evil into which we can be led by logic and against which Western philosophy had not sufficiently insured itself. This possibility is inscribed within the ontology of a being concerned with being – a being, to use the Heideggerian expression, “*dem es in*

seinem Sein um dieses Sein selbst geht’ [“which in its Being has this very Being as an issue” (SZ, p. 42 [McQuarrie translation]); SC]. Such a possibility still threatens the subject correlative with being as gathering together and as dominating [as in Heidegger; SC], that famous subject of transcendental idealism that before all else [as in Kant and Hegel; SC] wishes to be free and thinks itself free. We must ask ourselves if liberalism is all we need to achieve an authentic dignity for the human subject.¹¹⁷

Let me sum-up a bit here: the very emergence of ‘philosophical nobility’ is only made possible as an effect of an earlier, violent, and decidedly “non-egalitarian” cause. The philosopher’s privilege – be it as ‘wonder’ or as *Angst* – is bought by the lowness of his other(s). This means, however, that the ‘Why?’ question that arises out of this ‘nobility’ or ‘privilege’ is already a response to a deeper, muted and unheard, question: ‘Why are you (the ‘philosopher’) free (to ask this question) and your other (the slave; the woman) is not?’ The hatred that erupted in the Nazi ideology, in what Lévinas calls “the philosophy of Hitlerism,” at least – as the guiding joke of antipathology intimates – heard this question, even if it tried to annihilate its source, to provide a ‘final solution’ for it (instead of a *response*). The Nazi-driven Holocaust – seen in this, “antipathological” context – serves as a historical witness to what Lévinas calls the “face of the other;” this is the deeper meaning behind the “thou shalt not kill” that Lévinas identifies as emanating from the face, the expression, of the Other:

[...] To kill is not to dominate but to annihilate; it is to renounce comprehension absolutely. Murder exercises a power over what escapes power. It is still a power, for the face expresses itself in the sensible, but already impotency, because the face rends the sensible. The alterity that is expressed in the face provides the unique "matter" possible for total negation. I can wish to kill only an existent absolutely independent, which exceeds my powers infinitely, and therefore does not oppose them but paralyzes the very power of power. The Other is the sole being I can wish to kill. (TI, p. 198)¹¹⁸

The accusing Other in Lévinas’ philosophy, as I believe is crucial to repeat in the context of this antipathological investigation, is never “fair:” the Other does not “care” that it is only upon a certain freedom-of-detachment that ‘I’ could be addressed/accused by it most directly and explicitly; there is no fairness or symmetry, no systematic or “trustworthy” causality behind which Being could hide the excessive demands of the Other to/from thought. But it is this very excess that both tempts thought with the murder and annihilation of the Other (and, as shown above, of itself as well), but also constitutes the future, what Derrida called the *à venir* – the to-come of thought, of justice. ‘Philosophy’ begins in an uncognizable – yet all the more potent for that reason – injustice. It is born from or borne by the – impossible, vexing, murder-tempting – obligation to respond to it.

1.3 Antipathology as War-Machine: Introducing ‘Levinatzsch’

At this stage of my argument it is perhaps appropriate to hint at where my antipathology is going with the war-machine I call “Levinatzsch.” The “murmured accusation” that I mentioned above – soon to be explicated in terms of what Lévinas calls the *‘il y a’* (“there-is”) – is perhaps a good opportunity to anticipate the ‘tzsch’ part of ‘Levinatzsch,’ seeing that this chapter dealt primarily with Heidegger and Lévinas. Nietzsche did occasionally show his crucial importance to my methodological approach in my insistence on repeating how, for Lévinas, there is no symmetry in the I-Other relation, and that, most importantly, the Other is never fair. In relation to Lévinas, Nietzsche helps to pull away from a Christian-metaphysical interpretation, where every inquiry is born guilty and “fallen,” while only its end – be it as death (Heidegger) or as *telos* (Hegel) – can give it absolution (as, to adopt a famous line from the Gospel, the Truth of its Way). The Christian ‘not-enough’ that promises the “end” as releasement from responsibility – owing to an already-redeeming Messiah, an already achieved “merger” with God and His Truth/Being – needs to be distinguished from the Lévinasian call to responsibility. The former is based on guilt, tied to conception of the soul and of salvation which are foreign – probably deliberately antithetical – to Judaism’s approach to the Divine. The Christian merger with God suggests the most radical “gnosis” that the Jewish God explicitly forbids (at least if we – as we are throughout this dissertation – follow Hegel’s philosophical appropriation of theology): this involves replacing the Old Testament’s “Don’t (acquire knowledge of me, only follow the *letter of my Law*)!” with the New Testament’s “You don’t know enough (of me in life, but the *spirit of your faith* will carry your soul, after death, to the potential merger with my Divinity, as already occurred with Jesus Christ)...” Theology had always been a discourse of god, a knowledge of God’s Being, God Himself, which is why Judaism’s approach had consistently been called a “negative” theology (just like Hegel calls their conception of the Divine a “bad infinity”).

Lévinas, advancing a Jewish ethics into Western-Greek metaphysics is not in any way treating the accusation of the Other as one that – as characteristic in an economy of guilt – accused of insufficiency of knowledge, for this “other” would only be a “to-be-known” other, the “concealed” part of Heidegger’s conception of Truth (as *a-letheia*, unconcealment, etc.). Or, alternatively, it would be an Other that awaits – like death, like Salvation – as the “missing piece” that one can access only after death, when one’s soul rises to the beyond. But Lévinas’ ‘beyond,’ the Jewish ‘beyond,’ is not arisen to, but only arisen in the name of, in life; it operates, not as a goal to be achieved, but as an interruption, a trauma, to obsess over. Hence Heidegger’s conception of time – as pro-jection, as throwness (assured by

a God that reconciled All in Truth/Being) – is foreign to Lévinas conception of time – as *inter*-jection, as ethical command (issued by a separated God that interferes and confounds all knowledge/power project(ion)s in the name of an *inaccessible* Justice).

This is where Nietzsche comes in, where Western critiques of knowledge betray a Christian metaphysics (and morality) that underlies their methodology – the latter always assumed to be absolvable by Truth, even if it has “not been arrived at yet.” In this sense, a thought like Lévinas’ – if we can resist the appeal to “snap” it to the aforementioned Christian-metaphysical grid – is such a radical threat to Western projects, not to say deification, of ‘knowledge’ and ‘science’ (something that Hegel was most aware of). The Lévinasian Other should not be appropriated as a “not enough” spoken from a Divine (or ‘Natural,’ however one wishes to call it) Truth that, eschatologically, promises reconciliation and merger (i.e. from the assumption of a full/total justification, a “fulfillment of the requirements of justice,” as it were). This “not enough” is based on a teleological morality that assumes the justice of projection/intention as only guilty insofar as they are no *total*, not complete. To conceive this very project/intention as itself a usurpation, as itself a violence, would be utterly unfair, a scandal on the way to absolution/salvation, contradictory and non-sensical to Western metaphysics. ‘Levinatzsch’ was formulated to counter or resist this common assumption – which is also a moral assumption about the primacy of the will (whether in content or in telos) – that would see the “unfairness” of Lévinas’ Other as an argument against it, as an obviation of the entirety of Western Science and Knowledge. If the Other’s accusation is seen in terms of a “guilt” that cannot, by definition, be expiated, then “why bother?!”

Levinatzsch tries to make its difference here; to show that the Other’s accusation is no reason to morally condemn the ontological or philosophical question, but an invitation to delve deeper into it; in this I see both Lévinas’ ‘ethics as *first* philosophy’ and Nietzsche’s ‘gay’ science of ‘*genea*-logy’ as sharing a similar impetus. Both are responding – in a way that is more risky, yet more “upright” or “proud” – to the demands of an interrupting Other; their respective philosophies of time, hence, dictate a different “historical sense” than that wielded by Western (and particularly ‘modern’) philosophy/metaphysics. Both Nietzsche’s ‘will to power’ and Lévinas’ ‘being hostage to the Other’ bespeak a depth and a height – which Nietzsche accurately depicts as a ‘pathos of distance’ – that gives thought both its security and opens it to the “possible impossibility” of its radical opening or break; eternally recurring, haunted by a past that has never been ‘present’ (and hence “immemorial”), thought attains its claim to justice through the affirmation of this risk. The essence of antipathology inheres in

this affirmation, one that will not reduce ‘distance’ to the mediating meaning that simulates its closure or coherence (and here it (en)counters both Heidegger and Hegel), but affirms its being beholden to that which is almost, but not quite, ‘nothing.’ This “foreign agent” infiltrates the closure of Western metaphysics/ontology as that which is presupposed in any (ego’s) “intention” – *the* central concept of phenomenology: antipathology makes this event originate in the commanded non-indifference that only an appeal to justice – “murmuring” an inarticulate complaint or demand (and yet for that very reason indestructible) – can *provoke*. I hope to show this further as this Division progresses.

2. ‘*Why Me?*’: Levinatzsch as Methodological Vanity

[...] [W]e have found that it is not the groups and the specific Notions and individualities that are the essence of this actuality, but that this has its substance and support solely in the Spirit which exists qua judging and discussing, and that the interest of having a content for this argumentation and chatter alone preserves the whole and the groups into which it is articulated. In this language of insight, its self-consciousness is for it still a being *existing on its own account, this single individual*; but the vanity of the content is at the same time the vanity of the self that knows itself to be vain. When the placidly apprehending consciousness makes a collection of the most telling and penetrating versions of all this brilliant talk, the soul that still preserves the whole, then the vanity of witty judgements perishes with that other vanity, the vanity of existence. The collection shows to most people a better wit, or to everyone at least a more varied wit, than their own, and shows that 'knowing better' and 'judging' are in general something universal and now universally known. With this, the sole remaining interest is eradicated, and the individual judgement is resolved into the universal insight.

– G. W. F. Hegel¹¹⁹

If classical philosophers usually avoid autobiography, it is because they think it’s indecent. That is, a philosopher should not speak of himself as an empirical being. And this impoliteness, or this politeness, is philosophy itself, in principle. So if we want to break with this philosophical axiom, classical philosophical axiom, according to which a philosopher should not present himself or give in to autobiography, then we have to be indecent to some extent.

– Jacques Derrida¹²⁰

On conviendra aisément qu’il importe au plus haut point de savoir si l’on n’est pas dupe de la morale.

– Emmanuel Lévinas¹²¹

The aforementioned “anteriority” of the Other connects Lévinas’ ethical inflection of the ‘Why?’ question to its metaphysical dimension, where ‘time’ is considered – building on but exceeding Heidegger’s ‘ontology’ – in its relation to thought (as a thought “riveted” to Being). The “unfair accusation” of the Other, in the Lévinasian paradigm of the other’s death, accuses me of being (always)

already too-late; *Dasein*'s projections/cares are, hence, seen by Lévinas as already *in response* to the Other. This Other is phenomenologically conceived by its trace upon Being, owing to the passivity of a 'me' that witnesses, literally, the "fatality" of Being's closures – what Heidegger calls 'facticity' – as if a demand for being otherwise, always covered-over by a being's de-finition, is imprinted on it from beyond with the urgency of a dying other. This trace upon Being, the "crust" of Being, is what Lévinas calls the *il y a* ("there is"). Lévinas conceives of 'me' as the chosen witness to a "temporal breaking point," a testimony – rather than 'evidence' or 'fact' – that beseeches the singularity of the asking philosopher herself, "individuating" her, as "chosen," through this responsibility-beyond-death. Lévinas' "choice attunement" for this witnessing is, hence – not the *Angst* of a *Dasein* facing its own Nothingness and thus arriving at the Truth of its existence, but the insomnia of a 'me' that is forced an awakening, an excessive vigilance carrying the structure of an obsession, towards the Other.

Lévinas' philosophy of time hence performs a radical reversal of Heidegger's: it is, in a way, the *other Dasein*'s "care" that takes phenomenological precedence to mine and under-writes my 'Da'; hence, in every Da-sein subsists a trace of what truly comes "first," exposing 'Da' itself as already a usurpation (unbeknownst and involuntary) of the Other. Heidegger's 'ontological difference' – between 'Being in general' and 'beings in the world' – and its attendant anticipation of my own death, gives way to a truly 'diachronic,' "immemorial" time that is only witnessed in/as the trace of an 'an-archic' Other; not an entity or order from 'beyond Being' (i.e. not the ontotheological 'God'), but still an interruption of Being (a trace upon its fatality/finality), a demand to be reckoned with. This thought – even though necessitating and presupposing the understanding's temporal projections and horizontal totalities – cannot cite the latter in defense from the Other's accusation. This temporal interruption cannot be assigned a Da (coming from a "*non-lieu*"), and yet remains, like a constant murmur that upsets Being itself, causing the aforementioned 'insomnia.' This murmur does not end in my death, nor does it rest with Truth, but is a constant reminder of the Justice owed the "ungrounded" Other by my 'ontology.'

Like in Nietzsche, Lévinas here offers a temporality of radical, *ontologically discontinuous* 'becoming,' where time betrays a radical, immemorial past and a 'futurity' that cannot be reduced, not even structurally, to the 'anticipations' or 'potentialities' of being-there, but insisting on the excessive force of an interruptive "elsewhere" (again, not conceived ontotheologically/scholastically as an "entity"). Here we face not "the limits of (my) freedom," but the 'an-archy' – which only registers as rupture, an interruption from without – from which it emerges in the *first* place; hence Lévinas terms his philosophical intervention as an 'ethics as first philosophy'. I show that, in the eyes of a spirit that cites

‘Truth’ as its justification, this constitutes a kind of “ethics of the coward.” The coward, like the skeptic, is witness to a break coming from an unknown (or at least illegitimate), a break in his very identity and Being that cannot be understood as anything but “vain,” a desire to save one’s own skin (that is, the “inessential” in oneself). Like the skeptic, all that is left for the thought of Being is a refusal coming from a non-place, not offering the understanding of another place or another truth, but instead providing an *example* of this radical encounter with the Other. The moral judgment that the coward elicits, hence, becomes ethically suspicious, and calls to question the metaphysical presuppositions of this judgment, just as the skeptic calls to question those of philosophy (as a search for ‘truth’). Both their testimonies are refused, left unheeded, and – due to a particular metaphysical assumption/structure regarding thought and Being – morally judged as vain. Antipathology – as an attempt at introducing this problematic into modern/scientific methodology – proclaims an “ethics as first philosophy” in *this* regard: as an ethical account of these metaphysical structures, this *decision concerning metaphysics*.

2.1 From Ontological to Ethico-metaphysical ‘Phenomena’

Lévinas does not wish to obviate phenomenological inquiries, but to avoid them becoming fundamentally “egologies,” that is, presupposing a freedom that remains absolutely justified and therefore unquestioned, and *authoritative*, as is ‘necessary’ in the search for ‘Truth’ or the construction of meaning. It is the essence of Lévinas’ ethico-metaphysical question to call thought back to a pre-originary ‘origin’ – already a kind of contradiction in the Truth of Being itself (i.e. in time and sense/meaning) – of this, supposedly ‘autonomous,’ freedom; this question arises in response to the trace of an exterior, ‘freedom’ thus betraying an obsession with and by the Other – as usurped, as destitute, and as hailing *me*, as questioner/thinker, with an absolutely commanding force. The latter, as affirmed by Heidegger’s “recoil” of the ‘Why?’, comes from without; and yet the phenomenology of this arrival is left silent in his ontological enclosure around Being, and rendered (as) ‘spiritual;’ an enclosure whose ‘transcendence’ had already been, as Lévinas shows, appropriated, its ‘exteriority’ tamed by the onto-hermeneutic ‘anticipation.’ In this manner, Heidegger’s *Dasein* could take charge of an always-already comprehended time, a pro-ject whose futurity is itself defined/delimited by the edge of the hermeneutic circle that Heidegger calls ‘horizon.’ Yet this phenomenology remains silent about that which justifies its force, that which authorizes its necessity – an always-already absolved ‘existential freedom’ to ask the philosophical ‘Why?’.

A different kind of questioner – a ‘me’ – takes the stage with Lévinas, one that is defined not by an indifferent freedom that subtends and underwrites its (“wonderous,” “anxious”) projections, but by a “difficult,” *responsible* freedom that founds its *logos* on the basis of a force/violence that never arrives, as such, at the luminescent scenes of Being and Truth. It is the Lévinasian ‘me’ that obsesses over something in the “crust” of Being – neither Being nor Nothingness – which is the trace of an already usurped/evacuated Other. This ‘me’ is a “non-egological” conception of, or approach to, thought, for it remains responsible for an Other that, rather than remaining “there” as total silence and passivity (acquiescing to the philosopher ‘freedom,’ as it were), persists a distressing “murmur,” an accusation toward the questioner (whether as absolute, transcendental or ontological ‘subject’).

Antipathology gets at this murmur or accusation not by any “mystical knowledge of the Other.” Rather, it proceeds, in Lévinas’ footsteps, by performing a more subtle phenomenology of egology’s relation to this “murmur” of the other. For, any ontological or metaphysical totality that wishes to assert itself over-and-above the trace of the Other, finds itself implicated in a paradox that betrays, and hence opens to accusation, its own desire for closure. What Lévinas calls the desire to murder the Other, the violence elicited, or tempted, by what he calls the “epiphany of the face” is here interpreted (and affirmed) as an indignation of the ‘I’ towards the external interruption/force for which it cannot help but feel troubled, obligated to “answer.” It is an indignation that arrives with the revelation that the ‘authentic,’ asking-being is responsible – due to an ethico-metaphysical predicament that exceeds its “onto-egological” concepts of guilt/accountability – beyond its very freedom to ask; such is the temporal and ethical anteriority of the Other that excites the philosophical questioning, and yet refuses to be comprehended by it.

A true scandal and outrage: Being and Truth appear as stop-gaps to an excess that ‘autonomy’ – however authentic – must presuppose-while-denying; an Other that ‘autonomy’ must, in other words, be the accused usurpation of. The Lévinasian ‘heteronomy’ – as attending, bearing witness to this predicament – is, hence, not wholly ‘ontological,’ the difference he insists on not “recognizable;” it is ethico-metaphysical. Antipathology arrives at this ethico-metaphysical interruption precisely through the animosity and indignation that it elicits; and this is especially important wherever this kind of rejection and exclusion is itself denied, itself excluded or disallowed in Western thought and discourse. The latter – in this context betraying its “undyed theological roots,” as it were – had always presumed a comprehension that was only ever after the Truth; it liked to think of itself as always open to question in this regard, and yet Levinatzschean antipathology reveals that it was open to question in every regard

except the regard of Justice. When it came to the latter, this discourse had made the assumption – which carries its own violence – that Truth and the freedom to seek it authorize and justify one another; that there is no other relevant claim beyond this, fundamentally “egological” (for it always comes back to the Same), approach to ‘philosophical necessity.’

Lévinas interjects two related elements into the question(ing) of philosophy, elements that Heidegger explicitly wanted to leave out. The first was a *metaphysical* ‘beyond,’ something “otherwise than Being.” This meant conceiving of thought as a kind of “escape” from Being, not towards but, *in the name of* a ‘transcendence’ which is neither ‘Being’ (keeping Heidegger’s resistance to scholasticism’s ‘ontotheology’), nor ‘nothing.’ This was a thinking of the Other through its trace upon Being, a marking, yes, but also a questioning and interruption, of Being. The second element that Lévinas interjects to/through phenomenology is an *ethics*; a regard for the ‘Other’ as always-already violated/usurped, whose trace precedes, and underwrites, the purportedly “fundamental” ontological question(ing) concerning Being. This Other – which, for Lévinas, *forces* the (Heideggerian) question about the meaning/Truth of Being from without – no longer affords the questioner with an *original* (or ‘fundamental’) loftiness or ‘courage of soul,’ that height or rank which is, nevertheless, as attested by Aristotle, always demanded by the ‘Why?’ question.¹²² The Lévinasian revision to the trajectory of metaphysics makes Heidegger’s ontological primacy shift orbits, not to say gestures: “topologically” put, it passes from encircling ‘Truth’ to being breached by ‘Justice.’

More than a mere “critique” of Heidegger, I think Lévinas shores up that which Heidegger remained (characteristically) *silent* about: the ethical presuppositions of the (supposedly “fundamental”) ontological inquiry itself. The “being that asks the question,” for Lévinas, will then not be fundamentally reducible to its *Da*, and yet will also not be imbued with some eternal ‘soul’ – mirroring an eternal God/Being – in the manner of a Christian ‘onto-theology;’ the questioning of this question of Being, the ‘Why?’ that “recoils on itself,” will testify to a difference not comprehended by ontology, a difference that exceeds its circum-spective ambit, an-*other* temporal ‘transcendence’.¹²³ The ‘Why?’ question, *when taken as the urgent, persecuted search for justification*, could always be reflected back to Heidegger’s authentic philosopher by asking: *Why is the meaning of Being in question for Dasein?* Heidegger, for his part, however much he explained the *possibility* of his ontological inquiry, never explicitly addressed why, and in what sense, it is *necessary*; in other words, for Heidegger’s

fundamental ontology, the existential ‘is’ always came first, before the ethical ought (unless, of course, “spirit” were declared...).

Following Lévinas’ interjection – effectively authorized by Heidegger’s silence on this matter – this ‘Why?’ already arises in response to some interruption or difference that transcends the ‘ontological difference’ (between Being and beings), transcends the *Da*. It does not “primordially” come from within the totality of ‘world;’ nor is it reducible to the Nothing that swallows *Dasein*’s existence/care/time. For Lévinas, the ‘Why?’ question can only be itself questioned in excess of *Dasein* and its horizons of understanding, in excess of every closure (and this will include Hegel’s perfect ‘System of Science’ as well); even Heidegger’s ‘authenticity’ – from its “spiritually ordained” place of freedom – must appeal to (and be appealed-to by) a command that is not ontologically/”internally” derivable. The recoil of the ‘Why?’ question, in short, already appropriates an ethico-metaphysical register that comes “first” – due to the priority of the an-archic interruption of time that enables it (of Kantian ‘causality’ and Heideggerian ‘projection’) –, hailing a difference that Heidegger’s fundamental ontology tried to delimit as ‘ontological.’ Having no “ground” from which to derive the ‘Truth’ of such an inquiry (concerning the an-archy of justice), faced with such a “compromised,” or “difficult freedom,” Heidegger, quite characteristically, remains silent.¹²⁴ And yet, as shown above, sometimes ‘spirit’ – when “push comes to shove” – does makes him betray this silence, and speak it.¹²⁵

With Lévinas, hence, the ‘Why?’ question shifts, comes unstuck and out-of-joint; it is no longer a merely ‘ontological’ matter – of ‘anticipation’ (of death), of revealing and concealing (Truth), of covering over and uncovering (the meaning of Being) – but betrays an *ethical* urgency, introducing a difference whose *interruption* I cannot – even as a function of my *Da* in the world (i.e. *even in my death*) – avoid or escape. Instead of the *Sein-zum-Tode*’s ‘*Angst*’ about the ‘nothing’ – an *Angst* which for Hegel betrays a veritable *horror vacui* of ‘Spirit’ (hence its persecution of ‘vanity’) – Lévinas offers an *obsession* with the Other; where ‘conscious awareness’ of Being and Nothing is displaced by insomniac wakefulness to their otherwise (as ‘the trace’ of the Other). Instead of the ‘Why is there something rather than nothing?’ type of question(ing) – a priori absolving, and hence ethically indifferent to, the “leap” that enabled the philosopher’s “spiritual freedom” – a more *personally* engaged, *non-indifferent*, question emerges in ‘Why is it (i.e. ‘Being’) not *otherwise*?’ What I am delineating here, in short, is a difference between two types of *witnesses*: the Heideggerian witness to the Truth of Being (as ‘Nothing’), and the Lévinasian witness to the trace of the Other’s excessive demand for justice; it is a metaphysical difference between the ontological witness of ‘*Dasein*’ and the ethical witness of the ‘me.’

The philosophical ‘I’ in Lévinas (i.e. the one who is called to philosophical question), does not stop in the admission of ‘inner’ differentiations in its *Da*. Lévinas accepts Heidegger’s revolutionary critique of this, previously undisputed, subjective “kernel” – a critique which embedded various historical traditions/interpretations in this, previously atomistic, “Cartesian Subject” of philosophy – but insists on taking it further and deeper towards a crisis, to the “*non-lieu*” of decision and responsibility that emanates from beyond it (and its de-fining “*lieu*,” the ‘*Da*’). Even if the philosophical ‘*Da*’ – that grants thought the freedom to reach its highest justification or “*raison d’être*” – is necessary for even attending the Other’s accusation or demand “in the first place,” it is not, for all its ‘*ursprünglich*’ necessity in Heidegger, relieved of the Lévinasian Other’s encroaching, an-archic gesture; it actually makes the gesture all the more acute, accusing the very ‘*Da*’ that enabled the ethical regard of the Other in the first place, that which exposes *Dasein* as having (always) already usurped this Other (once again, ‘the Other’ is never “fair”). In ‘*Da-Sein*,’ for Lévinas, the ‘*Sein*’ is already a response to an always-already-accused ‘*Da*.’ In Lévinas’ words,

The I is the very crisis of the being of a being in the human. A crisis of being, not because the meaning of this verb [i.e. *to be*; SC] (in its semantic secret) remains to be understood and is an appeal to ontology, but because, being myself, I already ask myself whether my being is justified, whether the *Da* of my *Dasein* is not already the usurpation of someone's place. (AT, p. 28 [my underline])

As ‘questioner,’ Lévinas’ ‘ethics as first philosophy’ makes *me* – as the one who is first addressed/accused (i.e. *prior* to ‘wonder’ or ‘Angst’) – decidedly less “worldly-autonomous,” my ‘*Da*’ – no longer secured by its ‘authenticity’ – becoming, rather, a precarious trap that pulls the ‘ground’ out from under me. Here is where conscious thought itself – *necessary* for any ‘justice’ being discussed and addressed in language (what Lévinas calls the “said” – *le dit*) – is *wrenched out of me* (rather than either being something I “voluntarily” or “freely” undertook, or the historico-hermeneutic constitution that sustains my ‘*Da*’).

Like Abraham answers the appeal from God, in the passive ‘*me*’ of the “*me voici*” (i.e., like the French “*objet direct*,” the *accusative* ‘*me*,’ is distinguished from the *subjective* pronoun ‘*je*’), Lévinas acknowledges a primary place for the address of the other’s death to me. No longer am ‘I’ afforded the “primordial” comfort of Heidegger’s ‘existential freedom;’ there where I am within my powers, spiritually ordained by the ground of Being and absolved by my death, “thrown” across historical horizons (*including* the “recognition” that hermeneutically constructs them), endowing my freedom’s limits/closure with the assurance of my “ownmost” death. Lévinas’ “ownmost” is, more than “fundamentally” ontological, *primarily* – in a *philosophia prima* sense – ethical; it is the Other that now

receives this privilege of the “ownmost,” while ‘I’ am left stuck with a ‘me’ that now, ceaselessly, contends mine:

[...] I have attempted to carry out a phenomenology of sociality, starting out from the face of the other man, reading, before all mimicry, in its facial directness, a defenseless exposure to the mysterious forlornness of death, and hearing, before all verbal expression, from the bottom of that weakness, a voice that commands, an order issued to me not to remain indifferent to that death, not to let the other die alone, i.e., to answer for the life of the other man, at the risk of becoming the accomplice of that death. (AT, p. 29)

2.2 Time for Ethics (as First Philosophy)

It is my ‘*obsession*’ with the Other that, for Lévinas – following the alternative paradigm to Heidegger’s (which suggests facing *the other’s* death) – gives rise to the highest philosophical question. Rather than endowing a *Dasein* with a ‘force of spirit,’ it persecutes ‘me’ with a force that cannot be reduced to that of Being/Truth; it is the force of the Other’s destitution, the other’s death, rather than the ground of Being, that compels (me) to ask the metaphysical ‘Why?’¹²⁶ This ‘me,’ recalling a responsibility from before the ‘care’ that provides the very con-stitution of my ‘Da,’ calls forth another thought of time or thought of an other(‘s) time; what Lévinas calls an ‘an-archy’ or ‘diachrony’ that bespeaks a break in the narratives underwritten by *Dasein’s* ‘throwness’ or ‘pro-ject.’ The Other, rather, addresses, *inter-jects*, with an appeal not exhaustible by/as an appeal to be known, “recognized,” or even “uncovered”.¹²⁷ Here is a time whose thought cannot be delimited or defined by the ‘interpretative horizons’ of the past (‘history,’ ‘tradition’), and interrupts with an excess that can no longer be constrained to *Dasein’s* anticipation of its own death.

Taking Heidegger’s crucial work on the phenomenology of time as a starting point, Lévinas contends that Being and the thought of Being do not exhaust their temporal predicament in the ‘throwness’ of the ‘Da,’ in the ek-static temporality. The latter’s diachrony is always already “mended,” synchronized, in a way, by *Dasein’s* projected anticipations (those that make up the understanding of Being). Transcendence is here regarded temporally, metaphysically – not as Heideggerian ek-stasis that only serves to open the temporal projection (and hence “tame” the temporal interruption of Being/Thought), but – as ‘diachrony,’ as *discontinuous* time. Even though Heidegger had, nominally, resisted treating time in terms of a succession or flow, his “projective” or “thrown” approach carries on in the “spirit” of this flow, this enclosed totality or continuity. This is what Lévinas means when he writes that, “[t]he Heideggerian deduction of the ecstasis of time on the basis of being-to-death, which

anticipates itself without this self-anticipating being borrowed from anything fluvial, is speculatively more satisfying than any image of a river” (GDT, p. 109 [my underline]).

Lévinas continues his critique by making the necessary link that phenomenology forges between time and consciousness, a link – that is, a relation and a difference – which I here keep calling an ‘ethico-metaphysical’ difference,

[...] a relation with that which is not said to be absent by default but rather which, as unqualifiable, could neither coincide with anything, nor form a present with anything, nor lodge itself in a representation or in a present. No present would have capacities equal to the unqualifiable, which is wholly other than a term, wholly other than a content. (ibid, ibid)

A philosophy of time that can lay the groundwork to conceive of this relation, to allow the Other’s radical interruption of the Same, means that time can no longer be allowed the “speculative satisfaction” of anticipation, a “dis-tension” – by various terms/narratives – of time as pro-ject. This will help explicate what is often repeated here as the insufficiency of ‘history’ as an ethical arbiter (and/or justification of violence), *beyond the interpretative openness that Heidegger’s plurality of ‘Das’/horizons affords*. With Lévinas one needs to respond to, to think an *interruption* that cannot be conceived at its source by “egological” thought, the thought of what Lévinas calls ‘the Same’/*le Même*; a thought that will always resort to ontological evidence – that is, when it does not resort to ‘spirit’ – in order to base its historical interpretations/narratives.

The problem here is how to think ‘responsibly’ vis-à-vis a violence whose essence – just like the philosopher’s “leap” – is necessarily blind to its own usurpations? Such is the violence-problematic inherent in Jean-François Lyotard’s conception of ‘wrong’ (*tort*), whereby the crime effaces the victim’s legitimacy to complain about it, to make it visible, to assert its “ontological rights,” so to speak. It is only with Lévinas’ ethics as first philosophy that the violence of ontology itself – as a claim/“right” to legitimacy/Truth – is made conceivable in principle; a responsibility towards the – however necessary – violence of a given ‘ontology,’ of a given ‘Da’.

This, radical and irreducible (and irreconcilable) responsibility is not exhausted by ‘history’ – whatever its chosen/interpreted horizon/narrative, from whatever ‘Da’ it is projected or conceived – but accusative of it. History, for Heidegger, assumed a restless or ec-static time, but Lévinas will emphasize the primacy of the “*ek*” (out) over and above the continuity (and comfort) of the “*stasis*” (position, place); a transcendence of radical ‘exteriority,’ that breaches the closures of the “there.”

[...] Can the nonrest of time, that by which time contrasts with the identity of the Same, signify otherwise than according to the continuous mobility that the privileged metaphor of the flux

suggests? To answer this question, we must ask ourselves whether the Same and the Other owe their meaning simply to a distinction of quality or of quiddity, that is, to the given in time and to the discernible? To put it differently, do the nonrest or the disquiet of time not signify, prior to any terminology or recourse to terms appealing to no images of rivers or flux, a disquieting of the Same by the Other, which takes nothing from the discernible and the qualitative? This would suggest a disquietude that would be identified as indiscernible, or that would not be identified by any quality. To be identified thus, to be identified without being identified, is to identify oneself as “me” [*moi*]; it is to identify oneself internally without thematizing oneself and without appearing. It is to be identified without appearing and prior to taking on a name. (GDT, p. 109)

To give it an initial expression, the Lévinasian ‘Why?’ is eschatological in the sense that its approach to time, appeals to a time “before” the beginning of conscious thought, all the while keeping open a time “after” it; in order, as Derrida put it, “*que l’avenir lui-même ait ainsi un avenir.*”¹²⁸ It is, as some have put it, a “messianism without a messiah”,¹²⁹ since it bespeaks a futurity that cannot, by definition, “take place” and yet, unlike death, is also not a nothing in relation to place. Lévinas thinks of it, rather, as the murmur or trace of the Other at the de-fining closures of the ‘Da,’ of any place; a “u-topia” that bespeaks an-other thinking of time. As Heidegger’s “spiritual complication” already attests, it is not enough to pass over the eschatological in silence, limiting thought to death or any other (natural, historical, transcendental) finitude, for, alas, the spirit of ontotheology is thus left to wreak its havoc without interruption and without responsibility (at least in Western-Christian tradition of thought). Lévinas’ Jewish eschatology – evincing its ethical exigencies *in life*, beyond death and yet with no reconciliation, no Messiah “on the horizon” – interjects a resistance to that of the Christian ontotheological ‘spirit;’ affirming the eschatological while insisting all closure in its name be refused, resisted. Otherwise, as Heidegger shows all too well (and we can add Kant here as well), the spirit “has its way.” Hence, a true critique of ontotheology needs – to paraphrase (and radicalize) Michel Foucault’s famous saying about political philosophy – to “cut off the Messiah’s head.”

Just like what the philosopher’s “leap” necessarily leaves behind – the singularity that ‘history’ can never register as such (recall the example of Krug’s pen in the case of the skeptic), the ‘me’ that is first addressed before the ‘I’ can judge and act – Lévinas’ ‘responsibility’ is, as in the ‘*me voici*,’ not subjective, but accusative. It is exhausted neither by *Dasein*’s understanding – “recognition” on the basis of my ‘Nothing’ or another’s ‘Da’ – nor by the Truth of (mine, or the other’s) Being, but rather shows both Truth and Being to be always already heteronomous, a response to an immemorial Other that interrupts, plagues them, from without. It is this incommensurability that yields ‘Sameness’ – in

response to the urgency to do (it) justice – by recuperating the “time of the other” to a thematic, knowable and de-finite concept. Put in Lévinasian terms, the “saying” (*le dire*) that the Other wrenches out of me, as witness to its ethico-metaphysical destitution, is the “bility” in responsibility, while my judgment and decision already betray this saying by thematizing (i.e. enclosing, de-fining) them in a “said” (*le dit*) – a(n always) finite “response”.¹³⁰ Both demanding and frustrating my ability to do justice, to become responsible for my own, necessary (and yet accused), violence.

Thus, for example, the death of the other will be conceived as a function of certain conditions, be they ‘natural’ or ‘historical,’ constituting a “said” that regulates the excess that this other’s life/death – as the origin of “saying” – constitutes for my own (understanding of) Being: s/he was old, “had it coming,” or even “died before her time.” This “regulation,” however inadequate to the task, already marks a trace of the excess saying that brought it to being/knowledge, to the “said” of ‘representation;’ a trace of what Lévinas calls the betrayal of the saying in the said, something he affirms as the “price” of any appearance: “[...] the subordination of the saying to the said, to the linguistic system and to ontology, is the price that manifestation demands. In language qua said everything is conveyed before us, be it at the price of a betrayal.” (OB, p. 6). This is what I mean here when I speak of the “crust” of Being, the price of its pathology/closure, only communicable through this “crust;” the ethico-metaphysical ‘Why?’ that demands, as an ethical ‘saying,’ an ontological response (a conception or de-finition, a ‘said’), but not without the trace of its betrayed excess (I deliberately do not use “remainder” here), a trace attested to by me as the pathology of this said, its inherently accused – beyond all economies of guilt – and contrived nature.

The ‘me’ that witnesses the saying, the ‘nudity’ of the face of the Other as/in its expression, inaugurates thought/language as already a communication, opening a space for the ‘said,’ the testimony of this an-archival encounter with the Other. This encounter, in Lévinas, is not a mere “facing of the unknown;” it is driven by the ethical urgency of the death of the other rather than the spiritual complacency or indifference towards the singular, or a scientific observation geared to collect enough facts so as to arrive at a “wholer” ‘Truth.’ If history is written with the blood of the usurped by a self-justifying usurper, the trace of the other attends precisely to the bloody “price” of its inscription; there where death as “disappearance” does not exhaust the exigencies placed upon thought by its ethico-metaphysical predicament, even if and when this death cannot be registered, “said,” as such.

‘History,’ as a “said,” is hence always necessary, but never originary (Heidegger) or absolute (Hegel). For Lévinas’ “first philosophy,” history’s ‘said’ is open to radical breach not merely by

“another perspective” as it were – as it was for Heidegger, an “otherness” issuing from another interpretation (lodged within the same(‘s) ontology just sporting a different ‘Da’ *within* it) – but by the an-archy of an Other that, while not the “eternal Being” of ontotheology, marks a ‘saying’ as an interruption of temporal continuity by the “Otherwise than Being;” not a Truth approached to or an “infinite Being” reconciled with, but a Law that imposes from without, the ‘saying’ always remains inaccessible, and yet decisive, commanding.

Lévinas here is not arguing “against” the ‘said’s’ representational quality – once again sharing Nietzsche’s “*amor fati*” ethic of affirmation – but for its *necessity* being, first and foremost, an *ethical* one: evoked by a *singular* demand for *justice*, rather than conceived as the ‘universal’ grasp – “impartial” since it *knows* of no *singular* motivation, and hence indifferent to the death of the other – of knowledge/truth. The “objects” of thought – its “themes” – are neither occurring owing to some holistic ‘substance’ or ‘soul,’ nor to ‘natural laws’/‘grammars of cognition,’ nor are they ever reducible, *even potentially* (i.e. eschatologically), to any ‘historical’ narratives or regularities. Rather, thought “throws up” these objects as attempts – desperate, self-betraying, failed – to respond *for the other*, owing to an ethical urgency that the Other’s face – as destitute expression (nude, threatened, ex-posed) – imposes on ‘me;’ this constitutive ‘imposition’ is the “*difficult* freedom” that displaced the “fundamental” or “autonomous” status of the Aristotelian/Heideggerian one.

For a ‘self-conscious I,’ this “primacy” of the ethical will always appear “anachronistic,” temporally contradictory, since it can only be derived *after* the ‘Da’ has been assumed (which is why Heidegger’s ontology remains silent about it). The temporality of consciousness, given to, or in, its temporal projections (recollection, anticipation), cannot have any direct or “sure” access to this “an-archic” temporality; it cannot glean any ontological certainty from it, no sense of “freedom,” but only a, little-understood, ‘diachronic’ ethical urgency. This “temporal predicament” will figure prominently in what Nietzsche calls, in his *Genealogy of Morals*, “historical sense” (discussed extensively in the next chapter), and speaks to the *ethico-metaphysical* problematic of “facticity,” whose ontological primacy dictated a non-eschatological future, a “future without a future,” if you will. the following quote by Lévinas will hopefully make clear the ethical difference between his ‘diachrony’ and the Heideggerian ‘ecstasis,’ wherein the latter’s horizontal closures – beholden as it is to the Nothing (rather than the Other) – evinces its existential freedom precisely as an a priori delimitation of ethical responsibility:

[...] The neighbor strikes me before striking me, as though I had heard before he spoke. This anachronism attests to a temporality different from that which scans consciousness. It takes apart the recuperable time of history and memory in which representation continues. For if, in every

experience, the making of a fact precedes the present of experience, the memory, history, or extratemporality of the *a priori* recuperates the divergence and creates a correlation between this past and this present. In proximity is heard a command come as though from an immemorial past, which was never present, began in no freedom. (OB, p. 88 [my underline])

The relation between Lévinasian ‘ethics’ and Heideggerian ‘ontology’ is perhaps analogous to the relation between the ‘I’ and the ‘me,’ even though Heidegger’s anti-theological move made this ‘I’ much harder to identify as a “res cogitans” styled Cartesian ‘Subject(um),’ as a simple substance.¹³¹ This difference is crucial in order to properly understand the ethical ‘passivity’ that Lévinas ascribes to the ‘me’ as opposed to the “ontological passivity” which Heidegger ascribes to *Dasein*.

As the leading thought of phenomenology confirms – what Edmund Husserl dubbed its “principal theme” – there is no mere “I think” (*pace* Kant) without there have been, already, what Franz Brentano, Husserl’s “fore-runner,” had called “intention” – an “I think something.” What this means for classical constructions of the ‘Subject’ (as ‘substance’ or ‘substrate’) is that, *fundamentally*, thought can no longer be separated from its “objects,” and, hence, can no longer be presupposed as having an integrity that does not already include at least the structure of “intending” towards them. This “realignment” of the “I think” means, hence, that the “subject” is always already conceived as pervaded by the object of its thought, losing its former (Cartesian) primacy or integrity. Hence, the questions of interpretation and time – of ‘anticipation’ and projection – are so crucial for Heidegger’s critique of the ontotheological *subjectum* (as ‘soul,’ for example). “Subject” is always already existing, and, as such, must be implicated ontologically, must be defined insofar as it is in the world, perceiving ‘beings’ (and Being) without which it would not have any presence or existence (Heidegger’s “anti-theology” rejects both the ‘logical’ and the ‘metaphysical’ ideas of the ‘Subject’).

This point is intimately related to Heidegger’s fundamental ontology project, and – in the ethico-metaphysical context imposed on him here – his thought of freedom. Heidegger had only conceived of freedom as – rather than “subjective” – ‘existential freedom.’ This meant that no longer can a distinct “subject” be seen as pursuing various objects of thought with “subjective freedom” – i.e. a freedom disconnected from all life-contexts (i.e. Heidegger’s historico-hermeneutic ‘horizons’) – but with an existential freedom that, indeed, admits to a more “passive” definition: it is no longer an ‘I’ that proceeds, in full freedom and activity, to skip from object to object, having the utmost control about each such skipping (and each ‘action’ in general) that it is “free to choose;” rather, the “subject” is a being-there, already conditioned – Heidegger even says “thrown” into – a “there” from which and with

regards to which it derives its de-finition (delimited by hermeneutic horizons as finite temporal projections). *Dasein*'s essence – as became the battle-cry of existentialism – is its existence.

This primordially of 'existence' gives an etymological clue – and, especially in Heidegger, these clues are indeed decisive – to the kind of "passivity" Heidegger's *Dasein* admits to. This indeed becomes clear in Heidegger's philosophy of time. Not only is *Dasein* seen as thrown (or, more precisely, as this "throwness" itself), but its time is indeed thought of as 'ecstasis.' Just like 'existence' (ek-sistence), ek-stasis denotes the very same temporal 'transcendence' I discussed above, a difference held fast in a kind of "dynamic tension:" both 'existence' and 'ecstasis' share the same etymology of the Ancient Greek prefix '*ek*' (out) and the Indo-European root **stā* meaning "to stand". The "out" in the standing is how Heidegger articulates the intentionality-structure of *Dasein*, a kind of "pulling apart" of Being that produces *Dasein*'s various potentialities (think "potential energy") as the anticipation of it collapsing back to 'Nothing,' where the stand can no longer maintain its out and retreats into itself (this, of course, is what Heidegger calls "death").

But the dynamic tension of 'existence' in Heidegger's fundamental ontology is nothing like the passive persecutedness – the "hostage-like" character – of what Lévinas calls the "me." This is the deeper meaning of what Lévinas keeps calling the "passivity more passive than any passivity," which includes the "dynamic passivity" that Heidegger created in his critique of the traditional Subject of modern philosophy. Since Lévinas' 'transcendence' of time is not ecstatic, not a *holding-together* – the "flow" of the river as "speculatively" appropriated by Heidegger – but a breaking-apart; a traumatic separation that forever traces a disaster at the very heart of thought. For Lévinas, there is a radical separation – that still maintains an ethico-metaphysical relation – between the 'I' and the 'me,' between the 'said' and the 'saying,' owing to a metaphysical (rather than ontological) thought of 'transcendence.'

This relation – which Lévinas calls "signification" – is not seen as an ontological structure of the *understanding's* hermeneutic projection, but as essentially a form of expression, the ethical necessity of *speech* ('saying,' 'said') that is always *addressed* to an-other. This ethical approach to phenomenology attends the "meaning-making" subject as *speaking to* an other, rather than "intending" an 'object' or a 'being.' The necessity of signification is not beholden to the Truth of Being, but to the ethical exigency of the face, seeking to respond to the other's 'expression' – "Thou shalt not kill" – in speech; the latter carries a meaning and a Truth (i.e. a 'said') but only owing to the 'saying' that necessitates them, that bears witness to the ethico-metaphysical priority of the Other in this "meaning-making" or "meaning giving" encounter. The 'saying' follows the aforementioned 'expression' as an event of 'substitution' – a

“myself for the other” – in which I am commanded to respond, to say something, to give a ‘said’ to the naked expression of the other as nude and exposed, destitute of words (like in the other’s death). It is an alternative understanding of “subjectivity” and “humanity;” alternative both to Heidegger’s, and to ontotheology’s since it breaks up all the totalities of the latter, evincing the *transcendence* of the other(wise). As Lévinas writes in *Autrement qu’être*:

Man is not to be conceived in function of being and not-being, taken as ultimate references. Humanity, subjectivity – the excluded middle, excluded from everywhere, null-site- signify the breakup of this alternative, the one-in-the-place-of-another, substitution, signification in its signifyingness qua sign, prior to essence, before identity. Signification, prior to being, breaks up the assembling, the recollection or the present of essence. (OB, p. 14)

This event of substitution – a kind of “being taken hostage” by the Other (where I am made to, speak, to “answer” for the other) – speaks to a passivity that surpasses both ontotheology’s “substantive” one (i.e., the ‘soul’ or the ‘I’ as somehow always already there as a kind of “subjective substrate” or a ‘res cogitans’), and Heidegger’s “dynamic” one as discussed above. The “leap” of thought – the *ek* to ecstasy’s *statikos* – arrives by a force that does not promise the repose of truth, but accuses via a demand of justice; like catching one’s view in a mirror one was not expecting, this gesture loses all claims to voluntarism. It is interruption that puts the Heideggerian “leap” under the sign of an other – more “limited” or non-originary – “existential freedom.” Hence the question we are dealing with here is still a question concerning time and meaning but – unlike Heidegger’s ontology – treated in ethico-metaphysical terms; the meaning that Heidegger’s hermeneutic approach “holds together” (in the dynamic tension of his conception of ‘history’) is broken apart in Lévinas’ ‘saying’ and ‘said.’ ‘Subjectivity,’ as ‘signification,’ betrays a radical separation that “breaks *Dasein* up” – not back to ontotheology’s ‘subject’ and ‘object,’ but – to an ‘I’ and a ‘me.’ Hence it becomes a “non-lieu,” a non-site that Heidegger’s ‘*Da*’ can no longer do justice to, the “*Da*” of *the Other*. This breakup is the temporal breakup of what Lévinas calls ‘diachrony;’ this is the ethico-metaphysical predicament that attends Heidegger’s ecstasy or throwness of Being, the “immemorial” time of Lévinasian ‘ethics as first philosophy.’

Subjectivity, locus and null-site of this breakup, comes to pass as a passivity more passive than all passivity. To the diachronic past, which cannot be recuperated by representation effected by memory or history, that is, incommensurable with the present, corresponds or answers the unassumable passivity of the self. “*Se passer*” – to come to pass – is for us a precious expression in which the self (*se*) figures as in a past that bypasses itself, as in ageing without “active synthesis.” The response which is responsibility, responsibility for the neighbor that is incumbent, resounds in this passivity [...]. (OB, pp. 14-15 [my underline])

I now turn to begin elaborating the type of betrayal towards which this antipathology is directed – the betrayal of the coward – showing both its ethico-metaphysical stakes, and, hopefully, “exonerating” Heidegger’s silence as *precisely not the act of a coward*,¹³² but an act of spiritual courage and “strength of soul.” If by now this last statement, still, seems like an absolute moral justification of Heidegger (and his ontology), the following, I hope, will provide an *ethical* critique of this moral regard. Otherwise, I am afraid, one still shows signs of being, as Lévinas suggested, “duped by morality.”

2.3 Death and Responsibility: A Coward’s Ethics

I did not invoke the "fathomless" and utopian depths of "interiority." [...] What one calls written in souls is at first written in books. – Emmanuel Lévinas¹³³

“You’re so vain, I bet you think this song is about you” – Carly Simon¹³⁴

The passivity of the ‘me’ that is taken hostage (taking the ‘I’ with it, as it were), is perhaps the perfect segue to something like an “ethics of the coward,” where the ‘I’ or “ego” – for all its plans and anticipations, for all its identifications and tolerations – is being *defected* from, where Being is escaped as result of the ‘me’s’ persecution by the Other. Just like a soldier’s defection from battle – what is all too often “justified” by modern psychology as Post Traumatic Stress Disorder (thus *internalizing*, which means avoiding, the *ethical* questioning that this kind of betrayal might have provoked to a more Levinatzschean approach)¹³⁵ – the face of the Other’s “epiphany” to me makes me betray all that ‘I’ hold(s) dear.

This defection’s “reason” or “cause” might be given a posteriori, a silence, or an excuse that seeks to avoid the state’s/society’s automatic accusation of betrayal; and yet this radical vulnerability could be seen as there where an *ethical* ‘Why?’ question became too demanding, where the Other’s face had finally been encountered *sans-issue*, that face that speaks the “Thou shalt not kill.” It was the unrivalled genius of what Lévinas calls ‘Hitlerism’ to efface this “humanity” of Man, this “thou shalt not kill” of the face: in the Death-camps’ mass-murder factories, where death had become nearly “automated,” not only were the victims divested of all “normality” of appearance for “human subjects,” approaching “object status” (shaved heads, stripped and emaciated bodies, uniform clothing, serial numbers), but the killing itself had become mediated and alienated. The Nazi’s had learned quickly that the method of firing squads took an emotional toll of Death-camp offices, switching to the more “impersonal” extermination – where proximity is diminished and faces are not seen – of the infamous gas-showers.¹³⁶

This “PTSD” that the Nazis discovered in their executing soldiers is precisely their vulnerability to the coward’s ethics, the latter’s being forced to perform such *proximity* killings of non-threatening people (however “object-like in appearance) left the trace of the Other on their very “psyche.” Hostages of the Other in this encounter (with the other’s death), as if the *Law* of thou shalt not kill proved too strong for their – Nazi or “Patriotic” – *Spirit*. Such is the vulnerability, the *responsibility*, of the coward:

Vulnerability, exposure to outrage, to wounding, passivity more passive than all patience, passivity of the accusative form, trauma of accusation suffered by a hostage to the point of persecution, implicating the identity of the hostage who substitutes himself for the others: all this is the self, a defecting or defeat of the ego's identity. And this, pushed to the limit, is sensibility, sensibility as the subjectivity of the subject. It is a substitution for another, one in the place of another (OB, p. 15 [my underline])

Though the ethico-metaphysical question harasses the “philosophical subject” so radically that it cannot help but fantasize about its own death as a desperate/violent attempt to efface it, the ‘Why?’s (or the ‘Why Why?’s) “persecutive” ambit stops neither at my death, nor at my ‘guilt’/‘soul,’ nor even at the other’s murder. In other words, *no amount of self-violence or “contrition”* – up to and *including the sacrifice of my very life* (in a Heideggerian “How can I be expected to ‘care’ when I am dead?” kind of logic) – and no amount of sovereign or ‘exceptional’ violence – up to and including the killing of the other person (in a Hegelian-Marxist “we have to let the dead bury the dead” kind of logic)¹³⁷ – can fully justify obviating the Other’s interruptive demand towards the ontological closure(s) of thought/consciousness. For Lévinas, it is precisely this demand that opens up the metaphysical question, *in the first place*, to attend to something “otherwise than Being” (*and* “otherwise than Nothing”). As Lévinas says in a footnote of *Autrement qu’être* – a passage that sounds almost like it’s been specifically directed at Heidegger – the relation with the Other bespeaks, “[...] [a] devotedness [...] in a sense stronger than death.” For, Lévinas continues, “[i]n finitude death outlines a destiny which it interrupts, but nothing can dispense me from the response which I [i.e., as a ‘me;’ SC] am passively held to. The tomb is not a refuge; it is not a pardon” (OB, p. 167 [my underlines])

This question will touch the very sensitive, not to say painful, nerve of the Christian-Jewish knot that is expressed most starkly – because most “irrationally” – in/as antisemitism: it will mark the difference between the eternal *soul* of a self-sacrificing and world-embracing Christian, and the vain cowardice of the world-evading Jew – who, in the eyes of the one possessing the Christian ‘spirit,’ will always abandon the (spiritual) ‘soul’ to save his own, vain and spiritually bankrupt, *skin*. To Heidegger, and not just in his “Nazi years” (as his recently translated *Schwartzte Hefte* show) the former evinces a

‘ground’ wherein dwells the Being and historical destiny of a people (*Volk*), while the latter would mark a metaphysical problem of groundlessness, a kind of “thwarted Being” and, well, an other-than-historical “destiny,” a destiny whose ‘spirit’ comes from an alien source. An uprootedness or ‘nomadism’ of thought, a thwarting of Being that Western man must contend with.

Such is the unique comportment that the scandal of the *other’s* death initiates: this kind of ‘vain care’ does not arise from the ‘ground of Being’ that secures my ‘Da’ in the temporal projections of history (i.e. as ‘destiny’), nor is it merely enclosed within *Dasein’s* *Sein-zum-Tode* projections, but is *addressed to ‘me;’* here the ‘nothing’ will no longer negatively justify or “save” *Dasein* from responsibility to its metaphysical beyond, but confounds and interrupts in advance all attempts of the latter’s “overcoming” (the vanity to Hegel’s system, the anonymous *das Man* to Heidegger’s ontology). The other’s death carries its ethical call over and beyond Heidegger’s “call of conscience,” beyond *Dasein’s* own death, presenting what is, truly, an “extra-existential” or “extra-ontological” predicament. It eschews, in principle, the gravitational pulls of Truth and Being, and evinces the interruptive commands of Justice.

Even if this seems implausible – for what Christian would not feel pity and give charity to a dying other – this is precisely what millennia of Christian anti-Judaism show, in theology and in history. Where was the ‘love’ or ‘reconciliation’ in the decade-long pogroms perpetrated against the Jews in Christian Europe? Where was the Christian ‘care’ and charity, its ‘*caritas*’? What was it in the suffering of the Jew that left it so cold? It was, as usual, Hegel – who saw his Christianity *confirmed* in (his) philosophy – who identified this “coldness” most precisely: “[t]he great tragedy of the Jewish people [...] can rouse neither terror nor pity, for both of these arise only out of the fate which follows from the inevitable slip of a beautiful character; it can arouse horror alone” (ETW, p. 204-205). As I will show in the case of Luther at the close of this Division, this in no way betrays any ‘ill-will’ on the part of Hegel (or ‘Christianity’ for that matter) – but precisely what happens when the Christian ‘spirit’ or ‘good will’ encounters the “stubborn vanity” of the Jew (history), or Judaism (theology).

Lévinas tries to bring Western/Christian thought to understand what it had lost contact with – trying to affect a universal acceptance “around” the Jews (who, as a people abandoned by God, were prophesied or hoped to “disappear” after the Christian fulfillment of the Jewish mission). The vanity of the contingent/singular, as well as the unrelenting drive towards “impartial” or “objective” truth, betray a similar hatred of the ‘vain.’ Truth, after all, has very little to do with ‘me.’ The Kantian move to cut off contact with the transcendent (*‘Ding an sich’*), to evict “empty thoughts” – i.e. that have no “empirical”

reality – from philosophy (CPR A51/B75) was a way to let this “persecution of vanity” be done “passively” (i.e. by history), while Hegel’s speculative system tried to find in this “*Aufhebung*” of Judaism an active, ‘Natural Law’: neither accepted such “emptiness,” such vanity, to philosophy; and, in this, both shared the same ‘spirit.’ Vanity, conceived in an ethico-metaphysical register such as this, hence makes up the negative kernel of all Christian theology (at least following Saint Paul), particularly in its ‘*Pleroma*’/‘*Aufhebung*’ claims vis-à-vis what it could only conceive as the stubborn vanity of Judaism.

The death of the other – whose ‘Truth’ is never arrived at, always at a distance (like the annoying transcendence/separation of the Jewish God) – marks precisely such a vanity; and obsession with the vain – e.g. obsessing over “the letter of the Law” – had always been the essence of the Christian-theological accusation against Judaism. “For the letter kills, while the spirit gives life,” goes Saint Paul’s famous dictum (2 Corinthians 3:6), but obsessing over the dead will never bring “us” (Christians) closer to Salvation – best to allow ‘spirit’ its “natural” progression and, as Marx said, “let the dead bury the dead.” The Jew, a deliberate refuser of God’s Salvation (indeed “God’s murderer”), is, hence, already dead to the faith, a perverse “necrophiliac” that only deals with its corpses: his “stickler” attitude towards the letter of the Law keeps him from understanding and knowing God’s spirit, the “Divine Truth’ that speaks *within* the Law – like a man obsessing over the shell instead of appreciating/enjoying the fruit (another famous simile in Christian theology). The Lévinasian insistence on the separation between the saying (the ethical interruption) and the said (the content or meaning), and his insistence on shoring-up the former, again bespeaks this vanity; it always troubles Truth, whether conceived “transcendentally” (Kant), absolutely (Hegel) or ontologically (Heidegger). The Christian “all embracing” spirit, a spiritual reconciliation of difference(s), is only won, constructed, as the negation of that Jewish, vain insistence on the separation of God from Man, as well as their separation, as a people, from the world. A veritable theological, and philosophical enemy whose very existence – so long as this existence is still a fact or is still perceived – retards the theological project that seeks to become one with God’s knowledge. This is the ‘spirit’ of the ontotheology against which Heidegger wished – and yet, sharing in this spirit, failed – to combat.

When this, inherently anti-Judaic spirit is taken seriously – in all of the various ways it had, and still is, underwriting Western thought – Lévinas’ Jewish ethics will have to be considered as *a coward’s ethics*: as *first philosophy*, this ethics will insist on the *primacy* of the death of the other in the same way that a cowardly soldier insists on war’s bloodshed/price *above all else*, even above the “cause” in the

name of which it was fought, or, in other words, above the ‘spirit,’ or the ‘way of life’ this war tries to protect/advance. For decades, in Europe – from times when antisemitism was still allowed to be expressed, not yet brought to silence by the imposed forgetting of ‘political correctness’ – the idea of “a Jewish soldier” had been, quite literally, a joke.¹³⁸ I will treat this point extensively in the next chapter, with Nietzsche’s uncompromising analysis of this theology and the – essentially nihilistic – philosophy he saw it bring forth.

Topologically, we are dealing here with the difference between an interior comprehended by/as a totality (Hegel’s “good infinite” matches this description), and a “bad infinity” that constitutes this (indeed *any*) totality’s exterior breach (a breach from without); theologically, however, we are dealing with the difference between the “eternal” (always already *ab-solved* from time) ‘soul,’ and the ‘skin’ as its vain, “contingent” shell that needs to fall away. Such is the Truth and the Way of things. As Hegel will indeed articulate with his characteristic precision, while Western philosophy can split into various positive systems of thought – Humean ‘empiricism,’ Cartesian ‘rationalism,’ Kantian ‘transcendental idealism’ (including the later Heideggerian ‘fundamental ontology’) – *they all share this one horror*, this one aversion: the vanity of an absolute, reclusive difference that admits of no “realization,” no proper “content,” but exasperates thought; like a transcendent ‘*Ding*’ that has not been “kept out” (Kant’s Transcendental Critique) but also not “actualized” (Hegel’s speculative System of Science). A saying that continuously harasses – traumatizes – the ‘said.’

This is where Hegel, indeed, captures the ‘spirit’ – from which even Heidegger himself was not exempt – of (occidental) philosophy: whatever it is that drives its affirmations, whether ‘logical,’ ‘epistemological,’ or ‘ontological,’ philosophy’s seeming diversity will always cohere on this negative point: that the conceited vanity of the singular/contingent would be denied connection with the absolute/Truth, be it by way of a protective membrane (like Kant’s ‘transcendental’), or, as was Hegel’s “final solution,” *by positing an absolute that is inherently toxic to this vanity* (i.e. where the latter falls away – like a cadaver (*cadere* – L. to fall, sink, perish) – from absolute/scientific knowledge, without a trace). Just like in the case of the skeptic, philosophy’s relation to the Absolute/metaphysics – whether prohibitive (Kant), unconscious-symptomatic (Heidegger) or appropriative-digestive (Hegel) – will always refuse the absolution of the singular/contingent, indeed the hallmark of ‘Science’ and the spiritual project of universal knowledge/truth.

What makes Heidegger’s case – and hence its Levinatzschean critique – so significant is that, even while acknowledging that Western philosophy is, in fact, a (Christian) onto-theology in its affirmations,

Heidegger offered his own philosophical system/method following onto-theology's one "fundamental" negation. It is here, hence, that Heidegger betrays his own collusion in the Hegelian "spirit" – for it shared in the assumption that such a negation is always already justified (or, what amounts to the same violence, neutral or natural, "in-different") in this, its 'universal' (however historically-inflected) project; the latter's systems/concepts of thought, its ontologies, might vary (as differing, historical manifestations of *an essentially comprehensive* "love of God"), but they all betray a single, consistent, and decisive hatred that underlies all this so-called 'love,' this so-called 'variety' or 'plurality,' this so-called 'difference.'

This hatred of 'vanity,' is structurally homologous to the most enduring characteristics of the only hatred that Christianity has never been able to answer for, that had always embarrassed it and caught it off-guard: its 'anti-Semitism' or 'anti-Judaism.' That this hatred could be sustained with and through the strictest of 'good will' (in Kant, who recommended Judaism be "euthanized"), with and through the most absolute reconciliation and love (in Hegel, who looked in horror at the Jewish "genius of hatred"), and with and through an explicit critique of Western philosophy as a Christian onto-theology (in Heidegger's philosophy, as well as his silence about the Jewish implication therein),¹³⁹ marks an urgent demand for Justice that, as the WWII Holocaust of European Jews already marks, was not yet heeded in 'philosophy' as such.

It is this demand that *my* antipathology – as a vain inter-jection of difference, as a conceited refusal of a "contingent particular" (like *me*) – tries to think through or to respond to. Heidegger's silence on this matter makes my claim all the more starkly clear: where Western thought denies conceiving of 'metaphysics' *as an ethical question*, it is defending itself from responding to the call of a suppressed, hated Other that it, nonetheless, needs in order to claim any progress(ion), and any such project(ion) that owes its *primary* justification to 'Truth.' That this violence is utterly "unintentional" – except, perhaps, in the case of Hegel (where it is affirmed as necessary) – does not obviate ethical responsibility towards it; it only makes the demand for justice all the more urgent, beholden to a violence that is all the more absolute for being so invisible, so hypo-critical, so under-thought.

As Carly Simon's famous song goes, Lévinas could be said to be, indeed, "so vain," you can bet he thinks the 'Why?' question is about him; addressed to him. To anticipate a little, it is precisely this 'metaphysical vanity' that – indigestible and irreconcilable to Western philosophy – Nietzsche and Lévinas share. It is this combined resistance that marks the essence of what I sometimes call here,

following Deleuze & Guattari's formulation, the Levinatzschean 'war machine'.¹⁴⁰ With regards to philosophy, this war-machine resists the absolute constraint/direction of 'universal knowledge,' shared by the Heideggerian insistence on a *grounded* 'truth,' fighting on the side of a content-less, vain and ungrounded (or 'nomadic') difference, which pries all ontologico-historical totality – be it a narrative of 'spirit,' the synchronous coherence of an 'apperception,' or an onto-historical project(ion) upon a 'horizon' of an "egological" 'Care' – open to its Other.

Such an "opening to the Other" – in the way Levinatzsch conceives of it – is never "pleasant," never "reconciled" or peaceful (the Other – never fair).¹⁴¹ It is not a "Why can't we all just get along?" mantra but a desperate "Thou shalt not kill!" command, issued from a destitute and usurped Other, to an accused 'me.' Lévinas' conception of the "face" of the Other, in what he calls 'the face-to-face encounter with the Other,' is a witnessing of the most absolute, potentially murderous, indignation of philosophy's 'Same' with regards to the Other that always escapes, or *refuses*, its "comprehensive" embrace. Here the questions of social justice, in their most "pathological" and anonymous necessity, are allowed to interrupt philosophical thought itself, to be carried over in the philosopher's "leap" so-to-speak; something which, in the Heideggerian-Aristotelian context I have been describing, confounds a philosophy that always already started by leaving it behind (promising to return once Being/Truth have been achieved/understood). Lévinas makes this very clear in his 1981 interview with Philippe Nemo:

Absolute knowledge, such as it has been sought, promised or recommended by philosophy, is a thought of the Equal. Being is embraced in the truth. Even if the truth is considered as never definitive, there is a promise of a more complete and adequate truth. Without doubt, the finite being that we are cannot in the final account complete the task of knowledge; but in the limit where this task is accomplished, it consists in making the other become the Same. On the other hand, the idea of the Infinite implies a thought of the Unequal. (EI, p. 91)

That is why Lévinas often says – and is often not understood in this saying – that his philosophy is *primarily* concerned with what is today called 'social justice.' In introducing Lévinas' thought to political theory, and to 'social science' more generally, it is important to realize that this Lévinasian move promises nothing less than a scandal or catastrophe of a thought that had habituated itself to follow in the Aristotelian method, further disseminating its (metaphysical) assumptions (even as they were inflected by theological scholasticism and modern philosophy). The most detrimental of these assumptions is the one I keep resisting here, that of a symmetry (or "inter-subjectivity" or "fairness") that is assumed to preside over the social bond/relation; Nietzsche, as will be shown in the next chapter, called this philosophy's "democratic prejudice."

The “social relation,” for Lévinas – who is trying to “translate Hebrew into Greek”¹⁴² – is never symmetrical, and never accepts this *assumption* – whether ontological or teleological – of symmetry or “fairness.” Like the death of another person, the encounter with the Other speaks an unfair, impossible imperative that always arrives too late, as an after-thought: the “Thou shalt not kill” that, as Lévinas says, comes from the always-already exposed and precarious, *killed* or *dying*, other. The voluntarist autonomy, the “human freedom” of the projecting ‘I’ (or the projected ‘Da’), refuses being thought-of as the accusative positioning of a ‘me.’ It cannot find any *absolutely* justified procedures to immunize it, in advance – for this ‘autonomy,’ as Heidegger knew all too well, always works on the basis of (causal-historical, backward and forward) – pro-jections – from the Other’s *inter*-jection, her interruptive appeal or demand. It is not – primarily, theologically, metaphysically – a relation of knowledge, but one of justice; not an ‘inner,’ ‘good’ infinity that promises its own fulfillment, but an ‘exterior,’ ‘bad’ infinity that interrupts all such “holistic totality.” The “social” quality – that in Western thought tends to be regarded in terms of the “we” – is brought to bear so as to confound and interrupt, rather than reconcile and cohere, the way that thought is conceived and approached:

Experience, the idea of infinity, occurs in the relationship with the other. The idea of infinity is the social relationship.

This relationship consists in approaching an absolutely exterior being. The infinity of this being, which one can therefore not contain, guarantees and constitutes this exteriority. It is not equivalent to the distance between a subject and an object. An object, we know, is integrated into the identity of the same; the I makes of it its theme, and then its property, its booty, its prey or its victim. The exteriority of the infinite being is manifested in the absolute resistance which by its apparition, its epiphany, it opposes to all my powers. Its epiphany is not simply the apparition of a form in the light, sensible or intelligible, but already this *no* cast to powers; its logos is: “You shall not kill.” (‘Philosophy and the Idea of Infinity,’ CPP, pp. 54-55)

Autonomy, sanctioned by the “universal” ideal(s) of ‘human freedom,’ will not allow its self-legislature any “hetero;” cannot allow itself to be taken hostage by the Other, and cannot, *following its own terms/assumptions* (which it habitually denies are through-and-through metaphysical), see the appeal of the Other as anything but an “unfair” or “vain” accusation: an accusation that, when generalized, can only be seen as contradictory and, as such, insubstantial or illegitimate by the fundamentally ‘egalitarian’ structure of Western Science/Knowledge. This refusal or accusation of ‘autonomy’ makes itself “felt” or “known” in its constant attempts to obviate the Other’s demand, which corresponds to what Lévinas’ phenomenology sees in the temptation to murder, to kill the other. As Lévinas notes (see above), murder, the taking of someone’s life, is never wholly sufficient to satisfy the

murderous intent; it always leaves “something to be desired,” as it were, as the Other reveals itself in a *transcendence* which marks the excess of that very intent as “biting off more than consciousness can chew,” so to speak. In the same “excessive” manner, the other’s (exposure to) death keeps accusing ‘me’ in the non-response of the other’s corpse itself (the most extreme exposure to death, the limit of ‘expression’); the Other’s “Thou shalt not kill” is heard in it ever more clearly and definitively, as an “unfair,” *and yet persisting*, accusation (the “recurring” nature of the skeptic from the previous chapter – who keeps “popping up” despite her position having already been “philosophically refuted” – betrays a similar structure).

The logic of obviating the Other’s demand, then, would constitute the most radical, excessive ‘No,’ a ‘no’ to life itself: speaking the most absolute, and total, nihilism; finding its logical conclusion in a “suicide”¹⁴³ by which the ‘I’ tries, in a last, desperate attempt, to use (its “own”) death so as to drown-out the demand of the other(’s death); this is what I tried to show in the case of Heidegger. Opening to the Other, unlike so many interpretations of Lévinas in a “Christian spirit,” is decidedly *non-voluntary*; and this shows itself in the most extreme contrast when ‘I’ – intentionally, consciously, willfully – undertake its denial: the other’s death – not nothing, yet not wholly ‘there’ (*Da*) either – then forces open that which had been assumed to be over and done with, or “closed.” The will to know, the “spirit” of knowledge – whether driven by the (“wondering” of “anxious”) thinker, or by the force of her ‘in-spiration’ – is made to answer to an Other which this will/spirit cannot (have) reach(ed), and yet, *vexingly*, is itself already reached, *compromised*, by it.

This asymmetry or non-reciprocity also means that this will to knowledge/truth – however ‘good,’ however ‘un-egoistic,’ however ‘communal’ or ‘dialogical’ – becomes exposed, in this event of communication, to the confounding, *ante*-subjective demands of an absolute Justice, to which neither ‘Truth’ nor the drive towards it could have prepared a response in advance. Here the implicit assumption of ‘Truth’ – as self-justifying, as absolute – is dethroned from its claims of constituting the ‘end’ – whether eschatological or teleological – of this communication-event with the other. It is my contention here that precisely due to this – what Lévinas called the *asymmetry* between the ‘I’ and the ‘Other’ – that a murderous reaction arises in the ‘I,’ precisely so as to preserve, against this *ethical* call for *justice*, its ‘natural’ or ‘moral’ *right*. Making sure that the question of ‘right’ be divorced from the metaphysical question, hence, is precisely the method by which Western thought – as “egology” – enacts this murderous violence. The methodological decision – which is also, as I show here, an ethico-metaphysical act – that underwrites this “egology” always insists that the ethical question concerning my

responsibility *should be* derived of a certain ‘Sameness’ (of ‘standard’ or ‘currency’); a ‘Sameness’ whose symmetry belies the absolute responsibility that upsets and puts in radical question any reciprocal or reconciled notion of ‘dialogue’ (i.e. ‘communication’ reduced to a “mutual recognition” or an “inter-subjectivity.”

Here we touch on the crux of antipathology as an attempt at *communication* with a Western-Academic tradition of thought: part of *speaking to* this ‘autonomous’ stance – and particularly where it couches its justification of violence (towards the vain; towards the groundlessly-self-differentiating) – inheres in recognizing how deeply and intimately it is threatened by this metaphysical catastrophe that *Levinatzsch* will spell for it. Its cries of “not fair!” should, hence, be given every bit of respectful attention we can muster, if the violence of this good will is ever to be coaxed out of its hiding place(s) and communicated with. Though all I can do in this chapter is draw-out the philosophical framework of metaphysics with regards to Jewish thought – the “ontological” aspect of this tradition’s ‘anti-Judaism’ – this communication attempt will get a lot more “personal” in the next chapter, which – with the help of philosophy’s first and foremost “psychologist” – will trace Nietzsche’s genealogical analysis into the resentment that underwrites of all that is considered good and moral (i.e. “fair”) for modern, Western thought, the ethical ramifications of its (hidden, denied) hatreds.

2.4 The *Ily a*: Witnessing the Trace of the Other

In his early work *De l’existence à l’existant* – which Lévinas’ noted translator and scholar Robert Bernasconi ventures is *the* Lévinasian contestation of Heidegger¹⁴⁴ – Lévinas offers his own phenomenology of the arrival of the metaphysical ‘Why?’. Instead of the “egological” sobering of *Angst* – as a certain witnessing of the ‘Nothing(ness)’ or emptiness of sense as the limit de-fines Being – Lévinas offers the *involuntary*, heteronomous wakefulness of ‘insomnia.’ Insomnia – similarly to ‘obsession’ – is the state where the ‘Why?’s ‘recoil’ gains its “force of spirit” not from (my own) death but from (the death of) the other. It is a wholly other source of “motivation” for the phenomenological ‘leap.’ In insomnia, unlike Heidegger’s “egological” ‘moods’ or ‘attunements’ of despair and boredom,¹⁴⁵ it is rather an excess(iveness) of sense that *strikes ‘me’ from without*; feeling the inability to escape my own existence/Being, ‘I’ am still brought before this demand that comes at my Being much more *interruptively* than the *necessary indifference* that boredom and despair intimate (to Being from *within* Being). ‘Why can it not *be otherwise?*’ would be the question that comes at Being from the Other, an accusation directed at Being from the Other.

While this “otherwise” is relatable to the otherness of, say, another(‘s) understanding (of Being), it is not – and this is said here to resist the interpretation given it by many liberal “pluralists” – reducible to it. Lévinas is speaking to an ethico-metaphysical Other, an otherwise than Being, which spells a break in ‘sense’ itself and not merely its encounter with “another(‘s) sense. This is not the “otherwise” that spells the difference that is, literally, *enclosed* within the concept of “inter-subjectivity” or “(mutual) recognition,” but, coming from the Other, is not reducible to a mere “other ‘Da’ that puts forth another worldview. The latter devolves into the Heideggerian ontological projections of the understanding, where one horizon meets another, promising what Gadamer likes to call the “fusion” of horizons in the authentic encounter with another human being. Such an ‘other’ is always encountered – unlike in obsession and insomnia – at my leisure, in “my time,” an ‘other’ already possessed with the “equal rights” of a metaphysically symmetrical, conversational counterpart. Lévinas’ phenomenology of the event of communication affirms an impossible transgression – always interrupted by a trace/remainder – that evokes, in its very incommensurability, the death of the other and the desire for murder. The ‘equality’ that the aforementioned “pluralism” evinces becomes, hence, blind in its egology, since it presupposes an overarching Sameness – in Gadamer, for example, it is the sameness of the ‘*Sache*’ (the ‘thing’ or ‘matter’ under discussion) – thus only affording a legitimate contact once the Other had been expelled, its interruption denied or averted.

It was Carl Schmitt who attested to the problem of this “liberal blindness” of Western thought, which – while presupposing the sovereign rights of Sameness (its faith in the legal/parliamentary system) – still has recourse to sovereign violence whenever these presupposed “conditions of dialogue” are frustrated or in need of being asserted/brought forth (the process of ‘civilization’ carries a similar structure and, indeed, ‘spirit’). Lévinas will not take Schmitt’s “side” – the Nazi jurist used this argument to affirm the necessity of dictatorship in politics, in the relation to the other (person) – but neither will he allow philosophy to forget this temptation to murder. As I show here, this temptation, this “primordial” animosity is denied by “egological” thought while – always calling it exceptional (and thus justified as ‘natural,’ a kind of “*self*-defence”) – still perpetrated by liberal democracies, systematically and without compunction. Responsibility to the other is becoming insomniac, unable to close one’s eyes to this compunction – and it is this that marks Lévinas’ relevance to Western political thought most of all. In the next chapter, I will show, through Nietzsche, the theological framework that is furthered by this, what he calls, “democratic prejudice” of philosophy’s consideration of encountering otherness. That which this prejudice ignores most of all is the limit or heteronomy that is traced upon its own

“existential freedom,” where Being cannot be approached or shared without first breaching its pathology, the uncompromising resistance of the Other that marks it from without as accused.

This “crust” of being, the ‘pathology’ that holds the ‘trace’ of the Other, is what Lévinas calls the ‘there is’ (*il y a*); an “impersonal, anonymous, yet inextinguishable “consummation” of being, which murmurs in the depths of nothingness itself” (EE, p. 52). This is “the bare fact of presence” which is, as Lévinas reckons, “oppressive:” as in the phenomenon of insomnia, I am, indignantly, “held by being, held to be” (EE, p. 61). In this experience the other ‘Why?’ arrives, with an *urgency* that can no longer be comprehended as mere ‘wonder’ or ‘boredom,’ nor even as “egological” *Angst*; but an uneasy, oppressive “presence,” a “haunting” that arises from “behind” or “within” nothingness (both of which are *logically* nonsensical): “[t]his presence [...] is neither a being, nor consciousness functioning in a void, but the universal fact of the *there is*” (ibid, ibid). The *il y a*, this “crust” of Being, imposes this “logically untenable” state that “transcends inwardness as well as exteriority; it does not even make it possible to distinguish these” (EE, p. 52). Lévinas is introducing transcendence – rather than the project or regulative ideal of an autonomous, free subject – as the latter’s inter-ruption by an Other; the an-archic temporality of the ‘otherwise (than Being).’ It is in this *imposed* ‘wakefulness’ – not, *pace* Heidegger, a “burden I give myself” – that the interruption of the *il y a* is most amplified; where, “[...] the anonymous current of being invades, submerges every subject, person or thing” (EE, p. 52). Like night for an insomniac, this “otherwise” encroaches as “an absolutely unavoidable presence” that is yet – *pace* Hegel – “not the dialectical counterpart of absence.” It is simply encountered as the oppressive interruption of an “immediately there” (EE, p. 52).

Once again we arrive at a crucial point of Lévinas’ elusive formulation of ethics as *first* philosophy: the philosopher can no longer take shelter in the (“egological”) ‘necessity’ of her philosophical indifference/freedom, but called to respond for an anterior, always preceding Other that somehow enables the metaphysical question, the ‘Why?’, to come forth: ‘what is’ and the question of its meaning, are here exposed to an impossible urgency, the urgency to respond to a violence already enacted by the philosopher’s thought, or ‘position’ (the ‘said’ that cognizes, but also betrays, the ‘saying’). It is the urgency of the “too late,” which is always both an imperative and an accusation: not just ‘think!’ but, turning thought against one, saying ‘your thought has preceded you and responded in your name; be responsible for its response!’ – one is hounded by the Other, running after one’s own thought – such is the vertiginal character of the ethico-metaphysical ‘Why?’, what Blanchot articulates as “the infinite affliction which does not reach us in the present, but befalls by linking us to a past without

memory”.¹⁴⁶ This thought’s “freedom,” if it has any, is only the freedom to run after itself in the name of the Other, interminably and fruitlessly obsessed by the trace of the Other, a “difficult freedom,” indeed.

Lévinas’ phenomenology indeed provides a different approach to thinking about ‘freedom,’ wherein the paradoxical/‘aporetic’ demand to free myself from my own Being gains such a heightened urgency as to put my very Being – in my wakefulness to the fatality of its “crust” – into question. What Heidegger calls “an impassioned freedom towards death,” is that which consists in my achieving the leap from my everyday fallenness (in ‘*das Man*’), and which, moreover “is factual, certain of itself [*selbst gewissen*], and anxious” (SZ, p. 265 [my underline]). This freedom is what opens up the ek-static relation of being-there and enables the anticipation/recollection of *Dasein* (in its existential ‘thrownness’) that Heidegger calls ‘transcendence’. Yet the Lévinasian ‘insomniac’ evinces a passivity *behind the back of Dasein*, a temporal interruption, an an-archy, that haunts this freedom; an ethico-metaphysical – rather than ontological – ‘transcendence’ that this “fated passivity” traces. It marks, as Lévinas says, “a passivity that cannot be taken charge of” (GDT, p. 178). While *Angst* affords the sleep and (its) non-consciousness as modalities of Being-there (*Da-sein* warming itself in the consolation of non-consciousness as its very salvation and horizon, as the indifference – not towards, but – *of* ‘my death’), insomnia is obsessed, it rushes ahead incessantly (and uselessly), imposing a wakefulness that is other than *Angst*’s “freedom towards death.” The ‘Why?’ of this headlong rush is not “inspired” by, or beholden to, my own death/Nothingness, but to the pathology of the Other (as witnessed in its face/trace).

Heidegger’s *Angst* is, hence, replaced with horror: “[i]t is a participation in the *there is*, in the *there is* which returns in the heart of every negation, in the *there is* that has no exits. [...] it is [...] the impossibility of death” (EE, p. 56). Unlike *Angst*, horror has bigger problems than mere ‘death’ (as horizon; as *eigenste* (‘ownmost’)); it is this “no exit” that comes from the *il y a*’s essential anonymity. The corpse – as the dead *other* – is *horrible* (EE, p. 56), precisely because it offers an encounter for which there is “no discourse,” for “[n]othing responds to us but this silence; the voice [of which] is understood and frightens” (EE, p. 52). This is what I called earlier the de-finition of the ‘expression’ of the face of the Other: the ‘no response’ of the other’s corpse – an encounter *explicitly evicted* from Heidegger’s ‘authentic’ phenomenology of *Angst* – leaves an accusing void that, in the very exposure of the other to death (here arrived at its most extreme manifestation), interrupts the most intimate, “egological” assumptions of *Dasein*.

This ‘horror’ – which, *pace* Kierkegaard, is not a ‘fear and trembling’ prior to a leap of faith (cf. ‘Loving the Torah More Than God,’ DF, p. 145), which, *pace* Heidegger, is “nowise an anxiety about [my own; SC] death” (EE, p. 56) – addresses the condition of the philosopher or thinker as a witness/survivor; it throws me to an “impersonal vigilance” (EE, p. 55). “Impersonal” here does not revert to Heideggerian indifference. On the contrary, it means that this is a vigilance that ‘I’ have/has no *recognized* stake in – not an inter-subjective ‘care’ towards “another subject” (already afforded the ontological priority of a supportive ‘Da’) – and am yet commanded into, despite ‘my-self.’ It is as if this anonymous passivity had invaded ‘me,’ making ‘me’ indistinguishable from ‘it,’ breaching my ‘autonomous’ and ‘indifferent’ closures with this horrible ‘*line of communication*,’ a communication *with the pathological and incommunicable*. Seen in this context, the Heideggerian *Angst* towards my own death looks “easy,” for it is a cessation of communication/sense; but ‘horror’ is exposure to the demands that come beyond sense, the very excess of ‘expression,’ where even silence has an “anonymous murmur” that compels my vigilance. Once again, Maurice Blanchot makes the most elegant and precise formulation of this ethical predicament, when he writes, in his *l’Attente l’oubli*, “[w]hen 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?” (p. 10). Such is, precisely, the indignant destitution of the ‘me’ that – as an insomniac witness to the *il y a* (as a trace of the Other’s face, the other’s vulnerability to death) – witnesses the accusation of the Other; an ethical ‘me’ exposing the moral ‘I’ (the “ego” that judges and understands) to this, horrible, responsibility towards the Other.

The me’s ‘passive vigilance’ testifies to my responsibility (as ‘I’) towards the other; its horror belonging to a wholly other ‘transcendence’ (than Heidegger’s). It is beholden to an-other (thought of) ‘freedom.’ Heteronomous by definition, such alienated conception of transcendence, thought as separation, confounds all ontological horizons – it is beyond *Angst*, particularly in its *urgency* that exceeds, is “stronger” than, that of (my own) death¹⁴⁷ – suspending and accusing them, holding them *responsible*.¹⁴⁸ There is no Heideggerian ‘*Jemeinigkeit*’ (“mineness”) in its experience; the horror of the *there is* holds ‘me’ as if from “behind” the ‘nothingness’ in front of which *Dasein* remains, transfixed.

This *imposition* of wakefulness, of the insomniac’s ‘passive vigilance,’ intimates my being-commanded to respond to something Other, beyond my “ego” powers and yet insistently targeting *me*; undermining and yet also underwriting my ‘freedom’ as will, as consciousness, as (a) being. Neither merely ‘free’ nor merely ‘servile,’ it spells an *other*, what Lévinas calls ‘finite’ freedom:

[...] [Finite freedom] is the freedom of a "me" [moi], whose unlimited responsibility (not measured by freedom and irreducible to nonfreedom) demands subjectivity as that which nothing and no one could replace, and strips this subjectivity bare like a passivity, like a self in an accusative form without a nominative." (GDT, 178 [my underline])

[...] 'This finite freedom, which, ontologically, has no sense to it, is the *rupture of being's unrendable essence*. As such, responsibility frees the subject from [Heidegger's; SC] boredom; it frees him from the gloomy tautology and the monotony of essence, or delivers him from the attachment in which the "me" smothers under itself (GDT, p. 179 [my underline])

This is the freedom that betrays a susceptibility to the Other that at the same time limits it and demands it exceed these limitations with the utmost urgency; hence, in the eyes of western philosophy's idea(l) of freedom, it corresponds to the "difficult freedom" I mention above. This "difficulty" that, with Lévinas, is introduced into 'freedom' is, once again, structurally homologous to that metaphysical interruption that Christian theology had so feared or horrified to find in the face of Judaism. As he was already interpellated into these 'existential' considerations of freedom, and as he is one of the few phenomenologists who dealt with antisemitism from "within" it, so to speak (as he was not Jewish himself), Jean Paul Sartre's *Réflexions sur la question juive* has some interesting things to say about the way that the Jew's "freedom" is conceived in the eyes of the anti-Semite.¹⁴⁹

Sartre's own account – which he terms an "etiology of hatred" – makes particular mention of how the antisemite's conception of the Jew's 'freedom' is, indeed, *irrational*. As Sartre observes, in the eyes of the anti-Semite – which are the eyes antipathology is following here – the Jew *is* free, but *only* "free to do evil" (*Anti-Semite and Jew*, p. 39). There is a coherence in this conception of Jewish freedom, even though it designates a very specific, indeed limited (which for Hegel has to be called 'finite') type of freedom. This freedom, however it prospers and allowed to grow – in whatever circumstances or conditions – will always only pursue 'evil.' Since God/Being is "All Good" for Christian theology – compare with Lévinas who always maintained that Platonic statement of the good as *epekeina tēs ousias*, "beyond Being"¹⁵⁰ – 'evil' had to be conceived-of as a privation,¹⁵¹ a lack of this Good, something that blocks its path or retards its – otherwise all-consuming – advance.

Though Sartre will use this "irrationality" as something that, in his eyes, delegitimizes the antisemite's hatred, antipathology refuses such "rational prerogative" and, rather, *affirms this hatred as legitimately communicating something*. As Jacques Derrida once remarked – concisely articulating an old insight – coherence in contradiction only denotes the presence of, or, as he writes, "expresses the force of a desire";¹⁵² it is only a 'philosophy' that claimed self-Sameness (as a pursuit of 'Truth' and/or Being) that makes this contradictory presence illegitimate. When this desire is a negative desire,

philosophy – owing to “universal aspirations” that loathe such *pathological* assertions of difference – tends to assume it is illegitimate, and here Sartre was no exception. Antipathology, on the other hand, owing to its Nietzschean influences, affirms these irreconcilable assertions of difference, both against the more “positive” (i.e. ‘comprehensive’) desire for totality and sameness, and as traces of difference or ‘distance’ (the Nietzschean ‘*Distanz*’) that allow for the divergence and multiplicity of a thought that do not hail back to a common root or origin, what Gilles Deleuze calls “nomadic thought.” Even though Sartre proves himself to be more Heideggerian than Nietzschean in this text, his phenomenological insights are still, characteristically, very subtle and astute.

What is this strange freedom of the Jew, a freedom under the sign of an essential privation, a freedom “only to do evil”? We need to see and affirm this view, to assess its import – not as a privation of reason, but – vis-à-vis the Christian spirit that animates the Christian antisemite. Then, seen in this light, this “irrational” view of the antisemites betrays its own, originally theological (i.e. metaphysical), coherence. As mentioned earlier, for the spirit of Love, the Letter of the Law spells death, the vanity of the inessential fighting for an existence that has no (or no longer) any “spiritual substance;” no longer enjoying the affirmation of God. It is the same with the type of witness that the Jewish faith stubbornly holds onto.

“Finite freedom,” for Lévinas, gains its ‘finitude’ precisely as the “badge” or scar, the trace of where the ‘there is’ has it in its grip (in ‘me’) and holds this freedom awake and responsible for (its own) Being. It is, hence, the freedom to resist ‘salvation’ or ‘absolution,’ *a relation* of self-separation with the ‘infinite (Being)’ that marks the Jew’s “difficult” or “evil” freedom. After all, it will only always testify to the privation, be held fast by everything that is irreconcilable and unabsolvable; even if this will have to manifest itself from within logos, from within Knowledge/Being, it will be done in the name of that which, as an ethical command (rather than to-be-arrived-at ‘Truth’), lies *beyond* it, becoming, much like the Christian ‘Devil,’ an invincible – because empty and formal – resistance to ‘God’ as infinite Being, God as comprehension and Love, God as Absolute Knowledge that knows itself (as Hegel’s famous construction goes).

This ‘communication with the incommunicable’ leaves me bereft of any “internal” privilege, and yet with the utmost *exteriority of distinction*: this passivity marks *me*, exposing my ‘self’ to a horrible proximity – accused by an anonymous Other – whereby the latter is called to answer for (its) existence. But it also “individuates” me, brings forth the conscious ‘I’ – even if already accused as the Other’s usurper – in an individuation that has little, almost nothing to do with that of the Christian individual

(which necessitates a free and salvable ‘soul’). This finite freedom, in short, is the *ontologically unreasonable* “essence” of the Jew. If one may speak paradoxically, it is the essence of Jewish vanity: a freedom, not to embrace, accept, reconcile, but to recoil, refuse, separate.

This makes as little ‘ontological’ sense as insisting on the “rights” of the “is not” in Parmenides’ poem; it is what marks the Jewish relation to God as what Hegel, tellingly, calls a “bad infinity.” And it is nowadays only the antisemite that can attest to this difference; only hatred that gives us the phenomenological clues to trace the ethico-metaphysical stakes that ‘Truth’ and ‘Knowledge’ gloss over as mere privations to be “left to their own devices” or “euthanized.”

I will leave you with the longer quote from which Sartre’s gloss about freedom is taken. Though Sartre uses the “strangeness” of the Jew’s freedom to prove the “irrational” aspect of antisemitism (so as to discredit it), this passage will both strengthen my argument and shore-up my ‘Levinatzschan,’ *methodological* distance from Sartre’s (metaphysical) assumptions. This hatred of vanity and its self-differentiating, “evil” essence – propagating privation (i.e. ‘evil’) where plenitude and sense are, as ‘Truth,’ “divinely ordained” (hence, also casting a suspicious light on ‘modern science’ as a political struggle on who gets to operate the means for this, Christian-theological, mission/project, rather than the latter’s telos) – shows the dark underbelly of this “all embracing spirit:”

[...] everything is made clear if we renounce any expectation from the Jew of a course of conduct that is reasonable and in conformity with his interests, if, instead, we discern in him a metaphysical principle that drives him to do evil under all circumstances, even though he thereby destroys himself [Sartre gives the example of a common antisemitic allegation against the Jew, which has the latter rooting for a Communist cause while his very livelihood depends on being a successful “vampire” of Capitalism; SC]. This principle, one may suspect, is magical. On the one hand, it is an essence, a substantial form, and the Jew, whatever he does, cannot modify it, any more than fire can keep itself from burning. On the other hand, it is necessary in order to be able to hate the Jew – for one does not hate natural phenomena like earthquakes and plagues of locusts – that it also have the virtue of freedom. Only the freedom in question is carefully limited: The Jew is free to do evil, not good; he has only as much free will as is necessary for him to take full responsibility for the crimes of which he is the author; he does not have enough to be able to achieve a reformation. Strange liberty, which instead of preceding and constituting the essence, remains subordinate to it, is only an irrational quality of it, and yet remains liberty.¹⁵³

It is this very “unreasonableness” of the Jewish inter-ruption of the ontological (and epistemological) totalities (viz. ‘Truth,’ ‘Being,’ ‘Essence,’ ‘Soul’), this “rupture of Being” as Lévinas calls it, that philosophy so disdained in what it refers to as skeptic-ism, that it so *resents* in the skeptic. It is to this “resentment in the name of Truth/Being” that we now, following Nietzsche, turn; for there is

something that “defies reason” in the Jewish ‘freedom,’ which, in order to track the meanderings of this resentment (that at least *marks*, even if only symptomatically, its existence), I want to affirm.

Allow me one more, crucial, comment before moving on to the conclusion, something that speaks a bit more directly to the vanity evinced in my inquiry here. For one can, and will, ask the following question: Are “we” to all follow in Lévinas’ footsteps here? Is Lévinas “telling it the way it is” here? My answer for this would be a careful, yet decisive, ‘No.’ I say “careful,” since all I aim for here – unlike Leo Strauss, for example¹⁵⁴ – is to maintain *a line of communication* between what the latter calls “Athens” and “Jerusalem”;¹⁵⁵ and this care should also be taken specifically in the context of Lévinas, whose own discourse was rife with claims to (Greek) universality, owing to his aforementioned translation project.¹⁵⁶ And yet this ‘No’ is also decisive, since it bears witness to the difference in the very approach to ‘universality’ (in Lévinas’ “translated” discourse), where ‘universal’ is meant to – much like modern ‘ethics’ – to undergo a catastrophic transformation or critique. The “universality” of the *il y a* is not the same universality of Being, nor of the ‘Truth’ to which, and for which, fundamental or “egological” ontology speaks.

Hence, to repeat, Lévinas is *not* telling us the way that it is, but, coming from Hebrew to Greek, is *making an appeal* to the latter, on behalf of the former. Hence the ‘No;’ for, to say ‘Yes’ to these “universal issues” (that have their place/legitimacy) would already implicate Lévinas (and me) within the Heideggerian fundamental ontology (as emanating from the ground of Being, from the Truth of “what is”). Rather, Lévinas is – and me/Levinatzsch in his wake – responding to an ethical urgency Lévinas had heard within the depths of Heidegger’s, his former mentor’s, phenomenological project, as well as the various contexts against which it arose in its own ‘Da.’ Not “telling it how it is” but *opening the question of the otherwise* of this “is,” an ‘otherwise’ demanded (in a ‘saying’) – though the demand is never fully de-fined or thematized (in a ‘said’) – by what *ought to* ‘be.’ An ‘ought’ that gains *primacy*, that eludes reduction and closure within the understanding’s horizons of intelligibility/projection (Kant, Heidegger), and yet interruptive rather than speculative/absolving towards thought (Hegel). If in Kant the ‘can’ implies the ‘ought,’ in Hegel the ‘is’ contains the ‘ought,’ and in Heidegger the ‘ought’ ought to be “passed over in silence,” – Lévinas’ ethics as first philosophy tries to give this ‘ought’ *a pride* – a vanity(?) – *of place*; inscribing its excessive demands as a permanent wound or breach of any certainty, any totality, any *said* ‘Truth.’ Lévinas just cannot – or will not – give it a general/“universal” status in the same manner that Western “egology” had, up to, and including (and also after), the horrors of WWII.

4. “*Cet esprit méphistophélique*”

I believe I have an inner call [*inneren Beruf*] to philosophy and, by fulfilling it in research and teaching, a call to the eternal vocation [*ewige Bestimmung*] of the inner man [*inneren Menschen*] – *and for that alone* I feel called to achieve what is in my powers and thus to justify [*rechtfertigen*], before God, my very existence [*Dasein*] and work (Martin Heidegger, Letter to Englebert Krebs, 9 January 1919)¹⁵⁷

[...] Given that the National Socialist worldview was becoming increasingly rigid and less inclined to enter into a philosophical confrontation, the fact that I was active as a philosopher was resistance enough. (Martin Heidegger, Letter to the Rector of Freiburg University, 1945)¹⁵⁸

1. Concerning 1933: I expected from National Socialism a spiritual [*geistige*] renewal of life in its entirety, a reconciliation of social antagonisms and a deliverance of western *Dasein* from the dangers of communism. [...] 3. You are entirely correct that I failed to provide a public, readily comprehensible counter-declaration; it would have been the end of both me and my family. On this point, Jaspers said: that we remain alive is our guilt [*Schuld*]. (Martin Heidegger, Letter to Herbert Marcuse, 20 January, 1948)¹⁵⁹

The radical responsibility before the Other (and the other's death) underwrites Lévinas' account of the desire to murder, the phenomenological complement to his paradigm of the death of the other. Hegel's 'System of Science,' where Absolute Knowledge comprehends all difference and all otherness – hence putting an end (a stop and a *telos*) to their vain murmurs – enjoys a privileged status in this respect, as arguably the single most consistent philosophical persecution of the Lévinasian Other. The absolution which is sought – however “spiritually” – to and through knowledge in Hegel's system of difference-reconciliation (which Hegel credits as Christian ‘Love’), indeed proved that Hegel's system could handle everything and anything; anything but what Hegel calls, with disdain (not to say hatred), ‘vanity.’ I show here that this vanity indeed shows a remarkably parallel structure to the image of the Jew in the eyes of Christian theology; that the Lévinasian witness is precisely that which Hegel's System – which, as he once wrote, *confirmed* his (Protestant) Christianity – relentlessly persecutes.

The vain, in the eyes of Hegel (or, more precisely, in the eyes of this System) is the empty insistence on a difference that has no “spiritual” substance, no place in absolute knowledge. It is a contingent difference, and insisting that it make a difference puts one in the already diminishing-to-nothingness position of the skeptic. Like the Jewish response to the Christian Messiah, the skeptic can only point at ‘Truth’ and negate it, say “this is not it!” or “this might not be it!” Not “contributing” anything, this frustrating “agent of nothingness” scandalizes any and all projects of knowledge and spirit by refusing – vainly, not due to any alternative knowledge, not coming from any particular ‘Da’ or

‘*Sittlichkeit*’ – to let the System proceed towards its absolution in Truth. In the case of the Jew, the accusation goes further and grants the latter the dubious privilege of being deemed the “murderer of God.”

Owing to our antipathological method, this “murderer status” should be, and is, wholly *affirmed*: for the Jewish faith there can be, indeed, no Messiah, so long as there still is history, so long as we are still ‘in time.’ Hence, any pretense to Divinity’s “merger” with the ‘world,’ with ‘Being’ – be it in a faith that worships the finitude ‘nature’ and/through existing objects/idols (Paganism, Heidegger), an ontotheological System that equates the “positive” infinity of God with Being (Christian scholasticism, Hegel), or a Jew claiming his own Divine paternity (Jesus Christ) – will be met with the famous Abrahamic iconoclasm/refusal. In the eyes of the Christian – and I will show this in my chapter on Martin Luther below – this refusal of Salvation also means refusing the ‘spirit’ of God’s Law.

At the heart of Christian antisemitism lies the intense animosity towards such a vain (because meaningless, empty) stubbornness. Its spirit – geared to universal acceptance and the reconciliation of all (meaningful) differences – has only the ‘vain’ difference as its enemy; a refusal that hangs on to its self-difference – its elevation or chosenness as witness to, or guardian of, the ‘Letter’ of the Law – despite all “facts” of history and all scientific “evidence,” insisting, in a self-contradictory, obsessive-compulsive manner (i.e. even against its own interests/survival), on being always reclusive, never reconciliatory, towards all worldly ‘grounding’ as such. Such is the horror of the Jews in the eyes of Hegel, and such is the senseless refusal of ‘Divine spirit’ that had made them – quite logically – the synonym of the Devil in the Christian psyche; after all, the latter, too, cannot help but only desiring evil, desiring only to resist God’s ‘reconciliation’ and ‘love,’ despite sharing an intimate relation with this God: a true traitor to the cause.

Antipathology uncovers the hatred behind Christian/ontotheological ‘Love’ as the hatred of this self-differentiating character. Unlike hatreds that precede Monotheism, this one is an essentially nihilistic, self-denying or self-negating hatred; a hatred – as I show via Nietzsche’s genealogical genius – of hatred itself. This hatred – because it had been deemed/assumed justified by centuries of Western “moral thought” (roughly, based on a metaphysics of Christian ‘guilt’) – had not failed to implicate even the foremost critic of ontotheology, by which I mean Martin Heidegger. In times of “spiritual renewal” this critic of ontotheology succumbs to what, in other times, he recognized as a dangerous prevarication of thought (‘spirit’). Even then, however, Heidegger avoids this, perhaps “hateful,” topic, and assumed that refusing to engage with this concept, trying to circumvent its effects via a more general critique of

metaphysics, was “sufficient” defense from it. Yet, as his getting “carried away” by this spirit in his National Socialist engagement, as well as his well-hidden and unspoken antisemitism (only now becoming publically known in/as his “Black Notebooks”) show, this spirit, and its self-denied hatred, continued to animate his thought even despite himself.

Heidegger saw an “inner truth and greatness” in National Socialism for precisely its stance in the spiritual struggle between the grounding/Being of “modern humanity” and the uprooting forces Heidegger identifies in “global technology.” The latter was so dangerous and threatening to Heidegger because of its alienation of Man from (her) Being, precisely for what he calls its groundlessness. Failing to take a closer look at this hatred prevented Heidegger to link it with the one other “groundless” character, particularly the one he associates with “international Jewry.” In this “spiritual” struggle over Being, hence, the ‘ground’ came to betray its violence – in a very “Christian spirit” (or at least Hegel’s affirmation of it) – in a manner which Heidegger could neither see, nor, indeed, authentically apologize for. He held on to this spirituality – and its characteristic blindness to its own violence (in the name of Being and Truth) – to the bitter end; he only left the Nazi party once he realized that this spiritual renewal was not philosophical enough; again disparaging, not the spirit, but the method in which it came to be pursued.

Heidegger remains, however, crucial for study. Just like Hegel, he is a brilliant marker of a violence that still keeps carrying its own justification with it, forever immune to a true contestation from, a true interruption, its Other(s). Whether being silent about this hatred/violence, or explicitly affirming and justifying it beyond all (relevant) question, its ethical problem remains, and remains urgent. Even though all “we” have – as modern/western scholars and thinkers – are the philosophical tools that centuries of (published) Academic research have left us, the task still remains of becoming ethically responsible for their use. I am pointing out here a hatred that “we” have never solved, never assumed responsibility for, but – enlightened and secular – assumed to vanish under the “universal” or “egalitarian” concepts of ‘humanity,’ ‘truth’ or ‘equality.’ This also marks a political stance on my part, marking the complicity that ‘Academia’ – especially in its ‘scientific’ garb – might be loath to accept and yet has shown, and not just in Weimar Germany, to be implicated in.¹⁶⁰ So long as this hatred continues to be stifled – assumed as gone or “privatized” to the oblivion of the “individual” (so long, in short, as it is not *communicated* with) – it will continue informing, unbeknownst, even our “best” intentions, and continue authoring effects against which “we” will be left speechless, privately resorting

to the ready-made interpretation that we are here facing an ancient, “exceptional” evil; an evil that must – again “exceptionally,” leaving “us” no choice – be destroyed, paid in (“ours” or “our enemies’”) death.

As a way of conclusion, I will now discuss how Heidegger’s charge against Nietzsche, who figures in the next chapter, relates to his and Nietzsche’s accounts of the skeptic. This will also help ensconce the importance of the Levinatschian construction I offer here. With respect to Heidegger, Levinatsch offers a double-pronged attack-defense formation: on the one hand, it offers a way of defending from, or responding to, Heidegger’s charge against Nietzsche’s “metaphysics;” on the other hand, it shows how this response/defense is already operative in Lévinas’ own charge against Heidegger. Though I prefer this critique to unfold through(out) this dissertation’s argument – as proper to this critique’s “spiritual” implications – this issue that concerns Truth and Skepticism should be marked here, albeit briefly, for being indeed the “sticking point” of my methodological critique(s).

Heidegger’s critique of Nietzsche revolves around the way Nietzsche treated the philosophical topic of Truth. Heidegger sees this approach as the epitome of metaphysics, for one because it introduces a *contradiction* at the heart of Being (recall the skeptics), and second, since it undercuts thought of Being and Truth by a transcendent concern with *value* (recall Lévinas). To Heidegger, Nietzsche is the consummate thinker of Western metaphysics because, *in the first place*, he subjects *all* ‘truth’ (the truth of ‘beings’ *and* the truth of ‘Being’) only to (what must be a metaphysical, “extra-ontological”) *valuation*. Nietzsche, hence, cannot think ‘Being’ in the proper, “fundamentally ontological” manner – which should always uncover, and build on, its Greek origin (Parmenides and Aristotle are Heidegger’s primary heroes here) – and prefers a seemingly more “individual” approach; an approach wherein Heidegger sees the valuation of an (already ontological) ‘Subject’ that is made primary over the question of Being (and its Truth). In his Seminar on Nietzsche, Heidegger focuses on an aphorism from Nietzsche’s (posthumously compiled) *Wille zur Macht*, where the latter writes that “what is needed [for ‘life’] is that something must be held to be true – *not* that something *is* true.” (WTP §507, p. 276). Heidegger is outraged by this approach to (Greek) Truth and Being, for its sticking a contradiction between Truth and Being:

[...] is not [Nietzsche’s] conception of truth full of contradictions and – to be blunt – quite mad? Just now Nietzsche demanded as the essential ground of every living thing *that truth exist*. And now he explains with metaphysical cynicism that it is not important for *something to be true*, that it is sufficient for something to be held to be true. How can these two statements go together? (N 3:55).

To Heidegger, the ‘fundamental ontologist,’ this kind of statement scandalizes Being itself, in its very ‘ground:’ no longer thought in its ownmost idiom, no longer thought through (to) its truth, Being becomes degraded, seemingly ‘subjectivized;’ a kind of “metaphysical wedge” is inserted between Being and Truth, where a thought can no longer *be* ‘true’ but interjected, *interrupted* by a “holder” who “holds (to be true).” Hence, for Heidegger’s (ontotheological understanding of) metaphysics, Nietzsche rejoins the “individualist” or “subjectivist” tradition of Western Metaphysics, as epitomized by Descartes *ego cogito*. It is neither ‘beings’ not ‘Being’ – in their luminescence and truth – that are taken to be primary, “fundamental,” for Nietzsche’s thought; they are interjected by a “holding,” a decision, a *selection*. What opens up the understanding of beings as the *field* that underwrites their ‘truth’ (or unconcealment, *aletheia*, in Heidegger’s Greek vocabulary), is now forced to bear a metaphysical crutch, which Heidegger relates back to the modern metaphysical ‘tradition’ of the solipsistic and a-temporal ‘I think,’ one that even Kant – with whom Heidegger shared a lot and held in very high esteem¹⁶¹ – was not immune from.

For Heidegger, in contrast, there is nothing that escapes the primordial essence of *Dasein*, which is, of course, existence. According to this, his most “fundamental” claim against this Nietzschean maneuver, “[t]he essence of things consists in the constant absence of contradiction” (N. 3:112). One can now perhaps better understand Heidegger’s outrage, not to say confusion, at Nietzsche’s *interjecting a contradiction* right into the heart of all thought of Being – its essential Truth. The ontological project itself, *in order to remain fundamental*, must rid itself of any trace of metaphysics, including any (ironic?) form of “metaphysical cynicism.” The latter – expressed in the ‘belief’ that Nietzsche interjects into the midst of truth – interrupts the very ground of existence itself, the intimate connection between Being and Truth, by something *other* than ‘ontological;’ something that, to Heidegger, smacks of modernity’s metaphysical (and nihilistic) solipsism. Heidegger stages here a kind of “duel” between Aristotle and Nietzsche precisely around the law of non-contradiction: to Aristotle, this law was the (onto)logical condition that beings will be apprehended *as beings*, that is, in their “presence and permanence” (N 3: 115), rejoining the Parmenidean position that what ‘is not,’ i.e., what does not belong to/in Being, is *not* (in Being).¹⁶² And to Heidegger, of course, this also means that this “third” must be excluded from philosophy, (re-)defined as fundamental ontology.

As noted earlier, Heidegger conceives of temporality as the ek-static, as “the primordial outside-of-itself” (SZ, p. 329). He rejects the “common” understanding that sees it as a sequence of ‘now’ points on/as a linear and unidirectional progression. Furthermore, he accords the *future* a privileged role –

owing to *Dasein*'s essentially 'anticipatory' character – as the “primary phenomenon of primordial and authentic time” (ibid, ibid). However, since for Heidegger both (my) Being and (my) Time are stretched in the projections of 'care' – which fundamentally, ontologically, is care about *my own* death as “Being-towards-death” (ibid, ibid) – it marks *this* privileged futurity as precisely a “towards-oneself” (ibid, ibid); an “existing at the possibility of nullity” (i.e. the aforementioned 'Nothing'). In this regard – recalling Lévinas' philosophy of time – Nietzsche's introducing such a “metaphysically cynical” contradiction in the midst of the very truth of Being is beholden to a *wholly other kind of future* (Nietzsche always insisted that he wrote a 'philosophy for the future'). This “futurity,” unlike *Dasein*'s projective anticipations, is beholden – neither to 'beings' (the 'inauthentic') nor the 'Nothing' (the 'authentic') as the ultimate factum which “disappears,” recedes into the night, with my death, but – to a chaotic, an-archic past, and an unknowable future that appeals beyond “my own” life/death (that, as 'will to power,' eternally returns but does not, or not necessarily, eternally *coheres*).

What I would like to propose is that this “gap” or “black hole” that Nietzsche introduced into the heart of Being's Truth – in insisting on the coming-to-be of a value that, in turn, *prescribes ontology* (rather than the other way around) – this “belief” in the fundamental “lie” or “mask” that is truth for Nietzsche, interjects a *skeptic* at the heart of philosophy. Herself a kind of “metaphysical cynic” – “*cet esprit fataliste, ironique, méphistophélique*”, as Nietzsche affirms (BGE §209, p. 133) – the skeptic interjects a gap of nothingness, a “vanity,” precisely where the 'nothing' had been presumably appropriated (in/by Being). This vain skeptic interjects a 'dangerous perhaps,' a “perhaps otherwise,” at the very 'origin' – or more precisely, before the 'origin' – of 'existence' itself. The skeptic will *raise the 'Why?' question* (of 'reality,' of 'consciousness,' of the 'good' and the 'true'), and especially its stakes – which in her become both '*personal*' (his so-called “solipsistic position”) and, relatedly, *urgent* – to new heights; that, above all, is how I see the scandalization of philosophy in Nietzsche's “holding to be true”.¹⁶³

As touched-upon earlier, this also marks Nietzsche's 'historical sense,' a conception that should be read in all tenses, past, present and, especially, future. That which Hegel had “choked the truth out of,” that over which Heidegger throws his “projective nets,” is *resisted* by the Nietzschean “phenomenology” in the interruption of a necessarily inaccessible difference; the evicted – but always returning – possibility which is the skeptic's charge to insist upon, or perhaps even *embody*. As we are about to see, Nietzsche's entire critique of Christian metaphysics – most decisively (not to say vocally) expressed in his critique of (its) 'morality' – will focus on this attempt to do away with this interruptive

transcendence (which will never cohere – as in classical metaphysics – to a ‘realm’ or a ‘being’ “beyond”).¹⁶⁴

This interruption of the truth of *Dasein* in the skeptic’s appeal is the most fundamental predicament that *Dasein* finds in deciphering the meaning, not of (my) ‘Being’ over-and-against (my) ‘Nothingness’ (my death), but of its hardened “crust;” the *il y a* that Lévinas writes is “neither nothingness nor being” and indeed appeals, as Lévinas confirms, to the “excluded middle” of the phenomenological Other (i.e. the ‘trace’).¹⁶⁵ This attention to the “pre-history” of the ‘will’ or ‘consciousness’ – whatever the ‘Da,’ authentic or otherwise, they might cite for their justification –, this insistence on the essential necessity of future’s *dispersion*, expresses that strange ‘exteriority’ that Lévinas referred to as diachrony. It is a “spiritual” resistance, a resistance to the spirit that always-already absolves its closures (be it as ‘ground’ or *telos*); where the skeptic, and her constant insistence on the ‘otherwise (to truth/being),’ attests to a fundamental “disjointing” of time in the ethico-metaphysical event of the becoming, or arrival, of a new (moral) value; the ‘trans’ of the Nietzschean ‘trans-valuation of value.’ The contradiction involved here is affirmed by Lévinas as a sort of “prerogative” or audacity, of the “philosophically illegitimate” skeptic, the audacity of, as I maintain, the “vain:”

[...] We must stay with the extreme situation of a diachronic thought. Skepticism, at the dawn of philosophy, set forth and betrayed the diachrony of this very conveying and betraying. To conceive the otherwise than being requires, perhaps, as much audacity as skepticism shows, when it does not hesitate to affirm the impossibility of statement while venturing to realize this impossibility by the very statement of this impossibility [here is the skeptic’s scandalous contradiction; SC]. If, after the innumerable “irrefutable” refutations which logical thought sets against it, skepticism has the gall to return (and it always returns as philosophy’s illegitimate child), it is because in the contradiction which logic sees in it the “at the same time” of the contradictories is missing, because a secret diachrony commands this ambiguous or enigmatic way of speaking, and because in general signification signifies beyond synchrony, beyond essence. (OB, p. 7 [my underline])

This contradiction, this “syntax error” in temporality itself, is attested to by the nobility, the vain audacity, of the skeptic’s (self-)contradiction – a contradiction precisely meant to explode and separate ‘Being,’ allow for a *metaphysical distance* (and, hence, a responsibility) to haunt the ‘self’ or the ‘will,’ so as to be able to respond (though never “absolutely;” never without violence) to the Other. Neither (as I argue earlier) the ‘logical’ refutation of the skeptic’s interruption of philosophical truth, nor, as argued here, the ‘onto-logical’ complaint against it (i.e. that it makes Being unthinkable in its truth), can address this ‘eternal recurrence’ of the skeptical “contradiction:” only Levinatzsch, in its conception of

temporality as itself already a response to a “metaphysically transcendent” Other, can affirm what scandalizes philosophy’s truth-statements and ontological coherence.

Affirming this scandalization of Being (as value; as “holding to be true”), and creating (new values) in its wake, means “wedging” a ‘No,’ a disquieting and infinitely deep fold (which is *not* ‘nothing’), at the heart of all “lines of communication:” be it the narrative “spine” of a Hegelian, dialectical-teleological spiral of Spirit, or the horizon upon which the Heideggerian understanding-of-Being projects its Truth, or even the line that Kant uses to mark the “off limits” of the “faculty” of philosophy (and, hence, of the philosopher’s responsibility to think). Time does not *only* or *necessarily* support the “reconciling” or “gathering” project of philosophical knowledge, and perhaps always erects it through scandalizing it at its very core. In the Levinatzschean framework offered here, the Hegelian *Aufhebung* and the Heideggerian *Dasein* become insufficient, not to say violent, responses to this generative, and interruptive, temporal fold; otherwise than being, this “vain thought” neither fully possesses (*haben*) the (ethical) height (*auf*) – the ‘audacity’ of the skeptic’s implausible and philosophically illegitimate “position” – nor does it find sufficient shelter from its return(s) in the “there” (*Da*) of Being (*Sein*).¹⁶⁶

It is this ‘audacity’ of the skeptic, who, *repetitively* re-emerges out of the “sleep” of philosophy (or the sleep of what is *noble* in philosophy), that Nietzsche calls the skeptic’s ‘grand passion.’ The skeptic’s “otherwise” is not merely a battle against dogmatism, or what Nietzsche calls ‘conviction;’ it is a freedom with regards to conviction and truth, to all spiritual sublations and temporal projections of ‘history,’ and yet a “difficult,” decidedly heteronomous “freedom.” Like the dogmatist’s “sleep” – which, I will soon show, Nietzsche’s method necessitates, and which makes one “permitted to speak” about value in the first place – ‘conviction’ (not to be confused with ‘audacity’) can only be breached from without (not by another conviction). It is not the skeptic her-self, but *this ‘grand passion’ that awakens in her* that which battles ‘conviction’ in this manner. It is this passion that “awakens” the skeptic to her peculiar ‘freedom,’ and yet its “force” – pace Heidegger – has no pregiven justification (neither in ‘truth’ nor in ‘ground’); its only “right” is the interjection of difference.

Like the ‘*Distanz*’ whose *pathos* Nietzsche will never cease insisting on, this ‘passion’ – pace Heidegger’s rendering of Nietzsche’s thought – affords a “non-egological” freedom, one that comes *from without* the skeptic’s ‘will,’ ‘intention,’ or ‘subjectivity.’ It will allow the skeptic, in time, to repeat her iconoclasm once more, against a newly revealed closure, *responding to a newly heard murmur of a “there is” which elicits her awakening*; a violence to which this passion – “grander,” indeed *higher* than

any conscious subjectivity, a passion towards which she is *passive* ('passion' and 'passive' share the same etymology) – allows her to respond. There is no “resting on laurels” for this warrior-traitor, no ‘autonomy,’ for she is always being *put in question* by this very passion: every conviction, every “prison,” could be her last, could become a final moral absolute from which she will find no issue, in which she will decadently sink to nihilism.

This constant ‘trial’ – by virtue of which, Nietzsche says, the skeptic *earns the right to speak* about value – is, fundamentally, an *ethical* trial; through it the skeptic is repetitively, “eternally,” put in question. As this ‘passion’ – in Lévinasian terms, a sensitivity to the closure and anonymous murmurs of the *il y a* – is the only ‘sovereign’ here, this is a ‘freedom’ like no other; it is, indeed, a ‘finite freedom’ – for it operates, somehow, through the passivity imposed by the prison of (moral; ontological; even ‘spiritual’) conviction. This passivity, not assumable by the “ego” and yet decisive with regards its identity/definition, is the “passivity more passive than any passivity” which Lévinas describes as ethical responsibility. All of this, I believe, is captured in the following Nietzschean passage:

One should not let oneself be misled: great intellects are skeptics. Zarathustra is a skeptic. The vigour of a mind, its freedom through strength and superior strength, is proved by skepticism. Men of conviction simply do not come into consideration where the fundamentals of value and disvalue are concerned. Convictions are prisons. They do not see far enough, they do not see things beneath them [...]. [...] Grand passion, the ground and force of his being, even more enlightened, more despotic than he himself is, takes his whole intellect into its service; it makes him intrepid; it even gives him courage for unholy means [read: divinely/priestly unsanctioned methods; SC]; if need be it permits him convictions. Conviction as a means: there is much more one can achieve only by means of a conviction. Grand passion uses and uses up convictions, it does not submit to them – it knows itself sovereign (AC, §54, p. 184 [my underline])

When the skeptic “speaks,” as Nietzsche’s short rhyme at the beginning of his *Gay Science* affirms, s/he speaks the ultimate question concerning ‘life’ and ‘truth,’ which is precisely what I called the *ethico-metaphysical* ‘Why?’ It is, appropriately, a personal, what Lévinas calls “individuating” *interrogation*, its individuation is uniquely schismatic, one that breaks up the unity of the speaking ‘subject’ into two unequal “parts:” the one who poses the question, and the one that hears and responds. There is indeed communication here, a “dialogue” so-to-speak – but how far is it from the metaphysical symmetries of Western metaphysics... This dialogue betrays a confounding of the times, a true diachrony, where my question is indeed confirmed by the other, from which it, diachronically, seems to originate. Hence the “speech” of the skeptic:

Half of your life is done:

And it was pain and error through and through!
 Why do you still seek on? –
 Precisely this I seek: The reason why!¹⁶⁷

Two ‘Whys’ are juxtaposed here, a ‘why’ that *responds* to another(‘s); as if Nietzsche’s question of “Why do you still seek on?” finds the skeptic responding “Good question!” This *repeated* (but *with a difference*) ‘Why?’, in a manner similar to that of the Nietzschean “contradiction,” *breaks apart the temporal-ontological unity* (of language/logos; of ‘understanding,’ of ‘comprehension’ and ‘speculation,’ of ‘apperception’).¹⁶⁸ The search is not a search for the reconciled promises of ‘truth,’ but an open-ended metaphysical inquiry (which, as I will soon show, opens the way for the creation of – rather than the conviction and insistence on – moral value(s)).

The ‘Why?’ question, then, gets *doubled*, indefinitely, in this affirmation/response of the skeptic: ‘-Why do you seek? -Why indeed!?’ One can spy here the dangers of nihilism as well: it is, finally, very hard, in this “negative theology,” to say anything other than ‘nothing’ the longer and the more frequently the question is posed – ‘Why? Why? Why?...’, so goes the “nagging” of the annoying skeptic. To “seek on” one must still have some “(test-)drive;” which means one’s still being subjected to some ‘grand passion’ that comes from a who-knows-where, in the name of a who-knows-what. The answer “there is no point to this” to the question “what is the point of this?” is just as nihilistic as Hegel’s more “speculative” answer that sees the point in the lack of point, and finally the *Aufhebung*’s answer, where the point had already swallowed/unified both the one who questions and the one who answers, annihilating their difference, and with it, their *communication*.¹⁶⁹

No longer will this “speech situation” give these interlocutors – are they really two? are they really one? – any *ontological* grounding, and this ambivalence or ambiguity preserves a susceptibility to difference that is (‘eternally’) repeated; a “despite” in ontology’s very foundations. Insisting on distinction, on the ‘*pathos of distance*’ (that underwrites all Nietzschean insistences on the value-creating ‘noble’), can only be considered, in all senses of the word, *vain*. This vanity keeps a distinction where all distinctions (are supposed to have) found their closure or justification, their *necessity*; contingencies, like Krug’s pen from the previous chapter, are shed with a shrug by Hegel’s *philosophy* (not that Hegel *himself* had displayed any such “indifference” towards his-day skeptics)... This constant repetition, where grand passion awakens the skeptic in accusation for her ‘conviction’ (read: ‘idol’), could spell fatigue and nihilism; a forfeiture on a certain distinction, a certain height, that seeks to (ab)solve the “slumbering being” of this nuisance once and for all. This will have been the decadent nihilism, that constantly threatens the skeptic (for she is never *assured* the return of this passion, just

always *threatened* by it); there where the skeptic's interruption has been sufficiently tame(d), so that it is never again heard *as a question*, but only as an already fulfilled moment, or 'position,' in the speculative dialectic of Spirit. An 'ism' that, like all other onto-philosophical "positions," stands ready to be *aufgehoben*.

The skeptic is, perhaps, not a member of the 'Homo Sapiens.' Her vanity catastrophizes this category, either by contradictorily interjecting herself – as *holder* (of 'truth') – against all reason, or by interjecting reason against the one, by, contradictorily, opening a gap/doubt that disturbs its closure. Her 'Why?' is hence, as they say, "not for the faint of heart." My Levinatzsch tries to make the case that – pace Christian metaphysics' flattening of difference (its "democratic prejudice" as Nietzsche will say) – this engagement is selective and demands an elevation, the singular chosenness of a 'me' rather than the communal project of a "we." Just like the position of the skeptic, like the philosophy of the traitor, it resists the 'universal's' rhetoric and, as such, is "not for everyone." It is explosively dangerous, and can be *turned everywhere* – whether towards the 'outside' ('Reality,' 'God'), or towards the 'inside' ('Will,' 'Intention'); towards the whole ('Being,' 'Knowledge') as towards the particular ('being,' 'Individual') – indeed, towards *any* kind of self(-same) that feigns or misjudges itself driven to self-unification by the always-already absolved 'spirit' of 'science' or 'knowledge'.¹⁷⁰ To the Levinatzschean phenomenology, these closures have this presupposed justification suspended; and yet it is this suspension that constitutes the singular opening for a question of *justice* to interrupt our communal programs and projects, our common sense, even out 'authentic' Being, to call the universal (truth) to its singular (responsibility).

In the following chapter, I will attempt to show how Levinatzsch battles many of the 'giants' of philosophy homage to Heidegger's rallying-call, at the very beginning of *Being and Time*, for a '*gigantomachia peri t'es ousias*'). It will then become apparent that Nietzsche treats all his critiques, *methodologically*, in the same way that Lévinas conceives of an *ethics as first philosophy*: Nietzsche's responding to the Other – his affirmation of height/distance and the insistence that no (moral) value capture the Other's essence and rid me of (not moral, but ethico-metaphysical) responsibility towards it – might then seem a little less illegitimate, his style a little more *philosophically* justified, than most readings of Nietzsche afford. Lévinas and Nietzsche are here, together, engaged in a battle against being "duped by morality," as Lévinas famously opens his *Totality and Infinity*.

This "speech situation" might not be coherent or 'ideal,' might appear as asymmetrical or 'irrational' – too vain, "personal" or, as Derrida says, "indecent" – but it is perfectly consistent with both

the Nietzschean skeptical provocation, and Lévinas' thought of *my* excessive responsibility towards the Other. And, furthermore, it goes some way to *affirm* the *uneasy* situation it puts "us" in – especially those that internalized the moral demands of 'good will' and modernity's metaphysical 'democratic prejudice' – where thought can hide in, neither a teleological eschatology of reconciliation (as a "joint project" let's say), nor in the base/basic 'grounds' of experience, nor in the 'rational' detachments of philosophical abstraction, any longer.

At least, not without a fight.

CHAPTER II: Levinatzschean Encounters

This is my suspicion, which keeps returning; my concern, which never lies down to sleep; my question, which no one hears or wants to hear; my Sphinx, alongside which is more than one abyss: I believe we are wrong today about the things we Europeans love above all, and a cruel (or not even cruel, just callous and childish) goblin is playing with our hearts and their enthusiasm [...] – I believe that everything we in Europe today are used to admiring as ‘feeling for humanity,’ as ‘morality,’ ‘humaneness,’ ‘sympathy,’ justice, while it may have a superficial value in weakening and softening certain dangerous and powerful fundamental drives, is nevertheless in the long term nothing other than the diminishment of the whole human type – its irreversible *mediocratization* [...]. [...] I believe that the great, advancing and unstoppable *democratic* movement of Europe, that which calls itself ‘progress’ – and equally its preparation and moral augury, Christianity – fundamentally signifies only the tremendous, instinctive conspiracy of the whole herd against everything that is shepherd, beast of prey, hermit and Caesar [...]; as a long-drawn-out slave revolt, at first secret, then more and more self-confident, against every kind of master, ultimately against the very concept of ‘master’

– Friedrich Nietzsche¹⁷¹

History will be kind to me, for I intend to write it.

– Winston Churchill¹⁷²

0. “Serenity Now”

Here a word in repudiation of attempts that have lately been made to seek the origin of justice in quite a different sphere – namely in that of *ressentiment*. To the psychologists first of all, presuming they would like to study *ressentiment* close up for once, I would say: this plant blooms best today among anarchists and anti-Semites – where it has always bloomed, in hidden places, like the violet, though with a different odor.

– Friedrich Nietzsche¹⁷³

As the previous chapter’s ‘Levinatzsch’ dealt predominately with Emmanuel Lévinas and his main sparring partner, Martin Heidegger, this chapter deals predominately with Nietzsche, sparring with G. W. F. Hegel this time. By way of introducing Nietzsche’s radical methodological ideas, and also in order to show their acute relevance to “our,” supposedly post-Nazi and post-religious (and post-anti-Semitic) times, I present here three more-or-less contemporary instances that might profit from such Nietzschean insights, and further demonstrate the novelty and necessity of a Levinatzschean methodology. This chapter will also begin to implement some of the methodological insights already argued-for above, specifically concerning the role of ‘singularity’ in considerations of responsibility, and hence containing many “ad-hominem” arguments that, by now, ought to be at least sufficiently defended from an automatic rejection (as Western philosophy is wont to do). Going deeper into the personalities and historical contingencies of the thinkers involved (including ‘me’) will seem, hopefully, quite vain and unfair, “partial,” but I hope to show, through this moral prejudgment (pervasive in Western Academic discourse), that both the “empty heights” of vanity and the asymmetrical predicaments of “unfairness” are still owed a justice that, at least Academically (but also politically), is still difficult to conceive, to affirm.

I will here regard, as somewhat exemplary, three instances where an antipathological witness was necessary in order to attest to a violence that, otherwise, might have gone by unseen, unspoken-of, and/or unheard. The first is taken from the Introduction to an English translation of Adolf Hitler’s, much reviled, *Mein Kampf*, a text that both shows, and perpetuates, the glossing-over of the ethico-metaphysical question that underlies antisemitic hatred as some kind of “human instinct to look away.” The second, stages a juxtaposition between Lars von Trier’s notorious “I am a Nazi” statement, with Heidegger’s no-less-notorious lack of statement (concerning the latter’s own Nazi affiliation), showing both as responses characteristic of Christian guilt; a reaction to injustice that consists in an incarnation of an affective symbol, be it allowing oneself to be undeservedly victimized through it (“I am a Nazi”), or refusing to exonerate oneself from an earlier affiliation’s averse moral and political consequences

(Heidegger's silence). Both show that, under the blanket of what Nietzsche calls resentment – no “hate speech” is allowed in principle to surface, which allows the hatred to continue silently perpetrating its (arguably *holy*) work. The third ‘example’ analyzes the “Black Lives Matter” movement in the United States (2013 to present-day) that protested excessive police violence directed at harmless black bodies, and the how and why that attended its vocal claim's being blocked or muffled by the counter-movement of, a seemingly innocuous, “All Lives Matter” retort (i.e., “human lives”) or the arguably less seemingly innocuous one of “Blue Lives Matter” (i.e., police officers' lives). I show how contemporary analyses of this claim continuously presuppose an ethico-metaphysical category that had already denied/justified its own violence *in principle* – precisely an underlying “universal equality” of all “humanity.” Nietzsche will call this principle resentment's “democratic prejudice,” one which allows the questions of power that underlie the genealogy of “humanity” and its attending “values” to remain both presupposed and denied. Throughout all of these examples, the Lévinasian appeal to ethics as first philosophy will echo, sounding off precisely how the call to responsibility is being, either actively or passively, avoided/denied in all three.

0.1: See No Evil: Abraham Foxman and “Our Instinct”

Let me start with a random and short example of the viole(n)t nature of anti-Semitism in Western discourse: Abraham Foxman's Introduction to the English translation of Hitler's *Mein Kampf* – what is considered today to be National Socialism's chief ideological text – tries to come to terms with the WWII horrors unleashed by this proto-Nazi ideologue. Specifically with regards to the Holocaust, Foxman then makes this seemingly benign statement: “[t]he systematic effort to destroy a religious or ethnic group is a concept so horrifying that our instinct is to look away”.¹⁷⁴ Foxman then proceeds to show how the (legal?) concepts of “genocide” and “crimes against humanity” were established in the wake of WWII atrocities and the Holocaust (ibid, ibid).

How does he, or “we,” justify this leap from the ‘Jewish people’ – who always maintained themselves in (some form of) *separation* from their surroundings as a “chosen people” – to the “Jewish humans?” Are the Jews really only a species of the “religious/ethnic group” genus, itself belonging to an overarching class of ‘humanity’ amongst other such “*genera*”? Would the philosophers who spoke most highly and insistently of ‘humanity’ – like Immanuel Kant, for example – afford this membership to the Jew *as a Jew*, or would the Jew have to, perhaps, renounce something, leave something behind as a “price of membership,” tuck it away in the ‘private’ basement of her ‘individual particularity’? Does this

not efface the difference that marks the Jews as a *particular* people, a people whose persecution – as well as existence – *uniquely* spans thousands of years? Does this historical “singularity” not undermine something in the general concept of people-murder (‘genocide’) – as well as that of the ‘(crime against) humanity’ – with regards to their (metaphysical) “general categories?”¹⁷⁵

The latter, I submit, betray something of the euphemistic quality of (a certain) ‘humanism’ which – with regards to *both* Judaism *and* anti-Semitism – is not only a historical and metaphysical falsification, but a painful one, particularly in the aftermath of WWII. Hence I make the following, ‘antipathological’ – for it is based on the nature of this hatred – claim: there is, at least in the Western/European tradition, *something unique* about ‘the Jews;’ and it is this uniqueness that, at least, attends anti-Semitic violence and “attitudes” throughout all Renaissances, Enlightenments and Secularizations, throughout all Western Reformations, reconciliations and ‘civilizations.’ It is this *singularity* that calls for responsibility.¹⁷⁶ This does not mean that concern for the *other* “hated others” is preempted or abolished thereby, but it does spell a demand that they be interrogated vis-à-vis their historical – which also means ethico-metaphysical – particularity. In this sense, words like ‘genocide,’ ‘racism’ or ‘humanity’ do not only obfuscates this demand, but do so *suspiciously* (as the epigraph to this chapter attests, no one had a stronger suspicion of this than Friedrich Nietzsche).

Hence, antipathology spies the footprints its most profound *oppressor* in Foxman’s two, seemingly innocent, words that – when he writes “it is our instinct to look away” – read “*our instinct*.” The unique quality of this long-standing hatred of Jews is perhaps the best witness to the fact that a deep *difference* is being denied in this “our;” and perhaps it is important to recall here that, nowadays, it is only neo-Nazis and Jews that still *openly* tell “Holocaust jokes.” Perhaps, indeed, it will come to light here that it is this looking-away’s purportedly “instinctual” character – supposedly ‘natural’ (i.e., ‘unconditioned’), ‘common’ (i.e., ‘universal’), not to say “moral” (i.e., ‘good’) – that provides the necessary glue for the cohesion/coherence fabricated in this “our.” In a study of betrayal like the one attempted here, especially when it comes to the methodology that underwrites it, such assumed cohesions are sirocco and scandalous; for, as I will show through my “Levinatzschean phenomenology,” such cohesions are always only temporarily stabilized after-effects to an irreconciled *difference* that, an-archically, precedes them, forcing ‘me’ to respond with such cohesions (the first of which being, as Lévinas showed in the previous chapter, the ‘I’).

As I will argue further below, this “our” – that works rather well when it comes to the non-directly unobservable affect or “instinct” – has only what Nietzsche called ‘*ressentiment*’ to thank for its

purported “commonsensical” guise. In resentment, the proto-Christian priest, following from, but also moving against, the example of the Jews, finds a way to create an internality that can be postulated as equally shared amongst all ‘Men’ – a theologically motivated aggression that resentment denies, using a veneer of ‘love,’ ‘conscience’ and/or ‘faith.’ What would be the *Jewish* “internal essence,” what would be the Jewish “instinct”? This question is already moot, since here one is considering a people, chosen by ‘God,’ whose election of/by the ‘Most High’ also condemned it to forever mistrust its internal reality in favor of a wholly external, transcendent Codex of Divine Laws.

This Codex, furthermore, dictates its ethos only to the Jews, thus shunning any and all “our” that is not already as strictly demarcated and specified as the Jews had been throughout history (particularly in Europe). In this sense, “our instinct” constitutes an ethical usurpation of this Jewish ‘privilege’ (as the only people commanded to follow the Only God’s Law), as well as a metaphysical consumption of Judaic “externalism” or transcendence, what both Hegel and Nietzsche call the Jewish “genius of hatred.” Ironically, then, there is something very similar between, on the one hand, “our instinct to look away” from the Nazi phenomenon as an outburst of a totalizing hatred, and, on the other, the way that Christianity and its theological/philosophical offshoots tried to espouse unconditional ‘love’ and inner reconciliation, specifically as a turning away from Judaism’s difference-insistent, externality-worshipping “hatred;” except, as Nietzsche had already observed, “we” no longer see this move in its full, radical reactivity, where it fabricates an all-encompassing union from a mere internalization and negation of the self-secluding Jews and their obstinate pride as “the chosen people.”

“Our instinct,” hence, falsifies and violates, so much so that it can no longer ever recall the antisemitic gesture that led to its coherence and commonsensical nature over two millennia during which resentment, as Nietzsche says, became “victorious.” Not unlike ‘humanity’ (to which I will shortly turn below), “our instinct” appeals to a – postulated or hypostatized – divine and innocent “essence” that is always there to provide solace from ethical horrors such as the Holocaust; an anaesthetizing of a violence that remains tolerated by the very fact of its *manifestations* (i.e. externalizations) being designated – but always, and only, after the fact – “intolerable.” This is the “irresponsibility” that gives rise to antipathology; an irresponsibility that glosses over – just as *racism* and *humanism* – historical singularities that, in the aftermath of WWII, have only gained in urgency for thought. This does not only mark “the Jewish problem” – though this ‘problem’ is treated here *as unique* – but problems of many other, different hatreds in our “post WWII” world.¹⁷⁷ In order for a predominately Christian scholarly

tradition and discourse to face these, its all-but-forgotten *theological* hatreds, and in order to explain why this is an ethical (not just historical or political) exigency, a ‘Levinatzsch’ was needed.¹⁷⁸

0.2 Speak No Evil: Heidegger, von Trier, and the Scandal of Witnessing Injustice

[...] I really wanted to be a Jew, and then I found out that I was really a Nazi (you know, because my family was German [...]), which also gave me some pleasure [laughs]... So, I’m kind of a ... yeah... I... I... What can I say, I... I understand Hitler. But I... I... I think he did some wrong things, absolutely, but I... I can see him sitting in his bunker, at the end... There will come a point at the end of this!... I... I think I understand the man. He’s not what you would call a ‘good guy,’ yeah... I understand much about him and I sympathize with him a little bit. But, come on, I’m not for the Second World War, and I’m not against Jews (except maybe Susanne Bier [a Dutch-Jewish film director; SC]). I am of course very much for Jews, though not too much, because [the State of] Israel is a pain in the ass, but still... How can I get out of this sentence!?... [pause] Ok, I’m a Nazi.

– Lars von Trier¹⁷⁹

The Festival de Cannes provides artists from around the world with an exceptional forum to present their works and defend freedom of expression and creation. The board of directors profoundly regrets that this forum has been used by Lars von Trier to express comments that are unacceptable, intolerable, and contrary to the ideals of humanity and generosity that preside over the very existence of the festival. The Board of Directors firmly condemns these comments and declares Lars von Trier a *persona non grata* at the *Festival de Cannes*, with effect immediately.

– Festival de Cannes¹⁸⁰

I never liked Lars von Trier, nor his films; I felt him to be a misanthrope, whose films seem to issue from a radical nihilism. But I must admit that, in the instance depicted by the quote above, I sympathized with the desperation of his gesture, even if it can only go so far vis-à-vis the ethico-metaphysical critique I am advancing here. The incident cited above, I believe, serves both as a telling example of a Christian dialectic (or ‘spirit’), and as an apposite echo to the previous chapter’s discussion of Heidegger’s ‘conscience’ (and silence) vis-à-vis his ‘Nazi’ affiliation. The argument will be that both von Trier and Heidegger respond in diametrical ways to a discursive violence that neither is willing to, consistently and explicitly, confront, instead choosing to reconcile themselves to becoming the *symbols*, rather than militant victims (and *witnesses*), of this violence. This *testimony* that I give here – as their “antipathological witness” – will address both Heidegger’s silence and von Trier’s “I am a Nazi” speech in “a manner free from moralic acid,” as Nietzsche used to say; to show, furthermore, that it is only this Nietzschean “beyond good and evil” question(ing), what I call in the previous chapter the ethico-metaphysical ‘Why?’, that addresses the dialectical *violence* of von Trier’s and Heidegger’s shared ‘spirit.’ Levinatzsch, hence, will not only show how both Heidegger and von Trier are far more Christian

than they'd like to admit, but also help identify with their necessarily insufficient attempts at being responsible in the face of injustice, but also how they, unawares, fall short of responsibility due to the hold that 'ressentiment' already operates on their ways of thought and expression; that they are the "dupes" of its mechanism of guilt that misidentifies itself as "moral," or "just."

I submit that Lars von Trier's "Nazism" is the antipode of Heidegger's; that the former's *speech* – the antipode of the latter's *silence*. Since von Trier had never been a member of the National Socialist party (and, to my mind at least, would never truly identify with its ethos, or any ethos for that matter – "*le nihilisme oblige*"), his 'I am a Nazi' is a kind of "speaking out of turn." Heidegger's silence, by contrast, when it was "his turn" to speak – since he did consistently believe in the National Socialist ethos (even if not what became of it) – was, accordingly, a kind of "silence in turn." The question that I ask here, as a *witness* to these gestures, is, of course, 'Why.' Why is there *no speaking in turn* – only a silence in turn or a speaking out of turn – for the would-be or actual 'anti-Semite' or 'Nazi'? My argument here will be that, as antipodes of one another with respect to the 'Nazi' affiliation, Heidegger and von Trier define or demonstrate the pincer-hold of *guilt* over ethical concerns, a "hold" that guilt employs through its mechanism of discursive suppression or denial when it comes to confronting such a radical, ethico-metaphysical violence as antisemitism is in the Christian-European context. This will help shore up the "very little, almost nothing" of a difference between the Western concept of subjective/individualized moral duty/justification, and the Levinatschean singular exposure to ethical command, particularly the *high* demands of justice.¹⁸¹

I see von Trier's final remark as an instance of a "becoming testimony," a motivated (or 'spiritual') procedure, by which the witness merges with her testimony, or, at least in principle, reconciles herself to this merger. With Heidegger, as shown in the previous chapter, this reconciliation was silent: once 'Nazi' had been elevated to be the symbol of 'evil,' Heidegger makes no active/discursive attempts to justify himself, that is, to openly state that (and why) there is a *difference* between Heidegger the 'Nazi' and Heidegger the man/philosopher. With von Trier, the reconciliation is spoken: already inhabiting a Western *logos* (or 'Da') whereby 'Nazi' had cemented itself as a symbol of 'evil,' von Trier encounters the repressive violence of Western discourse – one that precludes any treatment of 'Nazi' *as a sign* that does not *first* get baptized in the moralizing waters of the 'evil' *symbol* – and speaks a reconciliation with it. Von Trier "tells" us 'I am a Nazi' in the language of this moralized discourse, but, I argue, this telling itself is how von Trier also *shows* the violence done (to him, to Hitler) by this symbol's demands. This problem of "show and tell," the problem of telling what is shown, brings

us back to the ethico-metaphysical problem of the witness, or witnessing, especially with regards to the role of ‘Truth’ therein.

Heidegger’s and von Trier’s examples illustrate, through the common themes of ‘anti-Semitism’ and ‘Nazism,’ two obverse aspects of how Christian guilt deals with its more “stubborn” questions of ethical responsibility. Von Trier’s “confirmation of guilt” in being a ‘Nazi’ treats the *sign* of Nazi affiliation in a way that mirrors Heidegger’s “guilty refusal” to address it; that is, as if there was, for some reason, “no arguing with it.” With the analysis supplied here, I aim to resist justifying the violence that both have suffered, but, unlike them, to do so in a non-Christian manner: to resist the “moralic acid” that assaults anything/anyone that even approaches ‘Nazism’ (or ‘anti-Semitism’) in a “morally ambiguous” or unapologetic manner (a subterranean procedure of automatic vilification, which I see as an instance of (ethical) violence lodged at the very heart of liberal/Western discourse as a *guilt-induced denial*); and yet to also attest to Heidegger and von Trier’s responses (to this violence) as essentially Christian, reconciliatory reactions. This means that here it is *me* who will be giving the *testimony*, precluded by their respective “reconciliations,” of how responsibility with regards to the injustice of Nazism goes beyond the self-absolving force-fields of ‘guilt’. This kind of testimony demands another kind of witness, a witness concerned with Justice *before all else*, with “ethics as first philosophy:” before or beyond ‘morality,’ or even ‘Truth,’ a coward-witness is necessary to, obsessively, bear his testimony while, vainly, insisting still remaining separated from it; a “Jewish witness” that cannot stop at mere ‘knowledge’ or ‘Truth,’ and, hence, never fully reconciles herself to her testimony.

Besides introducing Nietzsche’s revolutionary method (and methodology), the purpose of this chapter is to use Nietzsche’s methodological signposts to identify precisely how guilt serves as a barrier against *signs* of hatred; a prejudgment or prejudice that, as Nietzsche attests in the epigraph, makes for a more docile and “peaceful” Western subject, and yet also, *systematically*, makes this subject blind/anesthetized to its own hatred/violence. In many ways, by exploring what he called *ressentiment*, along with its *principle* for all moral valuation (especially the – let us call it – “force of spirit” that this principle must both exert and deny/absolve), Nietzsche was the first to devise a method to, as he says (slight paraphrase) “look at *ressentiment* up close for once;” to make its – disavowed or denied – *hatred* speak *in turn*. This “speaking” indeed exposes that which *ressentiment* keeps hiding (also from itself), through guilt; exposing the *activity* of the, essentially reactive and self-absolving, structure of *ressentiment*. Guilt makes sure that what Nietzsche calls the “depth” of *ressentiment* – which to Nietzsche was the latter’s main ethico-metaphysical feature – remains imperative and put to work. In the

Christian case, guilt is there to keep all “unmanageable” hatreds/differences hidden or inapproachable, “silent,” and yet this “perfect crime” procedure starts giving (itself a)way when the hateful origins of Christianity – as Nietzsche puts it, the hateful, Judaic “trunk” of the Christian “tree” of ‘love’ – are compromised or betrayed; and nothing betrays them more than Christianity’s one irreconcilable, all-but-structural, hatred – anti-Semitism. This is why it is of a telling significance to demonstrate how guilt handles this, historically resilient, hatred; in which case both von Trier’s and Heidegger’s examples will prove truly instructive.

In the citation above, Lars von Trier – a post-WWII German-Danish film director – makes a series of the worst political, not to say *moral*, mistakes: (admitting to) being ‘German’ yet not – automatically, *absolutely* – denouncing ‘Hitler,’ mentioning the State of Israel *in this context* as something that negatively affects his appreciation of Jews;¹⁸² and admitting he understands Hitler(!), even sympathizing(!) with this *globally-recognized* ‘evil’ – a veritable “enemy of humanity” – in his last moments (i.e., in the failure and despair of the man amongst the ruins of his “evil plan”). At the end of this “tragedy of errors” transcribed above, von Trier goes the extra mile and assents to the inaudible judgment (that the aforementioned “mistakes” had brought him) and “admits” to being – not being able to “get out of this sentence” as he puts it – a ‘Nazi.’

First, it is important to understand that the “sympathy” that von Trier was *confessing* (and I use this word deliberately) is precisely not sympathy to Hitler as ‘Nazi,’ but rather sympathy toward the Hitler that *exceeds his symbolic reduction* to ‘Nazi.’ Von Trier’s is, I argue, a certain sympathetic relation to Hitler’s fate of *having become a symbol* of ‘evil;’ a kind of commiseration with Hitler to the extent that the latter’s “human essence” (or ‘soul’) might have exceeded his (post-hoc) symbolic quality. I argue that von Trier’s confession – of seeing the “human” in the moments of Hitler’s failure – is used as a reminder of the violence that the contemporary ‘Hitler,’ as a *symbol* (of a kind of “absolute evil”) does to Hitler the “human.” I believe that, for a “historical” account that does not simply follow the logic of Hegel’s *Weltgeschichte*, the person herself always remains a *sign* to be interpreted; her life involves so many historical contingencies/‘vanities’ that *exceed* the absolute/essential status of her world-historical “essence” (once again, one needs to keep the example of Krug’s pen in mind here).¹⁸³

This excess, however, is eliminated once the ‘Hitler the person’ sign is usurped through the ‘evil’ symbol, creating ‘Hitler’ as a kind of “incarnation” of this symbol. Von Trier’s efforts all point to this excess itself as the locus of his curiosity or “sympathy.” The violence that von Trier reconciles himself

to in his final remark mirrors the foreclosed or disavowed difference between Hitler the man and ‘Hitler’ the symbol (of evil) in contemporary Western discourse; as the gradual elimination of difference between von Trier himself and the ‘von Trier’ swallowed by the ‘Nazi’ symbol. I submit that, by *reconciling himself to the same violence*, von Trier becomes (or wishes to become) himself the *symbol* of this violence: he will not *argue* the “injustice” of the moralistic suppression he is faced with, but will become, himself, a monument to this injustice. When faced with its violent repression, this testimony of injustice is advanced – *passively, yet demonstratively* – by the witness’ reconciling herself to suffering its consequences; a kind of a “pure” *showing* that, in a particular manner (that Nietzsche will clarify throughout this chapter), “wins” the guilt game/ordeal.

I argue in this chapter that the above “demonstrative passivity” is *the* fundamental moral structure that Christian guilt uses to train its subject(ive)s: foregoing her testimony’s various signifiers, the witness to injustice must consent-to and *internalize* the violence she encounters, which pushes her to no longer speak her testimony in signs, but “be” it, become its symbol. This becoming-symbol, means that the resulting pain becomes almost a kind of moral consolation, an anesthetic, offering a sense of moral security in a manner similar to how being employed offers a sense of financial security. If Jesus taught “us” one thing in his ‘absolute example’ it is this: that the greater the violence/injustice and the more pure the suffering (i.e. the more passively assented-to, the more “symbol-like,” and hence Jesus-like, one becomes in the face of this violence), the closer one is to the ‘good,’ the bigger one’s account is in the bank of moral legitimacy. It is through guilt, as Nietzsche shows, that pain itself is given a systematic economo-spiritual significance where one’s pain under this system in fact *confirms* one’s “having an account at the moral bank,” so to speak, due to what Nietzsche avers is resentment’s “affective economy”.¹⁸⁴

Seen with these Nietzschean eyes, both von Trier’s confession of ‘sympathy’ and his “admission of guilt” become only the reflection of – or a knee-jerk reactivity to – the excess of (a seemingly “unguilty”) animosity that the ‘Hitler’ and ‘Nazi’ *symbols* attract in Western discourse. That is also why (t)his reaction is fundamentally trapped within the symbolically-authorized economy of guilt: only by a “becoming symbol” – that is, only by finally reconciling himself to the violence inflicted upon him – can von Trier “protest” the violence of the ‘evil’ symbol. I put “protest” in quotes deliberately here, for this maneuver is precisely the Christian, ‘spiritual’ form of protest; where the protesting witness assures, through her passive reconciliation, the “truth” of her testimony, like wax taking the form of whatever had impressed itself upon it. Getting only the testimony without the witness is akin to getting the

“kernel” of the matter – the truth that “fact” or “evidence” *signify* – without the compromising “shell,” the singular contingency of their carrier/speaker. This has not only the advantage of offering an “unadulterated” evidence of the violence suffered, but also, crucially, the advantage of being able to elicit guilt or pity from its perpetrators.

With Levinatzsch, I argue that this is not the only way to give a testimony of (in)justice, for it follows a particular approach to the problem of witnessing, a particular *metaphysics*, whereby what Nietzsche calls *the value of ‘Truth’* had been already absolved from ethical question. In this sense one could think of another kind of witness, the kind that remains separated from her testimony and yet keeps, actively, uttering signs and interpretations on its behalf.¹⁸⁵ In von Trier’s case this “protest” might amount to continually fighting the ‘You are a Nazi’ judgment, even if this activity – made through interpretable signs – is becoming precarious, exposed to another’s interpretation and question, leading to, potentially endless, squabbles. Lars von Trier’s gestures in this context appear as only a countermove within the same structure of guilt that oppresses his own speech: witnessing that/how any kind of attempt to insert the (‘Nazi,’ ‘Hitler’) symbol back into discourse – to make it once again a polyvalent and polysemic *sign* – is met with automatic refusal and suppression, von Trier, faced with this violence, gives up on producing these signs of protest and reconciles himself to becoming the symbol of this protest.

This locus of the ‘symbol’ is where Nietzsche meets Hegel in this chapter, a locus I delineate, in this short tangent, as the very anti-Judaic principle that animates the dialectic of the Christian ‘spirit.’ The ‘Good,’ when relegated to a *transcendent symbol*, will be analyzed here as a two-pronged attack: first a *principled* rejection on all negative signs (of selection, of power-difference), and, second, an imputed passivity that cannot itself be accused any longer of such a negation. The symbolized Divinity of the Jewish God, in this sense, offers both an immunity to all signs of separation, and a procedure by which these signs are internalized and “defused” of their tension, their difference. This symbol, hence, offers the double gesture: first, singling out everything that claims a difference that cannot reconcile itself to the “truth” or “logic” of thought (in its Western philosophical conception), and, second, claiming a passivity for itself that promises absolution to all who internalize the reconciling exigencies of this symbol and, self-directing towards said absolution by assuming this passivity on themselves.

First thing’s first. What von Trier’s example shows most immediately is, to my reading, the *singling-out* function of a discourse that – as I claim following Nietzsche – is underwritten by this all-

reconciling, all-internalizing symbol. The fact that it was Hitler's Nazi Germany that, as Foxman mentions above, had provided the "spur" for the new legal conception of "crimes against *humanity*," already suggests this dialectic: once Hitler is 'negated' or *singled out* by an all-reconciling spirit – becoming a *symbol* through which all experience and discourse is, morally, interpreted – 'humanity' undergoes a redefinition vis-à-vis this negation (as that which 'Hitler' or 'Nazi' – as 'evil' – deviated from and declared war against); this 'humanity' becomes a new totality, a new "all" against which 'Hitler'/'Nazi' are singled-out. The Hegelian dialectic's next *logical* step would, however, *necessitate* that this 'all' will become subject to the negation of this negation: thus, from "*only* Hitler/Nazis are this-and-that," to "*all* are this-and-that;" from "humanity" is *everything* that Hitler is *not*, to 'humanity' being *something* that Hitler *is*. This, second, negation is what prepares the path of the inevitable *aufhebung* that *positions* (thereby legitimizing) Hitler's "proper meaning" in the overall 'Idea' of *Weltgeschichte* or *Weltgeist*.¹⁸⁶

The all-reconciling nature of Hegel's dialectical view of time (and thought) is worth mentioning here since it reveals something important in the context of the 'Hitler' symbol: it is the singling-out by "all" that makes "all," *in time*, succumb to the "truth" of what had been singled-out. This singling-out effectively means that what had previously – in/as historical event or experienced phenomenon – been a *sign* (which, as Nietzsche insists, is open to *endless* – in a "bad infinity" sense – interpretations/perspectives), must be reconciled with a single-meaning *symbol*, leading, necessarily, to the single Idea that captures the will of God in/as 'World History' (the latter understood, philosophically, as "knowledge of the divine providential plan"; LWH, p. 84/138). It is the '*Divine*' symbol that allows such a total grasp (*begriff*), that makes sure that all interpretation, all signific-*ation* (i.e. past, *and future*), is made to *converge* on the same signific-*ance*. The symbol's coherence, especially when historically transcendent, "inspires" the very coherence of time (as 'history') and this is why for Nietzsche it is through a particular symbol (or 'ideal') that Christianity, and its *ressentiment*, could take over Europe.

This metaphysical or theological structure of the Jewish God's "incarnation" in Christian theology – what Nietzsche identifies in his *Genealogy of Morals* as the most "dangerous bait" (GM I §8, p. 35) – has, I believe, a precise linguistic manifestation in the idea of an essential or total merger between what Ferdinand de Saussure called the "signifier" and the "signified": the signifier, as the external sign that can be perceived either in sound or in writing, is that which alludes to a signified as its ultimate, "internal" meaning or reference, that *for the purpose of which* the signifier "exists" in the first place. In

this sense, what I have hitherto called the symbol denotes a presupposed and understood link between the signifier and the signified: it admits of no signifiers, no legitimate cries of pain (or joy), no complaints or contentments – in short, *no need for other signifiers to substantiate its worth or meaning*.¹⁸⁷ The ‘symbol’ of an incarnation of ‘God’ – Jesus Christ as Divine envoy and God’s “Son” – much like the Hegelian ‘Idea,’ is where the signifier-signified couple achieves true union, where the sign and its ultimate comprehension, the “outer” and the “inner,” arrive at full reconciliation; it is, indeed, for Hegel, “the way and the truth and the life” (John 14:6) that captures the “point” of language, the “spirit” of time and history, the ‘logic’ of thought itself.

Singling out a symbol with regards to “all else” is perhaps only possible in Monotheism (something that the national *specificity* of the pagan gods would not allow), but it is here important to stress that this possibility is only ever “fulfilled” in Christian theology/metaphysics. In the progenitor of Monotheism, Judaism, that which had been metaphysically singled out was only ‘God,’ which was not only completely unknown (nor even directly named), but whose non-knowledge constituted *an ethical necessity* in the very approach to this God (the Second Commandment).¹⁸⁸ The Jewish people, in this, the very initiality of Monotheism, were *not* promised a communion – neither with God nor with all the world’s nations – in the Spirit or Truth of God/Christ, but were promised, upon the arrival of their Messiah, a return to Zion, the promised land of Israel/Palestine where, *still separate from non-Jewish nations*, the Jews would constitute *an ethical example* for these nations.¹⁸⁹ The Jewish ‘God,’ hence – still separated from “all,” from both “humanity” and “Nature,” not (yet) negating this separation in an incarnated ‘*Christus*’ – is either not a symbol at all, or, *if it must* be viewed symbolically (but where/why would such a necessity arise?), an essentially *empty* “symbol.” With regards to Hegel’s metaphysical system, then, the Jewish God is, “in essence,” the ultimate *vanity*.¹⁹⁰

It is precisely *against* such theological (and theodical) “bad sense” of history and time that Nietzsche seeks to devise *his, new, ‘genealogy.’* The passage from Judaism to Christianity is crucial in this respect: that the Judaic ‘beyond’ meant a judging God that must not be “grasped” (either as name, or symbol) made it possible for the Jews to, as Nietzsche says, reverse all values of (other, stronger) nations they encounter, allowing a *distinction* of the Jewish people (from their surrounding ‘world’) as “chosen” by this God. This unreachable ‘beyond,’ in Christianity, chooses another divine example – an undying symbol, rather than a worldly people – through which all the (previously unknown) ‘Good’ of this, Jewish, God becomes *invested*, incarnated in the historical Jesus Christ, then elevated to the “most high” upon his mortal death as a symbol of God’s very Being/Spirit. With this maneuver, what used to

be ‘good’ in the world of the pagans is no longer met with the Judaic *reversal* – that says “(we are good because) we are what you are not” – but undergoes a symbolization. Nietzsche’s argument will be that, while in Judaism’s beginning the Jews were strong enough to maintain their resistance and “abysmal hatred” in an external, explicit form, in Christianity such ‘negation’ becomes internalized through the Divine symbol of (the Jewish) God on the Cross. This is the final stage in the long two-millennia old process of *décadence* that starts with the Jewish “effigy;” whereby the ‘good’ descends to the world, into Being, where the Jewish ‘Word’ gains a Christian ‘Flesh’ as an incarnate symbol of the Divine. Everything in Christian morality, hence, hinges on this symbol of the absolute good, the divine example of God’s absolute Goodness; a ‘good’ that – *using the power of the Jewish ‘beyond’* – now pertains to all, to everyone and anyone, to “all of humanity,” *without distinction*.¹⁹¹

It is this “war of principles” that presides over the historical-conceptual “victory” of *ressentiment*. According to the Christian ethico-metaphysics of the symbol, ‘all’ are *equally guilty* (the “egalitarianism” of ‘Original Sin’); “guilt” retains the other-worldly nature of its Jewish progenitor (hence it flies in the face of pagan values that extolled the *fortunate* as the ‘good’), but, through the incarnation of the *Jewish God*, this guilt also became allergic to *any* separation and difference, to any height or “distance” (“fulfilling” the mere negative capacity of Judaism to in(de)finately *reverse* the differences). The Jewish ‘beyond’ is therein successively closed or “plugged” by a Christian theo-logy that follows this divine example, and tries, through a *logos* beholden to this symbolized *theos*, to know, and to absolve *all* through this knowledge, this ‘spiritualization’ of the world.

Of course, with this ‘absolutely Good’ symbol, a clear incarnation of God in the world, the problem of the “absolutely bad,” what in Christianity is called ‘evil’ and referred to the ‘Devil,’ becomes ever more problematic; the Devil had not, indeed could not, offer such a singular, historical incarnation. Hence, it is through the “problem of evil” that Nietzsche indeed begins to suspect that something was amiss with the Christianity that, as a youth, he had been so immersed in. As a dialectical counterpart to the newly born symbol (or ‘ideal’) of ‘Good,’ an apposite symbol of ‘evil’ had to be created, yet the *content* of this symbol will always remain problematic, often referred to merely as ‘Anti-Christ.’ Without a Jesus-like incarnation – as a clear, divinely ordained *example* of what ‘Anti-Christ’ might be – it becomes up to the Christian/Divine ‘spirit’ to identify what it is, based on the ethico-metaphysical *symbol* of Jesus Christ.

How does such an absolved/absolute ‘good’ – whose meaning is equal love and reconciliation towards all – treat a separate and hateful ‘evil’? How can one be, both all-loving, and yet still resisting,

rejecting “something”? This is where what Nietzsche treats as the “psychology” of the Christian internalization – through the priestly invention of ‘guilt’ or ‘bad conscience’ – comes to the fore; where the priestly ‘spirit’ “sublates” and fulfills the (Jewish) ‘letter.’ As in Hegel, the aforementioned ‘reconciliation’ is just as much a *telos*, as it is an *assumption*, of “divine” perfection. This assumption – which Nietzsche refers to as a “democratic prejudice” – posits an egalitarian, difference-averting “wholeness” against-which *each* ‘individual’ measures herself. The encountered ‘evil’ hence no longer entails any explicit signs of rejection or conflict, for – having Jesus’ symbol of absolute sacrifice always “in one’s heart” – these very externalizations merely point out a lack, a sin, an inability to reconcile one’s own attitude towards an (always only ostensible, inessential) ‘evil.’

With what Nietzsche calls the “ascetic priest,” the internalized Jewish Law becomes a policing of affect through a moral economy of debt that, fittingly, is called ‘Guilt’ (*Schuld* – also German for ‘debt’). It is the priest that makes sure that any and all affective difficulties (contradictions) that come up in the course of a believer’s life – when the believer encounters signs of a power-difference (considered, by a “democratic prejudice,” as ‘injustice’) – are reflected back on this believer as *her own* ‘sin,’ her own distance from redemption and salvation. It is this “distance” that gains *depth* in the Christian ‘conscience,’ and fuels the mechanism of guilt: if one cannot follow Jesus’ example – and, as Jesus says (and does), “[b]e perfect, therefore, as your heavenly Father is perfect” (Matthew 5:48) – one is assailed with the *internal affect* called ‘bad conscience.’ Since the Christian ‘ideal’ is an ideal of a comprehensive love and reconciliation, any and all problems with this ideal (both psychological and ethical problems) are now considered only individual, and thus *turned back against the believer* as accusations.

How does *ressentiment* wield guilt to deal with the other symbol, that of ‘evil’? The answer, of course, lies in the symbolic quality of ‘evil’ itself, a symbol that remains empty, passively willing to accept any and all content. This content, it is true, depends on the historical circumstances, but it is always already enclosed and *directed*, albeit “negatively,” by the positive symbol of the ‘good;’ ‘evil,’ hence, is always *judged* vis-à-vis the demands of the *known* ‘good’ of an incarnated God. *Ressentiment*, therefore, operates through a guilt which necessitates that the ‘evil’ symbol be, *first*, imputed on whatever resists/“negates” the aforementioned love and reconciliation, that it receive successive “incarnations” throughout the course of history, but, *eventually*, disappearing like the vanity/emptiness of ‘evil’ itself. Of course, this disappearance is hard won, for the affect of hatred/accusation – that turns on itself (to become self-hatred/-accusation) – *remains in force* so long as the “negative affect” is still

felt. This is how the “negative” is being put to *work* on a “psychological” level; but both the structure, and the *logic*, of this operation is the same in Hegel’s System.¹⁹²

I now turn to the second characteristic of the Divine symbol – its *passivity*. In this sense, Jesus’ prescription of becoming “perfect as your heavenly Father” also means becoming *as passive* as His chosen symbol; a passivity that tolerates (or, at any rate, *ought* to tolerate) everything – the pain and suffering of *all* of ‘humanity’s’ sins/guilt, being the sacrificial lamb of all “*peccata mundi*” (Vulgate, John 1:29) – and “work it through” until death in ‘this world’ opens the door to redemption in the next. Hence, assuming that suffering redeems, and that all negative-affects (hatred, aggression, envy...) are themselves, at least in principle, a “*skandalon*” on the way to redemption, *every* such “negativity” accrues guilt for failing to achieve the absolute ideal of “love of all;” even when – hence what Nietzsche calls Jesus’ “ghastly paradox” – the second “negativity” (that annuls the first), might involve, say, forcing or shaming someone for – by failing to repress some dangerous/negative affect – threatening the entire believer-community with dissension and irreconciliation.

Once the positive symbol of Jesus Christ, the *value* of his divine passivity and love, was accepted as the *known* absolute ethical goal (i.e. an ‘ideal’), the path towards moral absolution is set, a *direction* is imposed: in this universe, all negativity is like the friction on the path towards incarnating the positivity of this positive ideal of the ‘good;’ it hinders, but its very hindrance is recuperated as the necessary strife, the “labor of the negative” that needs to be “*aufgehoben*” – through the internalizations of conscience/guilt – on the way to Salvation. This difference-spewing, “frictional” entity, is incarnated ad-hoc as (the symbol of) ‘evil,’ a symbol of an unredeemable “hated by all,” who, much like ‘Hitler,’ accrues guilt *to its credit* from its haters. The *symbol* of absolute Knowledge/Goodness, as passive and removed, is not a sign to be interpreted (Law), nor is it an empty symbol that awaits the historical succession of various contingent contents (‘Evil’), but, in principle, already an incarnate self-comprehension of God. This *absolute* passivity allows the symbol to take upon itself all these “sins” (i.e. hatreds) of the world towards it; remaining, thus, intact as a symbol, except glowing brighter and brighter with this aforementioned “credit” (truly, hence, deserving of *Hegel’s closing symbol* to the *Phenomenology of Spirit*, aptly articulated as “the Golgotha [*Schädelstätte*] of the Absolute Spirit;” PS §808, p. 493/S.3:591 [translation modified])

In this sense, Jesus as the “*Rex Iudaeorum*” – the “exemplary” symbol of those who were deemed “*odium generis humani*” by the (still pagan) Romans – announces an entirely new dialectical economy of moral valuation: one is only ever ‘good,’ only ever redeemed, by passively suffering the hatred of

men, following a logic of “the more the merrier;” the highest example of which is Jesus Christ, who *symbolizes* the Jews’ absolute separation from the rest of the world, passively accruing the hatred of all non-Jews, and finally, using this very passivity for evoking *pity* in the latter. It is this pity that turns the force of unbridled hatred/cruelty into guilt, the “*mea culpa*” of the haters themselves, the “negation of their negation.”

I will explore this mechanism of guilt further below, but for now, what is important to keep in mind is that it is the passive suffering of what is “incarnated” in the symbol that is always required for its Christian deification; the symbol’s passivity – and here is the genius of the pity-hatred “bait” of Christianity – can take anything and everything “heroically,” that is, with ‘love’ or ‘reconciliation’ and, most importantly, *without complaint*; without a counter-hatred/accusation, towards its haters/accusers, “for they do not know what they are doing”, as Jesus says at the moment of his Crucifixion (Luke 23:34).¹⁹³ This is a necessary aspect of the Judeo-Christian “seduction” or “bait:” the self-absolving *symbol* of this “ghastly paradox of God on the cross” must no longer, as Law, emit any signifiers/‘letters’ of its own, but, as ‘spirit,’ possesses the extra-ordinary negative force of turning all signifiers that might accuse it against themselves, eventually remaining in total silence and total peace, victorious.

We can now go back to my consideration of von Trier and Heidegger, specifically through the aforementioned Christian symbol that at bottom, I argue, *authorizes* their speech. Much like the turning of the other cheek, the Crucified Jesus teaches/utilizes the passive-aggressive non-violence of the symbol: how to confront violence or hateful activity with complete passivity, never striking back or directly accusing, even showing complete reconciliation to this violence, “aiding and abetting it,” as it were.¹⁹⁴ It is very important to stress that Christian passivity is *a consciously assumed* one; actively imposed – through the ‘conscientious’ internalizations of ‘guilt’ – by a ‘will’ that had *internalized*, hence directing itself after, the absolute example of the Christ symbol. In the conceptual framework supplied here, I will hazard saying that this passivity is a ‘moral’ passivity, and hazard even more saying that its being taken for the other, Lévinasian “passivity” is precisely where Western metaphysics is, as Lévinas says, “*dupée de la morale*”.¹⁹⁵ Unlike the interpretative divergence of the “letter,” an assumed/affective “passivity” betrays a motivation and a direction; its giving has a *telos*: a convergence, an eschatological promise that can already envision its fulfillment.

This “inspired” passivity – as both Jesus Christ and Mahatma Gandhi knew all too well¹⁹⁶ – can indeed also be used to wage war: by showing no resistance, by *insisting on no difference*, by perceiving any point of *con-tact* in terms of union – this is also why Nietzsche calls dialectic the thought of the weak¹⁹⁷ – passivity “shows” rather than “tells” its ultimate “value,” the “truth” of the injustice for which it sacrifices itself. This showing, as internally-based, as *symbol* (“effigy”), is specifically geared to elicit pity (i.e. guilt from those who exerted the violent force): it betrays nobility’s will to power itself, and *shows* this noble power, through its effects on the prostrate/passive victim, to be *merely* a victim-making, coercive force; the fundamental “slandering” of the world/life that Nietzsche rails so much against.¹⁹⁸ Such dialectic also slanders all *power*, reducing it to its effects, and using this reduction against those who wield power, *as if* in a mirror of their own violence.¹⁹⁹ Just like the violence of Christian *tolerantia*, this “aggressive-passivity” is absolved *in principle* from all imputations of violence; and it will take Nietzsche’s exposition of the specific “psychological” activity of this “good will” mechanism – its own, however disavowed and nihilistic, ‘will to power’ – to bring this passivity itself to where *its own violence* can, finally, be brought to ethical question; where it can “speak in turn”.²⁰⁰

Owing to an ethico-metaphysical responsibility – and unlike Heideggerian ‘conscience’ – the Lévinasian passivity transcends the closure(s) of my/any Da, and, as such, is perhaps better designated as an ethico-metaphysical passivity (in contradistinction with the ‘moral’ one); this passivity is not chosen *by* some ethical subject (a choice de-fined, even for Heidegger, by the closure of ‘conscience’ within *Dasein*’s “potentialities of Being”), but rather is the singular ethical “subjectivity” of a Lévinasian ‘me’ (rather than, or “before” – since it is an ethics as first philosophy – an “I” that has the *freedom* to do so, or not) that is called upon *to respond beyond* this ‘conscience’.²⁰¹

In Heidegger’s case, this aforementioned ‘reconciliation’ took the form of a silence that refuses all further “talk” (or action) – one way of *assuming* this guilt, infinitely “internalizing” it, not exposing it in/to the finite closure(s) of signifiers – also means allowing this guilt an absolute status. Just like von Trier, Heidegger, albeit silently, chooses passivity in the face of the ‘Nazi’ symbol (and its violence towards him). This passivity assures that Heidegger’s guilt – not to be confused with his responsibility – receive no relief, no justification, and continue to elicit hatred against itself through the ‘Nazi’ symbol. This hatred is internalized by Heidegger, who then no longer needs any external reminders/questions concerning it (indeed, for a Christian sensibility, what could be more pure or true than one’s internal thoughts and affects?), thus, in fact, allowing himself to be “singled-out” along with the ‘evil’ of

‘National Socialism’ or ‘Hitler’.²⁰² However, the question concerning Heidegger’s Nazism only becomes more pressing and dangerous with this, Heidegger’s, decision: for, following the dialectic of ‘spirit’ (and its guilt machinery), it is not unlikely that at some point – due to the violence done to Heidegger via the symbolic ‘Heidegger-Nazi-Evil’ association – Heidegger’s very passivity will, eventually, not only “exonerate” him, but raise him ever higher, to levels of a veritable moral sublimity; that Heidegger, like Hitler, will find his place in the proper historical narrative. That will have been Heidegger’s own “seduction,” mimicking that of Christianity and its martyr God’s reconciling Himself to all accusations, without resistance.

This Heideggerian ethico-metaphysical stance or decision replicates the spiritual structures of guilt and conscience, despite having been, supposedly, made “factual” in the ‘Da’ of the “here-below”.²⁰³ To recall, Heidegger’s anti-theological maneuver had been to deny any beyond to *Dasein* that *Dasein* can, or should, be beckoned by. My own death, the limit of my potential/projected “cares,” is also the limit of my ethical capacity and duty, which thus cannot be “mined” indefinitely to achieve “spiritual” (rather than “factual”) goals/horizons. However, even if guilt and conscience become temporally limited to one’s own life and care(s) in this manner, their theological, self-absolving structure or “logic” – which is the kernel of the Hegelian ‘spirit’ that Heidegger just cannot seem to “shake” – had remained intact. Salvation is transmogrified into ‘authenticity,’ and the justification of Being remains unquestionable, except that *Dasein* is no longer beholden to an after-life, but limited by its own death. Converting the call of conscience in this manner – to think the Truth of being-towards-death (which leads to the “meaning of Being in general”) – replicates the Christian gesture of avoiding the always-singular ethical responsibility through some presupposed/fundamental ontology (except that in Christianity’s case, the condition was fallenness on/as the way to an extra-worldly Salvation, and in Heidegger’s case, the condition was that of mortality/finitude on/as the way to Truth).

The self-absolving and generalized structure of both Heidegger’s and Hegel’s gestures, then, remains suspiciously similar; confronting my own death (vis-à-vis Being), or my sinfulness (vis-à-vis ‘Jesus’) remains impregnable to the ethico-metaphysical *difference*, to the ethico-metaphysical ‘Why?’ question that, both interrupts the closure of Being (hailing ‘me’ from beyond my “capacity” and/or “care”), and resists, “scandalizes,” the closure of knowledge (as absolute reconciliation of all differences). As Lévinas had always insisted, Heidegger’s fundamental ontology remained secure in a “philosophy of the Same,” where radical Otherness is thwarted or denied by *Dasein*’s death or the closure of its ‘potentiality.’ As he learned in time, however, it is the *metaphysical closure* that

constituted the main ethical gesture of the theology he had set out to “destroy,” a closure that Heidegger’s ontological project specifically hid from (his) view. Hence, also, Heidegger consistently refuses to make any apology concerning his “Nazi” identifications; for, as he is quoted in the previous chapter, this guilt is wholly bound up with, *de-fined by his own existence*: “that we remain alive is our guilt,” as he writes to Marcuse.

The closure of this view of ‘conscience’ (by ‘existence,’ by ‘Being in general’) replicates the closure of the theological view of ‘conscience’ (by ‘divine example,’ by ‘reconciliation’): neither can/would accommodate the ethico-metaphysical *difference* which Lévinas calls ‘separation,’ and which Nietzsche’s ‘will to power’ calls ‘*Distanz*.’ Heidegger’s “ontology” avoids it, and Hegel’s “Christology” consumes it; thus, neither is able to attend its call, its radical putting-in-question. In this sense, it matters little whether reconciliation is directed towards one’s own ontological ‘facticity,’ or towards ‘God:’ both are *hypostatized absolutions* from ethico-metaphysical responsibility towards the Nietzschean *Distanz*, towards the Lévinasian transcendent/separated ‘Other;’ a responsibility whose call, over-and-above that of the ‘guilty conscience,’ interrupts the very “facticity” of Being and its attending Truth, a ‘saying’ that had always already escaped the knowledge that comes with the ‘said.’ It confronts Heidegger’s *ek-static* opening/projection of time – *Dasein*’s “ontological transcendence,” as it were – with the event of an anarchical interruption (of ‘the Other’) that compels a singular ‘me’ to enforce a value through which ‘Being’ is understood.

In von Trier’s case, this reconciliation took the, antipodal, form of speech. In a kind of “*Mea Culpa*” gesture, von Trier thus takes the other side of this guilt, becoming a symbol of the very excess he was trying to save from this violence; the violence with which a “righteous” hatred – an oxymoron in the ethico-metaphysical universe of *the* religion of ‘Love’ – proceeds towards its “investment” in a singled-out symbol. The *automaticity* of violence and suppression with which all *non-guilty* discussions of Hitler are met – ‘Hitler’ or ‘Nazi’ being the contemporary symbols that accrue an unquestioned and *unquestionable* “global hatred” – is exemplified in von Trier’s submission to a verdict, the “sentence” that reduces such discussions to silence with the accusation, the *guilt* that the Hitler/Nazi symbol implies: “You are a Nazi.” In this sense, only the moral prejudgment of ‘evil’ – in this case ‘Hitler’ and ‘Nazi’ – seems to defend whoever conjures it.

As the many ellipses in his speech more than suggest – ellipses that I made it a point to “spell out” in the quote above – von Trier was well aware of the repressive regime that both impeded, and, in the end, “inspired,” his speech. This regime had pitted precisely, as he said, a *sentence* – both linguistically,

and juridically – against him. In a ‘Western’ context – wherein WWII victors, especially after the end of the Cold War, wrote history as those who possessed the “moral upper hand” (liberal democracy, ‘humanity’) against a supposedly singular “evil” (of ‘Hitler’ as both authoritarian and anti-Semite) – von Trier became *the sign* (for an appearance) of ‘anti-Semitism’ and ‘Nazism.’ However, since, through ressentiment and its ‘guilt,’ both are already *symbols* of evil – signs whose meaning is already, as Saussure said, “motivated,” and thus kept from sparking any radically new, or “immoral” interpretations – no sign of their appearance is allowed to surface without an unquestioned, moralistic retaliation by guilt. This symbol that von Trier took upon himself, reconciled himself, to become – “Ok, I’m a Nazi” – indeed raises some important and difficult questions: Did his expulsion from the Festival betray the strength, or rather the *fragility* of the Occident’s “we defeated Hitler (and all he stood for)” narrative? Did this expulsion intimate something in the ‘human’ mechanism, one whereby – as the official press-release from the Festival states – “humanity” (and its “generosity”) somehow *needs* this automatic suppression of ‘Hitler’ (so as to affirm itself)? Is ‘humanity’ enough to suppress the annihilatory violence of Nazism? Does the former provide one with the proper methodological tools to *ethically question* – rather than morally suppress – the latter?

To one who witnesses this von Trierian sign in what Nietzsche calls a “beyond good and evil” fashion, these questions follow an uncomfortable trajectory of inquiry. If von Trier “understands Hitler” as he says (and, hence, can see past the Taboo attached to this Totem), could this immediate and violent censorship be guarding against the possibility of identification with this “understanding,” betraying a certain “susceptibility to infection” on the part of this “moral absolute”? Even had von Trier been “a second Hitler,” as it were, was he not born and bred in “our,” supposedly post-Nazi times, where “humanity” is legally inscribed and protected, with liberal democracy peacefully taking over a Europe once torn and troubled by religion and authoritarian monarchism? Did von Trier not come, to use a term from the previous chapter, from a shared ‘*Da*’ to those who expelled him (inscribed within a history, tradition, community, etc.)?

These issues are never palatable – Nietzsche would say ‘*immoral*’ – because they turn the question back on those that claim to be “over Hitler,” as if having found the final solution to his final solution. Those who find it *necessary* to construe ‘Hitler’ as a symbol, a moral/political “aberration,” might be abdicating a higher, *ethical* responsibility by assuming that “our” post-WWII world – now that Hitler, this *symbol* or fetish of ‘evil,’ has “lost” – is sufficiently defended from his ‘*evil*.’ Condemning and expulsing Lars von Trier for his above comments is taken here as one example of how, even today, what

Nietzsche called *ressentiment* hides itself by automatically effacing the *traces* of any violence it is complicit in; a *sklavenmoral* or bad faith that precludes responsibility/affirmation towards one's own violence. This violently repressive reaction more than suggests that "this Hitler business" still has, *in this respect*, something – and *somewhere, and somehow* – to hide; something about which it prefers to keep silent/silence, that it prefers – "like the violet," as Nietzsche says of *ressentiment* – to maintain invisible and *unrecognized*.²⁰⁴

Lars von Trier – confessing to have always wanted to be a Jew, to be chosen – understood that something in the prevalent moral taboo placed on Hitler does not exhaust the ethical relation that Hitler, the man behind the symbol, is due. In a truly Christian manner, von Trier explains or accesses his sympathy for Hitler in the man's final moments of defeat, when he at least might no longer have been identified with the *threat* of Nazism. *Ressentiment*, however, is the victory of the weak, which means that in any struggle it cannot merely dominate "from above," as it were; indeed such *slave morality cannot tolerate any distance/height whatsoever* (neither when the slave is "lower," nor "higher"). That is why *ressentiment* can either "swallow" its other, making it like itself in principle (i.e. in 'spirit'), or annihilate it, so that this otherness no longer attains presence (and, thus, can be divested-from as so many dreams and superstitions). Metaphysically speaking, both are ways of annihilating the Other; which is a necessity for *ressentiment*, for only surrounded by 'nihil' can the weak feel safe, can it know its debts are paid: its guilt redeemed, its God awaiting.

Ressentiment's moral focus, its focus on knowledge and the (conscientious) 'will,' assures its own absolution/reconciliation *so long as no signs can arise to suggest the contrary*. If it wields such 'nihilism,' it consists in an assumed denial of the an-archival hermeneutic openness of every phrase or idea: any sign that cannot be reconciled within its "nooks" comes to mean guilt and accusation for this "weak victor" as it were. Thus, *ressentiment* must, of necessity, proceed by persecuting – first, signs of evil, but, slowly and surely – *all signs whatsoever*, so as to maintain its claim of innocence and its justifications of violence. Any sympathy towards Hitler, then – he who became the "sign of absolute evil" in the occident – must be deemed outrageous, itself as "evil" and as detrimental to "humanity" as anything else positively connected with this sign-made-symbol. This reactive formation avails itself to a 'conscious will' and to Knowledge/Truth for its justification, and any sign that is left without a firm *grounding* in either threatens the entire System with incoherence. Incoherence, in turn, marks a lack of control, which, for *ressentiment* – as the quintessentially reactive/"weak" power²⁰⁵ – is also a threat of collapse.

Doing what *ressentiment* is currently doing to the *sign* of ‘Hitler’ is, hence, maintaining its defensive coherence (against ‘evil’) but remaining susceptible to – perhaps even secretly/hypocritically hoping for – an “inner,” unstoppable force of change that would reconcile this coherence to what is still recognizes as its ‘outside.’ What Nietzsche calls the Occident’s ‘metaphysics of will’ can, then, be exonerated from enacting Nazi *ethoi* by a justification-structure of *plausible deniability*: when the Nazis came, they came by an internal force, sweeping the German nation to a single, destructive, direction; little surprise that unity/coherence – as with any other “spiritual fascism” – was number one on their list of core values. Shutting someone like von Trier up, expelling him, allows “us,” in the occident, to say that “we did everything we could to fight fascism wherever it arose,” since every *sign* of it has been duly vilified and morally condemned. This helps maintain a moral coherence, an assured separation that singles-out “the side of good” and “the side of evil” by allowing the latter no quarter for disseminating its signs in the former, but it also allows for the affective anesthetic that seeks ‘love’ and ‘reconciliation’ upon pain of *guilt*.

Levinatzsch will call attention to the fact that Hegel’s entire system works in this direction, *destining* the aforementioned “plausible deniability” of speaking a “we did what we could reasonably have been expected to do” to the “*absolute* deniability” of maintaining the *conviction* – no longer spoken (for such signs, to Hegel, would prove it complicit in what it is denying) – that “we did everything *that should have been done*.” The plausible deniability of moral guilt/accusation – this “something came over me” structure – is precisely how Hegel’s System operates from the first: it starts with the assumption of positive/naïve coherence/identity of ‘spirit’ (“I am I”); then, through a singling-out procedure, this coherence/unity attains its first ‘negativity’ (“I am not That”); then, what had been singled-out (‘That’) literally “comes over me,” which, based on the assumption of spirit’s self-unity, leads to a contradiction (“I am That and I am not That”); and then, finally, I “come over me,” I over-come myself in/as a ‘spiritual’ reconciliation or communion with “That” (where I am finally absolved, through a proper conception that synthesizes ‘I’ and ‘That,’ as “the I that is we (me and That)”). This (eventually absolved) “path of despair” has to presuppose the aforementioned coherence – metaphysically known as totality/closure (the ‘crust’ or ‘pathology’ of Being, the Lévinasian *il y a*) – so as to move itself beyond itself; what need does it have, *in the end*, for the witness that forever accuses and disdains this closure?

To summarize, my “thesis” here is that Hitler’s Germany, with its attendant antisemitism, was a mere externalization, the ‘vanity’ of a hatred that was already (and still) there, hiding within the folds of what the Westphalian Treaty called “a Christian peace” (‘Reconciliation’-through-individualization),

what Christian theology calls “Incarnation” (‘Love’-through-internalization’) and perhaps even what the Enlightenment project called ‘Science’ (‘Truth’-through-generalization).²⁰⁶ Erasing this externalization, defeating the *sign* that reads “Nazi Germany,” only makes this hatred more insidious, forcing it to find deeper “nooks” (as Nietzsche would say), but also forcing it to defend its secrets ever more ferociously when they are in the slightest danger of being exposed. This, I will show, is a direct result of a ‘ressentiment morality’ that assumes that ‘justice’ consists in the absence, within the ‘individual,’ of any distance-affirming *affects* (envy, condescension, hatred, etc.); therein all the sign-based “shoulds” and “should nots” of Judaism were to be fulfilled, made irrelevant and superfluous. In short, avoiding this ‘vanity’ only makes this ‘spirit’ – and its attending hatreds – more dangerous. Antipathology, as an ethico-metaphysical approach to the problematic of communication, tries to establish a line that pierces *ressentiment*’s cocoon of guilt just enough to allow for an ex-posure to another “air;” to differentiate (what Nietzsche calls) the “bad air” of (what Lévinas calls) ‘the Same.’ It might also make this ‘spirit’ less susceptible to manipulation and “unpredictable explosions;” a *persistent* danger that a vast history of Christian pogroms – culminating (so far) in the Holocaust – can attest to.

0.11 Vain Witness: The Coward Speaks

Since *ressentiment*, which Nietzsche dubs a home to anti-Semitism – can only *signal* through such “von-Trierian” betrayals (its cloistered nature necessitating an “insider” to betray its secrets), antipathology is also, and in a deep sense, a friend to traitors. I mean “friendship” here to retain its ambiguity, and “politics,” irreducible to relations of a shared project (“love,” “community,” “tradition”), or those of immediate connection or linkage (kinship, “fraternity”); a friendship not equivalent to the coextensive symmetries of “mutual recognition,” nor to the appropriation of some presupposed teleological/eschatological convergence. It is this, *difficult*, friendship that ‘Levinatzsch’ pursues; a “communi(cati)on” where no knowable prescription or circumscription (i.e., neither contract, nor ‘horizon,’ nor *telos*) can be assumed a priority. Traitors will always have something unpleasant – ugly, immoral, resentful, hateful – to teach; so long as history can still have any meaning, so long as one *resists* (which is not the same as obviate) any – implicit or explicit – claim to its ‘end.’ These traitors speak the horrible idiom of the Other to an all-reconciling ‘spirit’ – or, if you like, speak this ‘spirit’ *otherwise* – and, without Levinatzschean aid, will continue to figure as philosophically ‘skeptical,’ morally selfish/’hateful,’ ethically ‘evil,’ and, ‘substantially’ (that is, metaphysically) vain. As such, this

“insider,” this traitor is she who, paradigmatically (and not unlike von Trier), has *no redeeming qualities to speak of*.

What I hope to show is that this “*non grata*” *weapon* (used to single-out von Trier) – for it is too automatic and prevalent, too violence-justifying to be called a mere “attitude” – is a characteristic Western-liberal, not to say Christian-moral, response; and von Trier’s self-sacrifice had only exposed its machinery. This mechanism is not only, as all mechanical processes, hard to communicate with and understand; it is, in addition, made unquestionable as a necessary or moral (at any rate, *justified*) automatism that, due to this act of concealment, is far more dangerous than von Trier’s sympathy towards Hitler (the man behind ‘Hitler’ – the *sign* of evil). Once the problem of justice gets reduced to the problem of affect, justice itself becomes indistinguishable from what Nietzsche calls a “psychological nihilism:” so long as I do not register/recognize a difference in power, I cannot come to feel guilty for it and, hence, cannot derive any moral imperative out of it either. Hence, the overriding moral judgment that makes claims to the ‘ideals of humanity’ (and uses these claims to justify violence/coercion) does *not* make sure that no such “Hitler-identifications” are eradicated, but only that they should never be allowed formulation and sincere question – that they attain *no presence*. It is only this “morality of affect” that comes to systematically ban signs of its own violence, so long as it could maintain its hold on the spirit that demands the affective homeostasis of reconciliation.

The “sentence” that this judgment imposes, that von Trier felt was closing in on him from all sides – already judged and decided, unthought and unquestioned – expressed what is ineradicably moral *behind* the “historical” (or ontological – that which achieves a legitimate appearance). This ‘sentence’ was expressed by von Trier – perhaps a “hysteric’s” sensibility, though I see it more as a counter-accusation – at the very end of his arrested discourse; there he – more than admitted – reconciled himself to a discursive judgment, which he could hear interrupting his speaking to/about Hitler with a “*you are a Nazi*” *sentence*. Lars von Trier, in reaction, *assumed the passive position* – the corresponding Christian gesture to any attack (turning the other cheek,” etc.) – and states his “I am a Nazi” as a self-sacrifice that bespeaks the violence of this sentence by fully “accepting” it. Like a Cross he drags throughout the short *via Dolorosa* cited above – heaving, almost collapsing under the weight of this moral-sentence-cum-Cross – von Trier arrives at his Golgotha and puts the Cross up, arriving at a rest by placing himself upon it for all to see. He “took the sentence upon himself,” becoming, like Jesus, both the ultimate the sign of this moral righteousness’ repressive injustice but also the sign of an absolute resistance to it. As the official Cannes statement indeed states, it is humanity itself that holds this “anti-Hitler” *conviction*,

that passes this sentence, that crucifies this man; hence von Trier's sacrifice is also a sign of *the violence done in the name of 'humanity'* and its so-called 'ideals.'

And yet, such self-sacrifice on the altar of truth, even of justice, is still "cooptable" by the dialectic of spirit, still falls short of responsibility, still does not do justice to justice. As argued in the previous chapter, antipathology speaks for the witness – the spiritually vain – that remains at a *distance* from her testimony; refusing to "let it go," but also – due to a "cowardly" nature – refusing to "merge" with it. In this sense, what I depict in the previous chapter as "the coward's ethics" bespeaks a different kind of "survival" than the one perceived by the Monotheist proponents of 'spirit' (also – as I show in the final chapter – different from the Pagan proponents of 'Tragedy'). From this "vain" perspective, the coward – as the always *chosen* witness – is anything but heroic; however one might dialectically spin the narrative. In this context, one might interpret Lars von Trier's *assumed* passivity – his reaction to the injustice he was assaulted with – as inherently aggressive, an accusation that counters another, speaking a Christian "who are you to cast the first stone?" kind of morality. He had *reconciled himself to becoming the sign of this injustice*, becoming the 'you are a Nazi' sentence that was used – against him, against other such "haters" that dare speak of this hatred in an otherwise-than-vilifying manner – to muzzle him; the passive-aggressive gesture of "I sacrifice myself so that you see what you have done (and feel guilt for it)." This gesture reveals the deeper sense of the Christian spirit's 'reconciliation:' becoming the sign of injustice also means reconciling oneself to it, with the – heroic, tragic – faith that becoming its sign is *the most truthful way of testifying to injustice*.

This connection between Greek tragedy and the Christian 'spirit' – especially the *beauty* that (Hegel's) 'Christianity,' even as it "sublated it, could always find in the former – will be explored further below with regards to how Hegel distinguishes Greek tragedy from "Jewish tragedy." The latter – like the survival of the coward (that had betrayed her beliefs/community and so, simply, "remains," still existing but bereft of 'spirit') – will always seem horrific and monstrous; "otherworldly" and "alienated," not to say ugly, or abject. *Remaining*, in the name of, literally, "God-knows-what," a survivor, a witness, and yet refusing to give oneself completely over to this testimony – the Coward doesn't care for his soul. As everyone knows, the soul is the first thing a coward will abandon in order to save her skin; and this "skin" – like the *il y a* of Being that never settles into an essence – counts for something other than merely preserving the 'inner' (right) or the 'whole' (truth).

The cowards save their skin out of regard to *another* kind of duty. Neither Pagan-*eudaimonic* nor Christian-spiritual, this "duty" is truly beholden to a 'most high' that never, ever, descends (pace Hegel),

nor even makes the slightest appearance in a definite sign that issues forth some final, absolute ideal or direction (pace Kant). This is the very “despicability” of cowards, that they will refuse *being* “the change they want to see in the world,” even articulating the essence of this change in a clear ‘position,’ a ‘good’ – but would “rather” *survive so as to testify to its absence*. These cowards were “chosen” to (re)issue a constant complaint, all the way to the end, that a change, an ‘otherwise,’ is needed, commanded; that a difference – between Being and the Good that’s beyond it – still calls out to responsibility. It is only this, radical, ethico-metaphysical refusal of the Christian ‘spirit’ that can resist being co-opted to its dialectic of soul and truth, of sin and guilt – be it in the form of the silent (Heidegger), the silencing (moral discourse/regime), or the pure sign (von Trier).

The coward’s is, to use Lévinas here, a passivity more passive than any passivity, more passive than either Ghandi’s or von Trier’s passivities. It is a passivity not “assumed in the name of Truth,” but *imposed* by the name of Justice; it speaks an interruption and a difference that arrive from the Other. In what I call here the “ethico-metaphysical register,” that is what being chosen means. This, non-heroic, passivity prides itself in its *distinction* with regards to Being and essence, with regards to place and meaning, evincing the vanity of being “more passive than any passivity.” The coward testifies to his passivity, but never, “heroically,” *assumes* it.

The ethical responsibility evinced by this *abject* “hero” of justice – for the coward can be coopted to the dialectical narrative neither as ‘hero,’ nor ‘villain’ (nor even ‘anti-hero’) – is particularly relevant to contemporary debates concerning “whistle-blowers” – like former U.S. military analyst Daniel Ellsberg, or the more contemporary example of former N.S.A. subcontractor Edward Snowden.²⁰⁷ The major “sticking point” in these debates on Western media/discourse is always whether the “right thing to do” would not have been to “work within the System,” instead of “ratting out the System” in such a public and uncontrollable manner.²⁰⁸ In a formulation so brilliantly concise that it bears citation here, United States Secretary of State, John Kerry, says the following about Edward Snowden and his actions in an interview:

Edward Snowden is a coward, he is a traitor, and he has betrayed his country. And if he wants to come home tomorrow to face the music, he can do so. [...] He should man up, come back to the United States. If he has a complaint about what’s wrong with American surveillance, come back here and stand in our system of justice and make his case. But instead, he’s just sitting there taking pot shots at his country, violating his oath that he took when he took on the job he took, and betraying, I think, the fundamental agreement that he entered into when he became an employee.²⁰⁹

In all of these cases one sees witnesses and testimonies that continue being spoken out, even in the face of accusation and indifference, and even though the testimonies are received by an audience that is seldom more “just,” nor more “moral” than the systems being “outed” by these, *cowardly*, betrayals. These come from those who had abandoned the ‘Da’ they were assigned, that they had identified themselves with, whose actions both enact and exemplify an absolute break in their hosting systems’ cohesion, the trust or common cause/sense that binds these totalities together. These coward-witnesses do not fully identify themselves with their testimony, since in these betrayals the testimony, the signification in response to a radical violence or injustice, takes an ethical priority over all their identifications (in Snowden’s case – his job-identification as an ‘employee’ and his country-identification as a ‘citizen’). These traitors must remain at a distance, *separated* from their own commitments and past connections/contexts, and only “reconciled” to the *interruptive* aspect of their largely unwelcome act of communication. This act itself can seldom cite any “redeeming” telos for its treachery, nor a viable course of action that follows from it; its essence lies in an identification-severance that can cut through all contexts that had previously given sense to the betrayed System and the person who abides in it. Hence the coward-traitor’s hateful abjection as well: they can neither, for one, offer better ways or solutions to the problem they raise – after all, they were, until that very act, an integral part of this problem (i.e. “hypocrites”); nor, secondly, can they *sacrifice themselves* on the altar by becoming themselves signs of the injustice they witnesses (i.e., “vain” or “self-centered”). In their – cowardly – betrayal, the *separation* between ‘saying’ and ‘said’ is maintained, a separation in the name of an ‘*agathon epekeina tes ousias*,’ beyond police policy or state statistics; a justice whose demand for responsibility is sounded repeatedly, a justice yet to-come.

0.3 Hear No Evil: ‘Human’ Behavior

[...] man permits himself to be lied to at night, his life long, when he dreams, and his moral sense never even tries to prevent this – although men have been said to have overcome snoring by sheer will power

– Friedrich Nietzsche²¹⁰

One final example before we begin. During the Barack Obama administration – the first African-American President of the United States – there has been a growing outcry of African-Americans against police (and other state-legitimized security forces) using unwarranted lethal force against their demographic, most often when the latter are unarmed and pose no immediate threat, many times resulting in their death.²¹¹ Starting in 2012 – with the fatal shooting of unarmed Trayvon Martin by

Security guard George Zimmerman – Patrisse Cullors, Opal Tometi and Alicia Garza started a movement called “Black Lives Matter” (hereinafter BLM), which is, according to their website, “[r]ooted in the experiences of Black people in this country who actively resist our dehumanization”, and hence “is a call to action and a response to the virulent anti-Black racism that permeates our society”.²¹² This movement has gathered more and more momentum in the U.S. since 2012, as more African American unarmed victims have been killed in controversial circumstances by American police and other ‘security’ forces. The movement is particularly vocal about the administrative treatment of these incidents, and especially against police departments’ misplaced loyalties – often, unlawfully, protecting their accused officers, be it by withholding/falsifying evidence, or the deliberate persecution of those that document police violence.²¹³

As the rallies and protests of the BLM movement increased in frequency, their “Black Lives Matter” signs started attracting a “counter-argument,” evincing a familiar liberal-democratic discourse that seeks to remind these, vain, protestors that *not only* “black,” but that – and this was what the signs read – “All Lives Matter.” The latter retort suggests that the worth of a ‘human’ life ought to be color-blind, and recalled into discourse every time the latter seems to lose sight of this, “regulative,” ideal. To say that “black” lives matter – or so goes one implication of this discourse – is to issue a “racist,” not to say effectively divisive and contentious statement. Moreover, “black lives matter” is – since it is always asserted in the context of a fresh tragedy – at the very least “not helping,” not to say harmful, since this tragedy requires an emotional healing; a “moral hygiene,” a “*looking away*” (and leading away) from the racist violence that had brought this tragedy to pass, working towards the reconciliation and assurance of the value of “all” (rather than, digging-up the wound, the value of “black” alone). Something of a “Kantian morality” is in effect here: the maxim “all lives matter” is not only “universalizable,” it is already a “universal” formulation; “black lives matter” is neither. Just like with von Trier’s example, by speaking to (a) racism the movement seems to be speaking for it; to have contracted it, becoming “tainted” with it. It is here – when the claims of “universality” are *assumed as such to be just* – that *ressentiment* hides its (literally unspeakable) violence, that an ‘antipathology,’ is, invariably, necessary. My contention is that, with this “Black vs. All” problematic, the “all” operates like a muffler that precludes the BLM’s protests from being truly heard; the “all” is, as it should or is presupposed to be, morally non-differentiating, and, slowly deaf to the signs emitted by anything or anyone that does not recall itself back to the “all.” In this sense, it would count as the problem being identified with either the

police, or its black victims, but nothing besides; everything else – like, say, a structural or systemic violence – remains, not only duly silent, but duly deaf.

One of the most vocal political and social theorists to address this ‘black/all’ conflict is Judith Butler. Following her previous work – geared towards what she refers to nowadays as “the radical equality of grievability”²¹⁴ – Butler, in an interview with George Yancy, charges the “all lives matter” reaction with a “misunderstanding” of the problem.²¹⁵ This – epistemic or cognitive – focus expresses Butler’s consistent concern with regards to issues of social justice. In a previous essay Butler analyzes the case of police brutality against Rodney King, especially the way that the video depicting his beating was “seen,” or rather interpreted, in court. She calls attention to the fact that “there is no simple recourse to the visible”, and that each visual scene, despite its purported “immediacy,” needs to be read and interpreted.²¹⁶ The video that shows King lying on the ground with a host of police officers beating on him, hence, could be interpreted according to a certain “cognitive bias” what Butler calls a ‘*racist episteme*,’ yielding an interpretation of the video as an act of “self-defence” by police, even though there had been no “immediate” visual indication of a threat coming from King (ibid, pp. 15-16). This aforementioned “episteme” posits the black body – owing to the *fantasmatic* nature of what Butler calls ‘white paranoia’ – as *a threat, not in its actions but in its very appearance*, and hence dignifies any strike against it as, *essentially*, pre-emptive.

This ‘racist episteme,’ Butler opines, must be aggressively resisted. In the Yancy interview, she repeats her appeal that “we cannot have a race-blind approach to the questio[n]: which lives matter?”²¹⁷ “We” should, rather, interrogate this episteme (but *why?*), trace its history, and reach a better knowledge of its nature. In this context, Butler specifically notes the history of slavery in North America as playing an important role in the BLM movement’s claims. She reminds us that “under slavery black lives were considered only a fraction of human life” (ibid).

This historical reminder is, indeed, very important. Yet my inquiry seeks to delve further into it, to its “beyond Being” so-to-speak, and ask after its silent/presupposed ‘*Why?*’. For Butler it seems that the issue rises and falls on knowing the history of ‘racism’ in America, and how slavery continues to produce effects up to and including our time. Would the injustice of her “fraction of a human life” reminder consist in slaves not being granted a “full share” in ‘humanity’? Or, rather, is this “slavery” already unique to the definition – fairly recent, and fairly Western – of ‘human’? One could argue, and I’m sure Butler would agree, that the ‘human’ itself, as category, had already established its ontological “universality” on the basis of prior exclusions; exclusions which – since ‘human’ is an ontological

(id)entity – can only be interrogated *metaphysically*, dictating a radical shift in the understanding of ‘history’ (as itself a ‘human’ endeavor). And here, too, it is not unwise to assume that – since indeed a “racist episteme” had been able to cooperate *so well* with this “universal” concept (‘humanity,’ “all lives”) – there might be a metaphysical issue that underlies the sign called ‘black’ (as well as that, seemingly more “general” one, of ‘race’).

This issue is more than merely ‘ontological’ (or merely ‘epistemological’ for that matter), and betrays an ethico-metaphysical weight that would ask a question that has nary been asked in the context of this debate: Should the fight really be to make sure that “black lives” be raised to the level of the ‘human,’ or should “we,” by contrast, ask what was it in this ‘human’ that would not accept the African natives from the outset? In other words, is the violence of colonialism really reducible to ‘racism’ and ‘slavery’ – and hence “solved” with their abolition/disappearance from view – or was there an anterior exclusion already in operation, one for which “slave” (then) and “black” (now) merely serve as an index? Did European Anthropology’s infamous conception of “the savage” really only concern the latter’s color or ‘race’? And even if racism is prior to all other relevant differences in this case, is it sufficient to approach it from the angle of some totalized “human equality,” or, perhaps, did it already learn to hide itself vis-à-vis *this*, humanist “episteme”?

If indeed these incidents of police violence against African Americans are a manifestation of an older, structural violence (slavery); and if that, in turn, is a manifestation of an even older, ontological violence (the ‘human’ from which all but ‘white’ had been excluded – at least as “full” members), perhaps the question exceeds the realm of ‘history’ proper. Butler herself notes that this “false” (i.e., “racist”) ‘fantasy’ or ‘episteme’ cannot really be the core of the problem, which has deeper historical roots that need to be taken into account. My question is simply this: why stop our ‘Why?’ question at the space between the structural and the ontological, between racist policies and racist perceptions/interpretations, and not push it further, towards this *episteme’s* underlying *metaphysics*? Why fault “humanity” for being “too white” instead of suspecting the metaphysical eschatology that underlies its very construction, not to say its (predominately ‘modern’) project, especially vis-à-vis the method by which said project treats (signs of) *difference*? Is it really a Truth to be fulfilled, a “better understanding” that one needs in order to fight this “fantasy,” to bring this “episteme” to justice/responsibility beyond the teleology that, always already, authorized it on its historical path?

The problem of justice itself is solved, in this (quintessentially ‘transcendental’) region, by (the epistemic concept of) ‘Truth,’ whose Kantian naiveté is assumed to be progressively overcome by a kind

of “pragmatic” approach to epistemology (construing it as, not only a logical or representational problematic, but a historico-hermeneutic one as well). However, so long as we revolve around the “episteme” problem – marking the “insufficient realization” of an ideal (‘Truth’) that is *assumed*, probably due to its “universal” claims, to be just(ified) – the same old (implicit) claim is advanced whereby ‘Truth’ becomes where (and how) *all* differences are reconciled and *would be* no longer in conflict; a final arbiter of Justice, if you will.

And yet, as I have been trying to show above, wherever ‘Truth’ authorizes knowledge (Hegel), or Being (Heidegger) – no “putting in question” would ever be allowed to breach the onto(-theo-)logical pathologies/closures of Truth as possessing a con-testable *value*. Appealing to “better knowledge” of history will never, *on its own*, rise up to this challenge, for it leaves “open” the problem of how – and more specifically *why* – this ‘knowledge’ is constructed and directed as it is (through the *modern* category of ‘race,’ for example). It shies away from questioning what Nietzsche calls the ‘will to power,’ the selection and organization, the *necessary exclusion*, that any “episteme” is already the *expression* of. If conscious thought – and *a fortiori* “history” (even “memory”) – is already an act of power (domination, selection), would more of the same (consciousness, knowledge) really *address* (I’m deliberately not using “solve”) the problem? How can thought be made *responsible* to this, its “pre-history” so-to-speak? Is it enough to argue that, since this is an origin that would always remain unknowable (‘Antinomous’ in Kantian terms), it is enough to assume that its effects are the same for every detail of consciousness and, as such, an *irrelevant* condition or substrate, one whose ethical import is negligible (due to this assumed “egalitarianism of the unknown,” as the famous “all other things being equal” caveat states so well)?

In short, I ask here how, by what means and ideas, can one construct a *responsible* approach to what Butler calls “white paranoia,” the “fantasy” world of the “Anti-black” racist? Is it enough to dangle a Truth of Humanism in front of their faces, hoping that its deep Truth would somehow “dissolve” their fantasy as light dissolves a shadow? Are they not all already – and von Trier’s example might be relevant here as well – standing precisely in front of this ‘Truth,’ operating whatever it is they need to (always “privately”) do/say so as to not feel the sting of being so far from its purported “egalitarian justice”? Perhaps the problem to be treated is not the fantasy itself, but its inability to self-express without the metaphysical/psychological suppression system that I, after Nietzsche, call here ‘guilt’?

Antipathology is there to find ways *to talk to* this ‘fantasy:’ neither to “become one,” nor find/show some shared “ground” with it (i.e., pace Hegel’s dialectic), but to allow it to speak in turn and

to provide “us” with ears to hear its (humbled) hatred. This work, as Nietzsche observes, is not only very difficult (“we are trained the other way” he laments), but veritably “immoral,” since it releases a kind of “pneumatic valve” that guilt uses in order to turn hatreds on themselves, making sure they have no direct expression; releasing this valve, so as to “study resentment up close for once,” is a risk that, for resentment, is fatal. Resentment needs its nooks – whence it claims its ‘justice’ as the unquestionably best ‘ideal’ – to remain protected from giving away signs of its hatred; since it uses these signs as its (only) fuel, as I will show below, any kind of “valve-relaxation” is, at the very least, a retardation on its way to self-absolution. Resentment’s ethico-metaphysical ‘humility’ is the name, indeed the function, of this valve.²¹⁸

Nietzsche’s will to power, just like the “black lives matter” slogan, will hence stick a *pride* where Western metaphysics *insists* – and the *clandestine* resilience of anti-Semitism says something of the force of this insistence – it does not belong. As one of Nietzsche’s most famous aphorisms reads, “‘I have done that,’ says my memory. ‘I cannot have done that,’ says my pride, and remains inexorable. Eventually – memory yields.” (BGE §68, p. 80). Attending, being *responsible*, to this “eventuality” is, as I show below, precisely what Nietzsche means when he berates his fellow genealogists of morals for their “lack of historical sense.” The latter is a sense, or sensitivity, that conceives of thought as this temporal traversal, as this “pride” and “power” that ‘become’ by *selecting* and organizing in accordance with an unknown and uncontrollable *archē*; an Other to which – even if inaccessible to, or inexhaustible by, ‘knowledge’ and ‘truth’ – responsibility is owed. The fact that it is unknown and uncontrollable should not be obviated (as in, for example, ‘positivism’), nor should it be neglected for never offering us any clear and distinct ‘truths’ (epistemology, ontology), but affirmed as the overpowering, an-archival action that Nietzsche’s ‘will to power’ approach to phenomenology shows it to be. The aim here is not to deny the legitimacy of “moral ontology” *per se*, but to make it responsible for its unknowns; to allow the moral convention, or principle, that always start from and come back to the ‘Same,’ to be questioned by the ethical demand that comes from the Other.²¹⁹

The onus here is placed, not upon more knowledge of history, but an entirely new methodology for treating its research and the insights gleaned from it. Hence, for Nietzsche’s Genealogy, it is only when “history” is conceived with “historical sense,” that the “democratic prejudice” of Western metaphysics not be allowed to continue using it to suppress these hatreds, hatreds that, nonetheless, sustain its power. What becomes of ‘history’ once one understands that the call to meaning (-making) is a call to respond, as a witness, to an an-archival Other that was always there “first,” and beseeches ‘me’ from a temporal

rift that cannot be “plugged” by ‘Truth.’ The violence that BLM is protesting involves much more than epistemological issues (how to make why police officers see black bodies “objectively” or “how they see their own”), and more than ontological (how to rid ourselves of the black category/name); for the question of what “matters” is, itself, also ‘spiritual.’ Thus, responsible research needs to breach the merely “historical” and, in this case, interrogate it with regards to this all-reconciling or egalitarian ‘theology’ (or systemic eschatology); to undermine the “fundamentally ontological” and make it betray, so to speak, its spiritual/metaphysical overlord; to allow an opening where ‘Truth’ no longer has the last say concerning value, and where any historical or methodological query finds itself – if only it has “ears to hear” – hailed by responsibility.

I return to Butler. For Butler, as shown above, the BLM issue revolves around racism and what she calls ‘white paranoia.’ She follows Franz Fanon, who spied behind the white man’s “corporal schema” of the black body, “a historico-racial schema”.²²⁰ As she says in the interview, “racism has complex origins, and it is important that we learn the history of racism to know what has led us to this terrible place”. However, Butler avers that this history bespeaks a “race project that seeks to achieve and maintain dominance for white people” [my underline]. Hence, the “problem” that Butler finds in “all lives matter” is simply that it is *unrealistic* in the face of an existing racial bias in the definition of what a “human life” is and is worth. Hence, she recaps,

[...] [i]t is true that all lives matter [...]. But to make that universal formulation concrete, to make that into a living formulation, one that truly extends to all people, we have to foreground those lives that are not mattering now, to mark that exclusion, and militate against it. Achieving that universal, “all lives matter,” is a struggle [...] (ibid [my underline])

And yet, the question remains as to why this dominance, this “project,” should be so invisible to, and denied by, its perpetrators? Is it really “racism” that underlies the entire issue here? And will a mere history lesson – leading, say, to “the truth about race-relations” – suffice in analyzing the causes of this problem? As if it were a mere error that our current ‘science’ or ‘philosophy’ can, in principle, access and comprehend if only they found out where the point of “untruth” is? Is the problem of slavery in North America merely an offshoot of a more general(ized) one of “racial bias”, and nothing more? Does not this, *visible* difference (of “color” or “race”) not allude to another, “invisible” (and inaudible) one? Butler herself says that the aforementioned “race project” was enacted by “establishing whiteness as the norm for the human” (ibid); as if it were a mere historical contingency that “white people” had “discovered” the validity – the truth, the desirability – of this concept(ualization)? As if there was no pride, as if there is no (will to) power, behind that very “universal” category of “people”? *Why* should

‘skin color’ even *matter* the way that it does? If we are dealing indeed with “the human” or “humanity” as a general ontological category, is it really only a matter of “concretizing” *this* category as “truly race blind” or “truly universal”? Do we not owe an ethico-metaphysical responsibility to the violence that is sustained and maintained in the very totality of the “all” – the “democratic prejudice” – that subtends the “human”?

In short, antipathology would ask Butler *why* is it – or why *should* it be – “true” that *all* lives matter? Is there not a metaphysical assumption here? And does this assumption really serve as the proper, “base condition” or “ground” from which to analyze the protracted hatred of white-against-black in America? Is there really no violence to this (essentially Hegelian) project of “concretizing the universal” itself? Suppose the ‘human’ category really has, hidden somewhere within it, a built-in rejection of *something* that “black people” represent for it; would it be enough to convince ourselves that its “concrete universality” is, simply, “not (yet) true?” Is there not a perpetuation of violence implied in this – quite eschatological – “yet”?

This hatred, in fact, might be interrogated metaphysically so as to comprehend precisely what is it “in” African Americans themselves that *justifies* the violence towards them in the eyes of ‘humanity.’ Suppose, for the sake of argument, that ‘humanity’ is like an organism to which something is inherently *toxic*: would the responsible course of action for it be the appropriation of ‘all’ that “disabuses” them from that specific “toxin”? Or would it, perhaps, be to refuse the reconciled totality of “all” that ‘humanity’ – that *defines* this “organism” as a *telos* – spells? To treat ‘humanity,’ instead of those it identifies as “toxic,” with suspicion and mistrust? Perhaps, then, a different approach to being socially responsible to violence – one to which ‘human rights’ still has no access due to its metaphysical (or, in this example, “organic”) nature – is a more productive, albeit far less comfortable, avenue for thought and research, for contemporary policy and any “historical reparations.” Why keep fighting – justifying self- and other-directed violence – for a membership in what had always, *from the outset*, been metaphysically violent and ethically irresponsible? More than insensitivity and blindness, more than lack of historical knowledge, there is an ethico-metaphysical violence to “all lives matter” that makes – both its proponents, and its critics (e.g., Butler) – deaf to the “black’s” cries of injustice.

My contention here is that until the metaphysical assumptions behind this universal “human” category are not “genealogically” (which, as Nietzsche shows, is not the same as ‘historically’) addressed, the deafness by which an “all (lives)” can no longer attend the *different* – in this case “black (lives)” – will be allowed to proceed, its violence allowed to continue, devolving on pseudo-problems

like “police-training” or “better history lessons.” Furthermore, I would argue that it is perhaps not sufficient to goad (what is now colloquially called) “white privilege” to go *further in the same direction* in which it was always already going. To use other, Nietzschean words, since the metaphysics of knowledge/history (that Butler, teleologically, affirms) already operates within an economy of resentment, it is simply not enough to make the “privileged” feel *guilty* for their privilege, since it is precisely through such humiliations of “pride” that this guilt-mechanism, proceeds. Guilt over being “fallen” – too “distant” from the shared-and-assumed, *presumably justified telos* – never threatens the *telos* itself, but only *accelerates* the propelling forces (of said guilt) to achieve it; intensifying its violence rather than stemming, undercutting it, or even seriously critiquing it. Here a paradoxical condition is formed where the “oppressed minorities” are in fact being blamed for their own oppression: if ‘history’ *itself* already bespeaks a genealogy of “white” (or, rather, Christian-European) privilege – unless some “universal history” is teleologically/essentially assumed – then what gives those who, by definition, were never “true believers” (but, literally and figuratively, *abducted* to this belief) *the right* to say to its true founders/believers “You are not going fast enough”? Within this system, in short, the oppressed have no claims to “justice” that will not be (automatically, “instinctively,” systematically) coopted to this aforementioned claim; and this is precisely why it is the very ideals at the core of “humanity” that clog one’s ears with an “all lives matter” so that no “black lives matter” can ever be encountered, heard, *responded-to*.

Is there not something behind these “universal” aspirations that – since it authorizes the use of force – gives nourishment, not to say justification, to, as Butler says in approval, its “struggle” against (in this case ‘racial) *bias*? Put in Nietzschean terms: What is the ‘will to power’ that subtends Butler’s “struggle” for more knowledge and “better history”? I argue not against Butler’s analysis, which I see as valid as it is important, but to augment this “historical” quest – one that everywhere *targets only the signs* that history/knowledge acknowledge (e.g. race, class, death) – with an ethico-metaphysical genealogy that argues away from it; that sees this very “universal” – not as illegitimate, but – as *suspicious* when it comes to the question of justice.²²¹ Hence, antipathology’s attempt to “catch the spirit in the act,” and hence, also, the contemporary necessity of its “immorality” and/or “vanity.” Was the history of slavery really a (hi)story of a “race-project,” or could it be inscribed in a larger metaphysical trajectory that the (Christian) idea of the Salvation of ‘Man’ or ‘Humanity,’ comprising and “embracing” the entire Earth, presides over and authorizes?²²² It might just be this very same Idea that guarantees that what Hegel calls ‘*Weltgeschichte*’ proceed, advancing – through its discursive project(ion)s – ‘Reason’

in ‘History,’ or, better yet, faith in knowledge (i.e., Knowledge/Science as a kind of “religion of humanity”). Nietzsche’s genealogy will force us to start from the question of power, of an asymmetrical and irreconcilable difference (i.e., “pride”) that has all but vanished, directly attacked and silenced, under the guilt-inspired repressions of resentment; as Nietzsche says, Christian resentment is the revolt of slave morality, a revolt whose victory meant not a defeat against this or that “master,” but the defeat of the very concept of master. How can a master who can no longer conceive of herself as such (upon pain of guilt) be *expected* to be responsible for her own mastery and “privilege”?

I fully subscribe to Butler’s prescription of an “aggressive counter-reading” to prevailing narratives, especially when these are narratives that uncritically extol ‘civilization’ or ‘progress;’ I simply refuse, vainly perhaps, to stop at ‘race’ (as well as ‘socio-economic class,’ for that matter). I seriously doubt, then, that what Butler says in her interview – “undoing whiteness [...] starts [...] with humility, with learning history, with white people learning how the history of racism persists in the everyday vicissitudes of the present” (ibid) – is sufficient; that this discourse/rhetoric betrays susceptibilities ignored or, as Nietzsche says, “unheard,” with regards the ethico-metaphysical violence perpetrated by the, however “humble,” universal “all.” I wonder, in other words, what it means to plunge a *metaphysics of lack* – that was always only ever after an egalitarian and reconciled ‘Truth’ (though no less violent for that) – into the same subterranean economy of guilt and resentment, that proceeds from this very metaphysics. One might, rather, look “back” to the role that Christianity, in all its “humility,” played in controlling (“humbling”?) its ‘Subjects:’ one can do this either by examining the metaphysical assumptions that play(ed) themselves out in North America’s “hospitality” towards its newly arrived slaves, and, going even “further back,” the role that the Christian *evangelical mission* (i.e., its ‘spirit’) played in the quest to “harvest” these slaves in the first place; or, to go “behind the back” of the historical “further back,” and ask how the latter mission was complicit with a Monotheist Messianism that thought it was/is its Divine Duty to cultivate the (savage) Earth, in preparation for the End of Days and the Salvation of Man.

This kind of angle for looking at the issue of ‘race,’ particularly in North America that – as a colony that would not become, like so many other European conquests/enslavements, “decolonized” – imported the “tools” of said salvation/civilization into its midst, and so could not simply leave these slaves and return to its own home like 20th Century England or France. These were left within it, as a persistent reminder of the logic of colonization, for these slaves – even when “freed” – did not become any more “equal” or “human” for it. Why is that? Was it merely the color of these “ex-slaves,” merely

their physical features or “funny habits” that account for this, continued, discrimination against them (attended by an irrational, “fantasmatic” as Butler calls it, fear)? Did the original *drive* behind the process of ‘civilization’ have, perhaps, something to do with a conceptual framework or *Weltanschauung* that, perhaps like the colony itself, is now buried under a heap of, let’s say, “motivated forgetfulness”?

There is a veritable lacuna in Academic research here; a lacuna which, in itself, is also quite suspicious, considering the vast traditions of so many Academic disciplines that might have broached the topic. The first Academic I know of to ever address the issue of “race” and “racism” with regards to this “forgotten” theological mission, is J. Kameron Carter, who wrote *Race: A Theological Account* only in 2008; and even then he opines how, “one is hard pressed to find an adequate *theological* account of the modern problem of race.” He further comments that,

[...] this is all the more surprising given that modern racial discourse and practice have their genesis inside Christian theological discourse and missiological practice, which themselves were tied to the practice of empire in the advance of Western civilization²²³

Indeed, what Cameron comes to contend is precisely apposite to my overall argument in this chapter.²²⁴ Though not venturing all the way to Nietzsche – opting to use Foucauldian insights (which, he admits, are “limited” in this regard; *ibid*, p. 5) – Carter asserts his thesis whereby, “modernity’s racial imagination has its genesis in the theological problem of Christianity’s quest to sever itself from its Jewish roots” (*ibid*, p. 4 [my underline]).²²⁵ Thus, complicating the story of Butler’s “racist episteme,” Carter locates a process by which it was ‘the Jews’ that begin to be identified (by Western Christianity) as “Oriental Semites”, a racial definition that followed upon a theological problem rather than an observed peculiarity of physical features. It is only then, Carter continues – and this also accounts for the violence/aggression of the Christian relationship with “Orientalism” – that Western theologians (and the ‘scholars’ and ‘philosophers’ that assumed their positions) allowed the gradual slippage from ‘racial imaginary’ to a full-blown “racist imagination of white supremacy” (*ibid*, *ibid* [my underline]).²²⁶

Seen in this manner, “black” might turn out to be merely an external indicator, a “vain” signifier for a deeper, *theological* violence that is shielded by an imputed “scientism” or “pragmatism.” In this sense, and building on the above analysis of guilt (that will only become more robust below), I would hazard the hypothesis that, to the “secularized Christian,” the racial *sign* had become – once it became recognized and starts eliciting negative affects in her – uneasy; a threat to a structure that is no longer conscious or acceptable, and yet nevertheless (or because of this) continues its operation. In this sense, Carter had made, in my opinion, the perfect choice of juxtaposition, since – at least in the United States

– “black” had come to refer to an internal “other” whose very existence, much like the Jew, means another “skandalon,” another obstacle on the way to Salvation, another “dark past” that goes on emitting accusations. The argument can, then, easily be made that the great American edifice had indeed been built, especially while it was still of a merely precarious existence, by these African-American, “proto-human” slaves, in exactly the same manner that, as Nietzsche says, the “fruits” of Christian love had been enabled by the “trunk” of Jewish hatred.

Seeing a ‘Jew’ *as such*, then, incurs an allegation that echoes the one of seeing the “black” (in the United States): it traces a long-forgotten violence that, upon this encounter, juts to the fore as a negative affect that needs to be managed; its very negativity provokes guilt/pain and requires a relief. Since the “priest” of resentment, as Nietzsche shows, had caused all external power-differences to be internalized and experienced as guilt, the solution to this problem is also a merely a self-serving affective solution that, Nietzsche will argue, is not even “moral” *per se*. This kind of solution only addresses the affective problem of guilt, but leaves the (irreconcilable) ethico-metaphysical problem of violence to the other; hence its solutions will always devolve upon, either the common “religion is a private matter” (and hence should be “tolerated”) approach, or the equally common “black is only (one more) vanity, an irrelevant sign of difference that the Western values of equality and freedom had already made obsolete (if only you are ‘good’ enough to *realize* them).²²⁷

What claim could such vain interruptions have (in the “procedural justice” of a guilt/debt economy), for a system wherein the suffering of *both* ‘me’ and ‘the other’ is already circumscribed in a metaphysical “prejudice” of ‘equality’ between us; an ‘equality’ that champions, *above all else*, what Hegel’s “Christology” called the ‘spirit’s’ *absolute drive* to reconciliation?²²⁸ After all, ‘knowledge’ is (presupposed to be) egalitarian, it is blind to all “value” differences and supposed to be only directed at the (ontological-Heideggerian, transcendental-Kantian or metaphysical-Hegelian) ‘Truth;’ it is only “we” that have to know more ‘history’ so as to realize this, already implicit, principle that pulsates within it and drives it. Hence, such a system would opt only for the “solutions” that go in accordance with its ‘spirit,’ solutions that, at bottom, mean to equalize (and hence abolish) the difference rather than *respond* to it: affirmative action and monetary reparation policies are the most glaring examples here.

Thus, to summarize a bit, they are only ever *signs* of violence and/or irreconcilable difference, what Lévinas calls “the face of the Other,” that need to be effaced; and this is achieved via a persecution-consumption – itself giving no “signs” (owing to its “*ressentiment* genius”) – of the spirit’s “scandals,” its pathologies. No “spiritual progress” (or “universal value”) would be realized without

these obstructions, whose face *needs to be stepped on* (to achieve this *telos*), since this “face” is the very rung of the Hegelian “ladder”). But does this progress – towards absolute equality/inclusivity, towards ‘Truth’ – really *justify* this violence to the ‘face’? There might be an eschatological or teleological complicity here, following the (Hegelian) ‘logic’ of a system that cannot be threatened by more (of the same) historical knowledge. This ‘guilt’ cannot be resolved with more humility, but only by an ethico-metaphysical ‘*Why?*’ – which indeed does seem harsh and immoral from the perspective of ‘guilt’ (not unlike the caricature of Jewish ‘Law’ in the eyes of Christian ‘Spirit’) – that can accuse and question this “morality of generalized humility” with regards to its oh-so-reclusive violence. Only then will one not be “duped” – neither by a presupposed “egalitarian” moral teleology, nor a ‘fundamental’ ontology, nor a “natural”/“spiritual” ‘logic’ or ‘necessity’ – to assume that ethical responsibility could so easily be reducible to (Christian) “morality.”

Let me provisionally sum up the argument and the stakes of what Nietzsche refers to as Western philosophy’s “democratic prejudice” which, in turn, constitutes the Occident’s “moral ontology”.²²⁹ The latter cannot account for any violence that might be asymmetrical; to any violence where an ontological fissure makes the act of thought appear like an acceptance of “what is,” when ‘is’ in fact is already the mark of a selection and domination, the trace of a usurped Other. The violence towards this trace might just intimate a metaphysical-eschatological mission to efface precisely such markers (once more alleviating guilt, yet not exhausting responsibility). Then, it might not be sufficient to fault a slave-owner like Thomas Jefferson – who coined the American Declaration of Independence’s “all men are created equal” – with mere “hypocrisy,” but to go further and spy a religious fundamentalism that remains even when its moniker had shifted and dispersed to more “secular-sounding” ones (e.g. ‘progress’ or ‘development’ or ‘way of life’). Could it be that, rather than “white paranoia,” there was actually some Weberian “protestant spirit” that is responsible for the problems that now have been “secularized” as problems of “economic class”²³⁰ and/or “race”? That a *Christian-Protestant will to power* was then – and is now – at play? Perhaps the focus on “race” is just another, contingent marker that – particularly under the (yet another “universal”) category of ‘racism’ – allows the Christian mission to continue with its (good intentioned) spirit of redeeming the world. If this is, at least in part, a “Christian paranoia” – and not just Butler’s “white” one – would more “humility” and “knowledge” really be a sufficient, even *appropriate*, response? Won’t they be, rather, like trying to put out a fire with gasoline?

This last example serves several purposes: First, it shows how the points that antipathology tries to make, with the help of Jewish ethics and Jewish persecution, are far from limited in relevance only for those defined as “Jews;” as I am trying to argue, the attack on Judaism in the West is an Enlightened, *metaphysical* attack whose (Hegelian) spirit effaces all signs/“letters” on its way to a promised, eschatological absolution in/as/through their ‘spiritualization’ in ‘Knowledge.’ Second, this example shows in a more concrete and precise manner that the violence I am trying to address, and particularly the blindness to this violence (that, again, does not stem from any “bad intentions” but from the structure of *ressentimental* guilt), are still *contemporary* issues that surface time and again, unable to free themselves from the same discourse and the same framing (and with the same results); antipathology is needed here to breach this cocoon of *ressentiment*, and get it to *communicate* with, rather than persecute all signs of, ‘the Other.’ Finally, since I am treating this as a metaphysical issue with very old and ensconced structures of stimulus-reaction, my antipathology will not allow the usual manoeuvre (Protestant in essence) of “internalizing” the matter, hanging the blame on the visible sign, the easy-to-blame “individual,” like von Trier in the ‘Nazi’ case, or the police officer that, *de facto*, kills a non-threatening black body in a BLM-related controversy. Antipathology will refuse to *simply* scapegoat those who only externalize – due to their job or position – what most others, however “liberal” or “democratic,” possessed of *the same systemic hatred* (and the same systemic inability to see it), would have done in their stead.

This, in essence, is why few contemporary examples show so vividly the extent of the Christian good will – in its guilt’s capacity for ‘good,’ but also in its *necessary* blindness to its violence towards the Other – better than the ‘All Lives Matter’ reaction-formation. The latter could be seen, rather, as the universal embrace of Christian love *par excellence*, moving forward with its metaphysical assumption, its “prejudice,” that the *universality* of its “all” is fundamentally equi-valent – either “value-neutral” (‘Nature,’ ‘Being’) or absolutely justified (‘God,’ ‘Truth’) – to the *singularity* of ‘each one.’ Who “knows” what can lie dormant, silently oppressed, behind the feigned equanimity of this “all”? Does responsibility require this knowledge as its condition of possibility or, rather, the other way around? The “all maneuver,” in this sense, recalls the Christian metaphysical maneuver, where the sign’s (“the letter’s”) singularity are claimed to be *aufgehoben*, “fulfilled” in a (“spiritual”) universalism of an ‘all.’ Does justice really have to wait for these signs – emitted by an ontologically or politically recognizable group/(id)entity – so as to elicit my responsibility (as a political agent, as an “academic,” as the addressee of the Other)? Does its demand really vanish with the vanishing of these signs? Does it have

to wait for various statistics – following (and hence assuming) various discursive/ontological categories of discrimination (in this case ‘race,’ but also ‘sex,’ ‘economic status,’ ‘citizenship status’ etc.) – to “prove” something, or is this “non-gay” science that underwrites what is deemed acceptable (as ‘evidence’ or ‘truth’) need to be put in more radical question? As Nietzsche says above, though “we” never seem to impute any truth on the dreams that assail us when in the state of sleep, “we” nevertheless managed to “train” ourselves to stop making external, obtrusive signs of this sleep; it is only when another “racist” case of death becomes visible and urgent (as when another white police officer takes the life of another unarmed ‘black body’), that we turn to berate the one whose snoring, in every sense of the word, betrays our “sleep.”

0.31 The Same Antisemitism, or the Antisemitism of the Same

[...] Like a big city, our moral and political world is undermined with subterranean roads, cellars, and sewers, about whose connection and dwelling conditions nobody seems to reflect or think; but those who know something of this will find it much more understandable if here or there, now or then, the earth crumbles away, smoke rises out of a crack, and strange voices are heard

– Johann Wolfgang von Goethe²³¹

As I am showing here, any communication attempted within the purview of modern/Western thought will be bound to be met with the structural suppression of a ‘morality’ that can only relate to it as a more or less interruptive “scandal,” dismissing violence towards it as somehow a “necessary” or “fair” act justified by a truth/knowledge that is assumed holy, passive, and, not least, “*all-embracing*” (the aforementioned reconciliation between ‘Nature’ and ‘Man’ operates here).²³² Other ‘dialogues,’ hence – subject to an automatic “we do not negotiate with terrorists” attitude – will always, just like with ‘Jews’ and ‘Skeptics’ (as shown above), “fail” to come into being. This failure *itself*, moreover, could never be conceived-of within this framework, and so is forever left – for the few who witness its pain – in an *unheard appeal* to justice.

Philosophy – as Lévinas comments – cannot account for the fact that the occasional *skeptic* still “comes up” now and again, despite philosophy’s refutation of skeptic-ism. Western philosophy’s approach to communication, then, owing to what I am stalking here as the “metaphysics of reconciliation” (or its ‘spirit’), will seek, more than engaging with the Other, to obviate the Other’s otherness as mere ‘vanity,’ by forcing it to make an impossible choice: either completely self-sacrifice on the altar of this testimony of injustice (and, hence, cease emitting signs), or inscribe these signs in a ‘position’ that already presupposes the holistic ‘Truth’ whereby all positions are reconciled with one

another in Science/Knowledge. It is this metaphysical imperative that Lévinas tried to think of as the violence of reducing the Other to the Same. It is the violence of an Odyssean philosophy that only affirms a ‘beyond’ or an ‘other,’ so as to “one-up” this other – either in subjective “hope” (Kant), ontological “history” (Heidegger) or speculative “actuality” (Hegel) – to get *beyond this ‘beyond,’* and back to its ‘self,’ its ‘home’ or ‘ground.’

This last Odyssean totality mentioned – the ‘ground’ or ‘home’ from which thought starts and to which it returns – bespeaks a structure that lends itself, as shown with Heidegger’s hold on Truth, to a specific ‘spirit’ of, and *for*, the ‘Same.’ This ‘spirit’ evinced a *particular* approach to metaphysics through a *decision concerning the method* by which to engage its question. With the onset of modern science (and its ‘secularism’), ‘metaphysics’ was supposed to have been expelled from its philosophical foundations, as the latter rely “only” on a procedure or method geared towards the attainment of a – presumably already justified and legitimate – Universal Truth. But the suspicion remains – and Carter shows this as more than just a suspicion – whether it is really a coincidence that what preceded European modern philosophy was the theology that had, often quite literally, *conquered* ‘humanity’ in the age of Empire and colonization, and posited its *Christus* (Messiah) as “the way” and, yes, “*the truth;*” or that this same theology, this same metaphysical understanding (or ‘spiritual force’), had done so in contradistinction with its progenitor’s Messiah-less obsession, not with converging around Truth (as ‘reconciliation’ with God’s will), but in diverging and bickering over (God’s) Justice.

That is also why, in the wake of “secularism,” ‘antisemitism’ – owing to the same(s) ‘spirit’ – has been appropriated under a universal/historical category of “ethnic-hatred” or “crime against humanity”, chalking-up the Holocaust as another, however “privileged,” mark on the ‘Genocide’ table. Antisemitism, like skepticism, remains misunderstood, refused a philosophical consideration as a non-issue for philosophy – whose business is the universal and the true – but still enjoying the hospitality of those, same, Christian/metaphysical structures of the old theology. ‘Secularism’ can hence, perhaps, be said to enjoy the same innocence as that of a child born to a colonizer on a once foreign, or at least contested, land; a land that, once colonized, had become “cultivated” as, precisely, a ‘ground.’ Does this child really enjoy *the same* “innocence” as a child born to those enslaved or appropriated by these colonists?²³³

I am trying here to both build a framework that accounts for this ‘secularism’ as a Protestant individualism with a different name, and to recall what is so seldom recalled: that the Holocaust, a *systematic* persecution and annihilation of Judaism *and* Jews, was most readily perpetrated by a

Protestant majority (40 out of 60 million Germans in 1933).²³⁴ Recalling the “metaphysical” aspect of Judaism is perhaps equally relevant to the recent history of Zionism: a statist incarnation of Jews from around the world, under the name of ‘Judaism,’ that – settled in the Land of Palestine (before its eschatologically promised time) – betrays a racial or patriotic “grounded Judaism,” whereby the Jewish question is (again) “finally” (re)solved; as if the Jewish Messiah had already come and bequeathed Palestine, per God’s Divine promise, to a Jewish Sovereignty in/as ‘the *State of Israel*’ (cf. Isaiah 2:3).

As a paragon of the first, “secular” violence we see a political thinker like John Rawls insisting – and he is only the one who articulated it most explicitly and precisely – that political thought can, and indeed *should* be, “non-metaphysical” (which, of course, allows the violence of the metaphysics that is already in place to pass unquestioned, and this *by force of fiat*).²³⁵ As a paragon of antisemitic violence, perhaps the clearest example today is the State of Israel itself, which evinces a discourse that less and less resembles the Jewish attention to the victim – as would behoove the Jewish ‘obsession,’ over *questions* of justice; *especially* the “groundless” victim (like the widow, the orphan and the foreigner/refugee; cf. Deuteronomy 14:28-29) – and more and more resembles a blunt and automatic self-justification that engages in violence without remorse. This violence is, at least in principle, unstoppable, precisely because it had identified itself, following the post-Holocaust (but also post-Westphalian and *nationalist*) atmosphere, with the *land* of Palestine, with a *ground* (which, for *Jews that had not yet witnessed the coming of the Messiah*, is the most fundamental jumping of the eschatological gun).

Seen in this light, the political gesture of assembling the Jews in a single “place under the sun,” perfectly echoes the metaphysical one of forcing Judaism’s “otherwise identity” to a recognizable *position* in a (Christian-reconciling) system; so long as it is done in history – i.e., *before* the Jewish God’s Justice and His Messiah have arrived – such “patriation” of world Jews would be the best, most *radical* way to attack Judaism, *both* politically, *and* metaphysically (or “theologically”); it would be a precise attack on what Lévinas tried to preserve and reactivate in Judaism, its paragon of ethical *responsibility*, with the weapon of ontological *answerability*: this position into which the Jew is forced (by WWII events) would become a final *solution* – though no longer a *communicative* one (i.e. an ‘answer’ rather than a *response*) – to what until recently was famously known as ‘the Jewish question.’ This would no longer evince a racial or ethnic or even ‘cultural’ definition of anti-Semitism; but precisely a philosophical, not to say metaphysical, one.

Questioning Western thought with regards to its metaphysics, and questioning antisemitism with regards to the ethical meaning of the Jewish mission, expose a similar structure of violence-cum-suppression: both force the indigestible – ‘Skeptic’ or ‘Jew’ – to a position, and both evince eschatologies that are beholden to a time in which the ‘problem,’ thus contained, will “play itself out” and finally disappear. This is how the Zionist “incarnation” or “grounding” of Jews in 20th Century ‘Palestine’ joins, in effect, Christian theology’s “antisemitic cause.” Re-addressing Western metaphysics and (its) antisemitism, hence, will hopefully make it more difficult to claim “no metaphysics here” from Western thinkers, and more difficult to claim “antisemitism” against every critique of the State of Israel; even if both are completely reconciled to/in this violence, and its use(s). The mere “separation of Church and State” still owes its due to a metaphysics that underlies *Statist* ‘nationalism’ – also a modern construction, owing to what was called in the Westphalian contract “a Christian peace.” The mere identification of ‘Jew’ and ‘Israeli’ still owes its due to the antisemitism that provoked the “solution,” so foreign to Judaism’s “Messiah-less messianism,” of enclosing the Jews in a Land, forcing their metaphysical nomadism to ground (in/as a nation-state).²³⁶ Both evince, in my view, what Lévinas calls in the epigraph to his *Autrement qu’être ou au-delà de l’essence*, “the same hatred of the other man, the same antisemitism.” Yes, “even” in the State of Israel. Antipathology is here offered as a methodological approach, specifically designed to address this hatred *metaphysically*; that is, with regards to its (what Walter Benjamin called) “divine violence”.

With *these* stakes in mind, I now turn to Nietzsche’s *Genealogy*.

1. Method and Metaphysics

Morality is the doctrine of the order of men’s rank, and consequently also of the significance of their actions and works for this order of rank: thus, the doctrine of human valuations in respect of everything human. Most moral philosophers only present the order of rank that rules now; on the one hand lack of historical sense, on the other they are themselves ruled by the morality which teaches that what is at present is eternally valid. The unconditional importance, the blind self-centeredness, with which every morality treats itself wants there not to be many moralities, it wants no comparison and no criticism, but rather unconditional belief in itself. It is, thus, in its very essence anti-scientific – and for that reason alone the perfect moralist would have to be immoral, beyond good and evil.

– Friedrich Nietzsche²³⁷

[...] La loi est intolérante à sa propre histoire, elle intervient comme un ordre surgissant absolument, absolue et déliée de toute provenance. Elle apparaît comme ce qui n’apparaît pas en tant que tel au

cours d'une histoire. En tout cas, elle ne se laisse pas constituer par quelque histoire qui donnerait lieu à du récit. *S'il y avait* histoire, elle ne serait pas présentable et pas racontable, histoire de ce qui n'a pas eu lieu.

– Jacques Derrida²³⁸

1.1 The Nietzschean Impulse: Why Speak (in the First Place)

What is often being passed-over in Nietzsche's genealogy of morals is that it is *fundamentally*, as the work's subtitle confirms, a *polemic* (*Eine Streitschrift*). Already in the Preface, Nietzsche admits that it was just such a polemical 'impulse' that *made him* speak-out, one without which he would never have published this – highly influential – genealogy of moral values.²³⁹ Therefore, it took a particular kind of 'perversion' concerning (thought about) morality, a particular "spur," to, in a way, *force* Nietzsche to "methodologize" what he had, until then, only "hypothesized;" if not the "desire to think" – to which I will (re)turn below – this was an *impulse to speak* about the origins of morality. Truly, a *gift*:

The first impulse [Anstoss] to publish something of my hypotheses concerning the origin of morality was given [gab] me by a [...] little book in which I encountered distinctly for the first time an upside-down [*umgekehrte*] and perverse species of genealogical hypothesis, the genuinely English type, that attracted me – with that power of attraction which everything contrary, everything antipodal possesses. [...] Perhaps I have never read anything to which I would have said to myself No, proposition by proposition, conclusion by conclusion, to the extent that I did to this book (GM Preface, §4, pp. 17-18/KGW 6.2:262 [my underline])

Indeed, Nietzsche suggests this "pride of place" by opening the first essay of his *Genealogy* with "These English psychologists [...]" (GM I §1, p. 24); also a battle cry or/and a *raison d'être* of his own publication. "These English psychologists" – like Paul Rée's "little book" – seem to have provoked in him an indignation, albeit a grateful one: something, previously silent, was *interrupted* by these "English types" and their "perverse" genealogy of morals and made Nietzsche speak. This "impulse," which Nietzsche construes as a gift by the "English type" (he uses the verb *Geben*), provides him with the force/necessity to speak; it is only out of this indignation at the English perversion that Nietzsche is driven to present an *other* 'genealogy.'

Now, to be sure, many of the moral critiques of Nietzsche's *Genealogy* were already both present, and published/spoken by him, in works dating back at least ten years, with the publication of his *Human, All too Human*. What makes this publication of the *Genealogy* so unique is that here – more than a *moral* critique – Nietzsche is advancing, for the first time, a *methodological* one. As he writes later in the *Antichrist*, "[t]he most valuable insights are the last to be discovered; but the most valuable insights are *methods*." (AC §13, p. 135). The successive 'Nos' that Nietzsche experiences upon reading the 'English

psychologists’ produces in him an affirmation, spurred him to write and think the ‘genealogy’ as an entirely new methodology. This concern with methodology lay dormant in him, and – hence the profound meaning of “polemic” here – needed the “midwife” of a productive ‘No;’ a ‘No’ from which a new ‘Yes,’ finally, emerges. As he says in *Ecce Homo*: “I contradict as has never been contradicted before and am nevertheless the opposite of a No-saying spirit” (EH §1, p. 327).

What Nietzsche’s self-analysis suggests is that moral critiques, even his own, are all well and good, and can continue endlessly to be spoken and rise to the fore and be published; for a *methodological* critique, however, something deep(er) has to be interrupted, awoken. By contrast, we can consider another, more contemporary ‘No-sayer’ and quote Barry Smith’s justification for his unusual public attack on Jacques Derrida (and the latter’s “threat” to thought and language themselves). Upon realizing that Derrida was about to receive an *honoris causa* from the University of Cambridge, Smith was provoked to go out of his way to respond, saying this was a “tim[e] when you need to go into battle for what is right”.²⁴⁰ Furthermore, remaining with Smith’s example, even if these ‘No’s did produce a ‘Yes’ in Smith, he never admitted it or credited Derrida with it, but remained indignant of Derrida’s “terrorist obscurantism” and warned that this hailed a kind of “spiritual death” (ibid, p. 155).

Nietzsche’s, by contrast, was an *affirmative indignation* – one bearing more than a passing resemblance to what Nietzsche extols in the *Genealogy* as the noble(‘s) reverence towards enemies (GM I §11, p. 39) – and based on a careful reading of his opponent’s texts.²⁴¹ As Nietzsche’s ethos of affirmation prescribed, this pre-condition for his thoughts – this provocation or impulse that, *for the first time*, makes his previous moral critiques and hypotheses speak a wholly new method – is considered as a gift (Nietzsche uses ‘*geben*’). That is why he can write “All respect then for the good spirits that may rule in these historians of morality!” even though “[...] it is, unhappily, certain that the historical spirit itself is lacking in them” (GM I §2, p. 25).

I maintain that Nietzsche is not only supplying an instance, but forwarding an entire philosophical approach that does not see the deepest or most valuable ‘thoughts’ as the result, as in Aristotle, of some generalized or disinterested ‘wonder;’ that the more *worthy* insights of philosophy are those concerning its methodology (and its value/justification), and arise not on the basis of a “general Truth” that needs to be “uncovered” (as with Heidegger), but of a disdain, a desire, that seeks expression.

Nietzsche’s “polemic” already shows that it is *only upon disagreeing* with “these English psychologists” that he was able to pinpoint the(ir) problem, that the ‘error’²⁴² begins to speak or speak-out in a positive, method-prescribing manner; hence Nietzsche’s use of *Anstoss*, a kick or a jolt (‘*stoss*’)

that arrives *at* (the German prefix ‘*an*’) him.²⁴³ That is what Nietzsche means by being one who contradicts, yet is also “the opposite of a No-saying spirit:” instead of rejecting their texts off-hand – as “false,” “immoral” etc. (precisely how Smith treats of Derrida) – Nietzsche delves deeper into it; “*they are interesting!*” (GM I §1, p. 24), he exclaims. And so, owing to his ethos of affirmation (and *communication*), Nietzsche sets to find out “what is it that really drives these psychologists in just *this* direction?” (ibid, ibid) Nietzsche’s affirmative indignation, in short, has opened for him a new and terrifying ‘*Why?*’ question in response to which he wrote and published (t)his methodological critique.

1.2 English Utilitarianism: A Theology by Other Means

The English psychologists’ merit consists in, for Nietzsche, that they had finally dared to raise the historical (that is, *temporal*) question concerning morality; he thanks them “for the only attempts hitherto at a history of the origin of morality” (GM I §1, p. 24). The “perversity” of their treatment, however, had provoked Nietzsche to ask after the ‘*Why?*’ of their method; *only then*, from their *telling* ‘error,’ could Nietzsche pick up the first clue for his own methodology. True to his philosophy – and to Heidegger’s great dismay – what Nietzsche wishes to re-activate is the particular constellation of will-to-power behind this “erroneous direction;” the “*holding*” conditions of the English psychologists’ “holding to be true.” Thus he is willing to assume – to gift them back a benefit of doubt – that behind their error they are still good, brave spirits, that, because they venture into such a risky, high-stakes terrain, perhaps they even harbor “a little anti-Christianity in them” (a genuine compliment on the side of this ‘antichrist;’ ibid §1-2, p. 25).

The English ‘error’ leads Nietzsche to the following, crucial, insight: that “the *historical spirit* itself is lacking in them,” something he takes to exemplify philosophy’s “hallowed custom” of being (or claiming to be) “unhistorical” (GM I §2, p. 25). Focusing on the ‘*Why?*’ of this ‘erroneous method,’ Nietzsche notes how it tends to *reduce* morality to, or “deducing” it from, some “essential,” *a-temporal values*. Hence, the key principles of valuation that the English psychologists had found were ‘utility’ and ‘habit,’ principles that Nietzsche summarizes as the forces of *inertia*, of the inert itself (GM I §1, p. 24).²⁴⁴ This approach had been a true “sin” against ‘historical sense,’ since the latter necessitates, for Nietzsche, a more radical engagement with the metaphysical problematic of time and/or change. Perhaps these inert forces were most consistent with the deductive, “unhistorical” method itself – ‘utility’ given to an unchanging algebraic calculus, ‘habit’ given to the unchanging *itself* – but Nietzsche’s methodological point still remains sharp if one posits values such as Kant’s universal coherence for

practical reason (his Categorical Imperative), Heidegger's "making ontology fundamental," or Hegel's single and comprehensive 'Truth' as what justifies the reconciliatory "absolute drive" of thought.²⁴⁵

Nietzsche's 'Anstoss' here consists of an awakening to the *question* of 'will to power:' if all truth is only a "*holding* to be true," as he argues, then 'history' can no longer maintain its "innocence," and, itself, needs to admit a thought that necessarily overflows history's ontological/narrative truth-claims.²⁴⁶ After all, 'will to power's' "ontological critique" (outlined in the previous chapter with regards to Heidegger) had precisely identified all conscious thought – and, *a fortiori*, all of the *methods* it can avail itself to – as merely the "tip" of a *temporally-unstable* array of forces. It is hence *against* the attempts to posit an ontology/morality around the "victor" of these struggles – as if this victor, the present 'value' or principle of valuation, were somehow 'eternal' or a-temporal – that Nietzsche insists on *speaking the 'Distanz'* that this struggle presupposes.²⁴⁷ This *Distanz* has to be affirmed, in the face of the "philosophies of inertia" and the metaphysical convictions that underlie their bad historical sense.

Thus, against the thought that identified the origin of the 'good' as the "primordially good act" – which, the (Christian) English psychologists name as the "unegoistic act" –, Nietzsche will associate this origin of the 'good' (and of Western morality in general) with a *difference in power*. This is no longer a static or unhistorical assumption, but neither does it follow some Hegelian or even Kantian "prime directive" or "instinct" of thought: as a *pre-ontological* difference or an ethico-metaphysical condition, it can *always* reshuffle the cards. The 'good,' hence, was rather born(e) by the only thing that could authorize 'good' in 'will to power,' *in history*: the 'being,' the 'truth,' of *the victors* themselves; a relation of valuation that, as Nietzsche argues in the *Genealogy*, first appears (but *Why?*) between the 'noble' and the 'plebeian.' Otherwise, *the word/concept 'good'* would never have arrived on the *historical* – and, *only then*, the 'moral' – "scene."

It is, hence, only out of a *power differential* – which the "unegoistic act" theorists had *assumed* – that 'good' could have arisen in the first place, and *subsequently* theorized. To Nietzsche's genealogy, this 'good' – as the result of an opening of *Distanz* – is a gift made from an excess of power, an "irreconciled" *height*.²⁴⁸ Nietzsche's 'pathos of distance' recalls all thought to this – "pre-ontological" – 'will-to-power' question: no *value* is to be exempt from its 'Why?', including the supposedly logical or "undeniable" one of 'utility;' any moral value always already *signifies* ('good,' 'bad', etc.) *from on-high*.

This following passage will be privileged here as a compact expression of Nietzsche's methodological concerns as discussed above (and elaborated more fully below):

[...] it is plain to me, first of all, that in this theory the source of the concept "good" has been

sought and established in the wrong place: the judgment “good” did not originate with those to whom “goodness” was shown! Rather it was “the good” themselves, that is to say, the noble, powerful, high-stationed [Höhergestellten] and highminded [Hochgesinnten], who felt and established themselves and their actions as good, that is, of the first rank, in contradistinction [Gegensatz] to all the low, low-minded, common [Gemeinen] and plebeian. It was out of this pathos of distance [Pathos der Distanz] that they first seized the right to create values and to coin names for values: what had they to do with utility! The viewpoint of utility is as remote and inappropriate as it possibly could be in face of such a burning eruption of the highest [oberster] rank-ordering, rank-defining value judgments: for here feeling has attained the antithesis of that low degree of warmth which any calculating prudence, any calculus of utility, presupposes – and not for once only, not for an exceptional hour, but for good. (GM I §2, p. 26/KGW 6.2:273 [my underline])²⁴⁹

This “bad history” that Nietzsche speaks to is, hence, also a bad *phenomenology*: to define the *origin* of ‘good’ from its *receiver* (or perceiver), “those to whom goodness was shown,” is doing only half the phenomenological work; like conceiving the essence of archery as the striking-point of the arrow rather than the archer-bow-arrow assemblage that fired this arrow in the first place (or, more precisely, as if this assemblage *made no difference*). While it is true that this assemblage is not directly approachable to conscious thought, deciding that for that reason it is philosophically irrelevant is itself an ethico-metaphysical decision that requires, though seldom receives, a justification. Thus, the power of “ego” is presupposed in the “unegoistic act” as precisely *a taming of the power-difference*: turning a “burning eruption,” a temporal break or event, to a “low degree of warmth” that persists “for good” (i.e. ahistorical, immune to the *problematic* of time).

As an *affirmer* of thought, Nietzsche probes yet deeper so as to conceptualize the temptation to make this ‘error;’ hence, he exposes this tendency as that of a metaphysics/science of presence/Truth. This “lack of historical sense,” then, precisely failed to have understood the phenomenological import of the ‘will to power’ in its radical approach to the metaphysics of time; this “lack” consists in taking the effect for the cause, a “chronological reversal” that demeans the formidable struggles that only this original difference/distance could afford.²⁵⁰ In positing a definite/conscious unhistorical principle of valuation as ‘origin’ – starting and stopping at the effect/result that *appears* (as) coherent – this metaphysical structure in fact either denies time (e.g., via the English’s inert concepts of ‘habit’ and ‘utility’), or dominates and “tames” it (e.g., in Hegel’s dynamic concept of ‘spirit’).²⁵¹

As I will show below, however, the only “passivity” that Nietzsche’s will-to-power admits to is precisely a passivity with regards to *time*. The English psychologists’ ‘error’ was to expect that the origin of morality itself be already that which *they*, so many decades later, conceived as ‘moral.’ That the source of morality could have been less coherent and accessible – and by far “darker,” less “moral” –

could not occur to those who, *unquestionably*, place the effect (i.e. their own *interpretation* of this effect) where the ‘source’ (and possibly an-*other interpretation* of this ‘source’) had been. Arriving at an “origin” that *reconciles existing moral values* in this manner, takes the resulting *coherence* – always achieved in the present (but “at the expense of the future”) – to be some kind of assurance of truth or legitimacy; and the atemporal character of this origin (an origin that admits to no temporal *difference*) is assumed, in turn, so as to assure the solidity of this coherence.

Nietzsche’s “historical sense” leads down a “road less-traveled” by Western thought. As was for decades so rarely mentioned in social-scientific discourse, the long tradition of English utilitarianism began in (Christian) *theology*, hailed forth from the pen of 17th Century theological thinkers, such as Richard Cumberland and John Gay.²⁵² The general idea(l) that underlay the utilitarian principle of valuation was that the “morally right” action was always the one that would produce “the most good.” This more/less approach to morality evinces, much like (Christian) guilt, an economy of debt, using a discourse of ‘lack’ and ‘fulfillment’ (“maximum” implies a telos of fulfillment). Thus, ‘utility’ allows an atemporal quantification of morality, for it is given to a universal, algebraic calculus of addition/subtraction (after all, $7+5=12$ regardless of the times – or so, at least, was the prevailing philosophical assumption).²⁵³

The *belief* in this idea remained engrained in Western thought – leaving the theological discourse behind with the self-proclaimed ‘atheism’ of early utilitarians like Jeremy Bentham and John Stuart Mill – in beginning from *the same metaphysical assumption* of the old theology: that ‘good’ could be thought as a “given” – applicable throughout all histories and encompassing all cultures – and always directed towards fulfillment of a larger whole (like ‘the Good of Humanity’); not unlike ‘God’ that, in/as a single coherent ‘spirit,’ animates and authorizes particular moral values that are geared towards fulfilling His Laws.²⁵⁴ ‘Good’ could be, then, viewed as a *quantity*, and ‘moral goodness’ – the drive for its maximization – was, as perhaps might have been guessed by the reader at this point, the *incarnation* of this atemporal, not to say eternal and divine ‘good’ in the world.²⁵⁵ This was, indeed, a continuation of Christian theology by other, perhaps more ‘scientific,’ means.

This basis of this theological understanding of ‘morality’ is also, inherently, *individualistic*.²⁵⁶ It recuperates the Christian conception of ‘Man’ who – only insofar as possessing of a ‘soul’ – can be “redeemed” through faith in the all-reconciling ‘God.’ In this framework, the single, transcendent *entity* that was the Monotheist ‘God’ is thought of as a kind of “transcendent *individual*,” with God’s will/plan conceived as desiring the maximization of Good *for Himself* (for He is All) through Man (His

mediation/incarnation). It is ‘Man’ – as, theologically speaking, a “part” of the “whole” which is God (at least insofar as Man possesses a ‘soul’) – that “inherits” this task, and is charged with *actualizing* this Divine Good in/on the world. Of course, the English utilitarian psychologists had perhaps no longer conceived of morality in these theological terms, yet the latter’s logic was perfectly mirrored in the former’s conception of the individual: self-interested, seeking maximization of her own ‘good,’ this ‘egoistic subject’ was indeed “God-like,” with the small caveat that she was only so “in part” and did not yet comprise “All.” Hence, the individual – Akin to a salvation-seeking ‘Soul,’ the “individual” could only ever seek its own ‘good’ (like God), but (unlike God) this would never be enough from a total or comprehensive (i.e. Divine) “point of view.” This “not enough” or “not yet” imposes a *metaphysical telos of fulfillment* – leading directly to the economy of debt/lack seen both in utilitarian calculi, and, as I show below, in Christian guilt.

This “partiality” of the individual was, hence, always evinced in view of *an im-partial totality that assures it a place and legitimacy*; Hegel’s ‘One Truth’ towards which all thought strives out of sheer “instinct” spells out precisely this (theo)logic.²⁵⁷ The utilitarian, supposedly atheist ‘individual’ is, hence, only bought at the price of this, its “universal mission”. Hence, it matters little whether this impartial totality/entity was conceived of as ‘Nature’ (understood “empirically”), ‘Reason’ (understood “logically”) or ‘God’ (understood “theologically”). That is why the “unegoistic” definition of the English psychologists was also following a Christian-theological metaphysics, presupposing an “essential” and all-encompassing nature of an egoist, instrumentalist S/subject whose ‘good’ *supposed to be incarnate* – not just as a condition, but also as a *telos* – in the world. This “equalizing mechanism” of utilitarianism – between individual and individual, between individual and God – meant that all “individuals” shared *the same basic drive* for ‘utility,’ insofar as all were equally “Man” of an equally good-seeking “Soul.”

Nietzsche’s genealogy refuses to reduce morals to ‘utility,’ even when the ‘un-egoistic’ classification reverses utility for *self* to utility for *another self*.²⁵⁸ Nietzsche realized that this reversal of the direction of utility by the clever English psychologists²⁵⁹ exposes precisely that which ‘utility,’ like the Christian appropriation of the Judaic God, had diligently covered-over: the absolute, *radical difference* – the asymmetry and separation, the *Distanz* that does not allow such an easy reversibility/exchange – between ‘self’ and ‘other.’ Utility for another self does, after all, presuppose the ethico-metaphysical *equivalence* of ‘self’ to ‘self.’ The ‘*Distanz*,’ as a metaphysical (or “extra-ontological”) *separation* will keep cause/force and its effect/meaning – a relation that *theo-logy* must

conceive-of as a single logical whole – “worlds apart.”

This separation or distance here functions as a methodological principle that keeps every ‘history’ at the level of the always-reinterpretable sign, immunizing historical research/perspective from a symbol’s always-already pre-figured interpretation of all signs, its temporal and hermeneutic teleology. Seen in an ethico-metaphysical manner, this principle allows maintaining a radical exteriority over-and-against temporal continuity, thus exposing the historian to being *herself* accountable for her own ‘will to power’ in bringing a “chain of events” into b/Being. The metaphysical prefiguration of the historical event’s narration/meaning – a necessary outcome of an assumed “absolute ideal” (like ‘utility’) vis-à-vis these *fluid* questions of power/domination – is precisely what Nietzsche’s ‘will to power’ insists remain open to Otherness, remain accusable by *other* idea(l)s that, *in time*, might come to command an *other* narrative. This methodological principle is precisely where Nietzsche places his own “ought.”

[...] there is for historiography of any kind no more important proposition than the one it took such effort to establish but which really ought to be established now: the cause of the origin of a thing and its eventual utility, its actual employment and place in a system of purposes, lie worlds apart; whatever exists, having somehow come into being, is again and again reinterpreted to new ends, taken over, transformed, and redirected by some power superior to it; all events in the organic world are a subduing, a becoming master, and all subduing and becoming master involves a fresh interpretation, an adaptation through which any previous “meaning” and “purpose” are necessarily obscured or even obliterated (GM II §12, p. 77 [my underline])

‘Utility,’ hence, is shown to proceed from a metaphysical assumption that, under the reconciliation or equalization of a ‘God of All,’ a correspondingly equalized ‘Man’ *becomes the only moral subject*. This assumption, in turn, evinces a system of thought, a *method*, that can explain neither the moral gesture that had been based on the aforementioned separation (between ‘self’ and ‘other,’ between ‘powerful’ and ‘powerless’), nor, for that matter, its *value*. In short, a system of thought that *methodologically denies* its own implication in the ‘will to power’. Of course, the self-other difference could very well be acknowledged on *ontological* grounds – that was the basis of the “egoistic/unegoistic” distinction – but *on the level of metaphysical assumption* the damage had already been done *in principle*: the *Distanz* had already been foreclosed, the *distinction* denied, the height leveled. This is why, Nietzsche concludes, *any* moral value, including ‘utility,’ should be made to answer to the question concerning *its own* value (something which, for Nietzsche, means admitting its own share in the ‘will to power’):

[...] purposes and utilities are only signs that a will to power has become master of something less powerful and imposed upon it the character of a function; and the entire history of a “thing,” an

organ, a custom can in this way be a continuous sign-chain of ever new interpretations and adaptations whose causes do not even have to be related to one another but, on the contrary, in some cases succeed and alternate with one another in a purely chance fashion (GM II §12, p. 77 [my underline])

This is why Nietzsche keeps bringing his readers back to ‘history,’ not necessarily to justify, much less to conserve, its “tradition,” but to detonate his phenomenological bomb of will-to-power within ‘history’ itself (and, *a fortiori*, the history of morality). As stated above, this move is phenomenologically crucial if we want to get “the chronological order” right so as to analyze and interpret a given (historical) closure (a fatality or *il y a* of Being, a de-finition of an ‘object’ or a ‘phenomenon’). Yet, it is also crucial when engaged in *a metaphysical war* against that which always assumes a *knowable*, ‘pre-historical’ or otherwise “temporally-immune” substance.²⁶⁰ For Nietzsche, as will become clear, the methodological implication of will-to-power can only ever admit of a ‘pathos’ (for its justification/origin), but *never* (*pace* Hegel) a ‘knowledge.’

For Nietzsche, it was the *contrast* between the ‘nobles’ and the ‘plebeians’ that retains the ‘historicity’ of moral value, following an elusive ‘pathos’ that traces this value’s murmured, now all-but-inaudible origins; a pathos of rank or power, of the “distance” that afforded the ‘noble’ the right to coin the ‘good’ as a value in the first place. As such, the ‘good’ refers, precisely, to the powerful noble’s distance from – its distinction and height over (and-above) – the dominated plebeian. It was this “pathos of distance” – the “total feeling” on the part of the noble that inscribes his action/existence as “valuable” – that enabled the noble to *give* (value); in contradistinction with those whose (plebeian) powerlessness precluded them this “right.”

The pathos of distance does not yet introduce the ‘ought’ in the sense of moral goodness, but, I maintain, it does prepare the way by which ‘Being’ itself, as historical presence/existence, is *ethically marked*. The metaphysical separation that the *Pathos der Distanz* implies will, henceforth, accompany not only ‘Being’ – the presence and activity of history’s powerful/victors – but also forever harbor, in full affirmation, a *methodological* consideration of *history’s “losers” and victims*.

In contradistinction to so many readings that make of Nietzsche’s a “might makes right” philosophy, Nietzsche’s moral critique comes in the form of a “distance makes value” genealogy/method. ‘Historical sense’ here intermingles with ‘moral genealogy’ in a kind of “equiprimordial” implication: morally speaking, no ‘good’ – whether ‘natural’ (English Utilitarianism), or ‘logico-spiritual’ (Hegelianism) – is allowed any ahistorical absolution in itself; following the historical sense that resists any presupposed coherence (i.e. a chain of events) that does not radically

compromise itself by the thinker's own imposition of power (a generative interruption that supplies an opening to the *time*, and the value, *to come*). It is rather that no "might" – either natural, historical or divine – can lay claim to an unquestionable "right," since time itself open any and all 'history' or 'existence' to other values, whose domination necessarily involves other narrations.

At any given or present time, for any given or present thought or thinker, other "links" and other "chains" – future outcomes of the ever-repeating struggles of the will to power – have been suppressed; they are *temporarily* dominated by a(n already-existing) value wielded by a(n already existing) historian that is called *to affirm both this domination, and its temporal infirmity*. This assures an ethico-metaphysical consideration of the oppressed values and affects – forever struggling and awaiting their "time" to dominate (i.e. 'come into being') – over-and-against the metaphysical closure (of 'nature,' of 'logic') that seeks to disavow them or "pay them off;" a System that would interpret their ill-defined, "non-Being" status as making them dispensable contingencies in the history of Spirit, temporary "setbacks" or "vanities," as ignorable by philosophical thought and knowledge as Krug's pen. No one has the "might" necessary for imposing a value that transcends the interruptive future that time provides.

Nietzsche's is, like Hegel's, a philosophy that understands 'history' as a value-laden narrative (i.e. a will-to-power) that takes part in this oppression; unlike Hegel's, however, Nietzsche's metaphysical, 'anti-Christian' caveats will insist on a responsibility (rather than guilt) for this pre-historical Difference. This means that, for Nietzsche, it is a *singular* responsibility, a breaking-off *pluralization* of 'history,' that ought to be affirmed, rather than denied by reigning it in as the absolute (and absolved) historical narrative of a single *Weltgeist*. The history of valuation, hence, is – like what Derrida says above of the history of the law – not reducible to 'Being,' and "*elle ne serait pas présentable*" as such. Nietzsche's genealogy indeed asks after, not (only) the "law" of this history – the law as the *value* that dictates what Heidegger might call a "Destiny" of 'Being' – but the history of this law, the formation of this value. Both betray a ethico-metaphysical gesture with regards to time: not only since this "history of valuation" requires a methodological shift to accommodate a different kind of 'history' ("the history of that which never took place"), but also that such a history – consisting as it is of an exposure of value to the dimension of time/change – is *necessary*.²⁶¹

If thus far I discussed the impetus to Nietzsche's publications about the value of morality as being polemical in essence, what about his method itself? Was the origin of his method about morality equally polemical, or was the polemic merely a "style," a strategy? What is the history of Nietzsche's history; how and why (and when) did he come to construe morality, good and evil, as a *problem*? I maintain in

the following that there is an implicit phenomenology to Nietzsche's *Genealogy*; and it is not one of apprehending Heideggerian 'Being' so much as contesting moral valuations in/as encounters (relationships; texts; cultural productions; religious structures). Thus, as shown above, Nietzsche will come to care not about the 'truth' – of 'reality,' 'experience,' etc. (except to show that his rival thinkers do not possess it any more than he) – but about the *value*, the *power* of "*holding* to be true."

This Nietzschean "wakefulness," as I will show, does not owe the interruption of his dogmatic slumbers to the 'unconcealment' of truth, but to the *striking* difference of singular encounters: what "happens" brings with it, not the 'Why?' of 'existence' – as in Heidegger's 'fundamental ontology' – but the ethico-metaphysical 'Why?' of *value*. This value arises in contention, from an otherness whose 'horizon' supplies – not the background of 'nothingness' in the *states* of 'Angst' or 'wonder,' but – the "*Anstoss*," the *interruption* that subtends all communication with another value, one that makes a *counter-claim* to power. The 'will to power' is, essentially and irreducibly, the decisive affirmation of this 'counter' – a polemic of method as well as style, an 'otherwise' that can never be *generalized* as a state or condition. This 'otherwise' must be attended to as a repetitively reiterated interruption, *constitutive* of 'existence;' as a will-to-power's responsibility towards 'value' itself.

2. The Nietzschean Awakening: Catching the Spirit in the Act

[W]hen it is distress that philosophizes, as is the case with all sick thinkers – and perhaps sick thinkers are more numerous in the history of philosophy – what will become of the thought itself when it is subjected to the pressure of sickness? This is the question that concerns the psychologist, and here an experiment is possible. 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*.

– Friedrich Nietzsche²⁶²

Nietzsche's *phenomenology* is, indeed, closer to Lévinas' than to Heidegger's, especially with regards to the *primacy* of the ethico-metaphysical problem of 'valuation.' For Heidegger, all authentic philosophical thought derives from a voluntary "leap" to an 'authentic' '*Da*' from which she could contemplate the "impossible possibility" of her death; the "fundamental ontological" comportment of an *Angst* that underwrites any and all relations of the philosopher's *Da-sein*, that *com-prehends* all of her potential and actual "cares." This authentic investigation is then free(d) to address its being (as)

projected towards its ultimate horizon (of intelligibility or of potentiality/possibility), or what Heidegger calls the Truth of the meaning of Being *in general*.

As discussed in the previous chapter, both the ‘spirit’ of this leap, and most importantly its *force*, are *justified* by the authenticity of the *aforementioned* ‘Da’; that is to say, by the ‘Truth’ that this ‘spirit’ accesses or “unconceals.” Nietzsche, of course, would accept neither the impetus of a ‘Truth’ that is *presupposed* to justify the philosophical “leap,” nor the generality of Being as the ultimate or ‘primordial’ horizon of philosophical thought: the “fundamentality” of ‘Being’ is already complicated by Nietzsche’s ‘will to power,’ and hence the ‘generality’ of its Truth is *methodologically denied* by the role Nietzsche assigns to *his own singularity* as thinker/evaluator, what he calls his “peculiarity.”

Like in Lévinas (and unlike Heidegger), this question of value takes *precedence* in Nietzsche – something I connected in the previous chapter to the skeptical revolt of the ‘Why?’ question against all its ontological/metaphysical closure(s). Here ‘Levinatzsch’ speaks evenly in affording a methodological affirmation the philosopher or thinker themselves – which a metaphysics of Truth teleologically minimizes to extinction – and their own relation, their own *witness*, to the arrival of “thought.” Here, again, Levinatzsch will affirm a *radical* singularity exceeding the ‘authentic’ thinker, whereas Heidegger’s “fundamental ontology” – accounting for thought in its Being (i.e. as “ek-static” temporal *projection* rather than inter-jection) – must enclose this singularity both from the “outside” (thought finds its de-finition in the thinker’s own death), and from the “inside” (always oriented towards the “Truth of Being in general”). This “ontological prison” of/for thought, as discussed above, mirrors or mimics the theological or ‘metaphysical’ one.

Nietzsche’s account of his method is, hence, *decisively* different than Heidegger’s. The first difference is phenomenological, in how Nietzsche conceives of the role of separation vis-à-vis Heidegger’s “leap.” The break, or “awakening,” that Nietzsche describes in the above quote may appear similar to Heidegger’s “leap” for its enacted separation, but is fundamentally different with regards to the question of freedom: it is an *Anstoss* – the awakening of a “Da-free,” rather than an “authenticity-oriented” impulse – that is no more enacted “by” Nietzsche “voluntarily,” than it is elicited *from him*. The second difference lies in Nietzsche’s insistence on keeping the problem of value as prior to that of “the meaning of Being”; an ethico-metaphysical ‘*Distanz*’ that – at least in a climate where resentment has become, as he says, “victorious” – cannot and should not be avoided or deferred, made *derivative* of ‘Being’ (as metaphysics itself was for and by Heidegger).²⁶³

As a new value emerges, victorious and present/conscious (an effect of the ‘will to power’), it comports with it the terrible implication, the promise or threat of an ontological upheaval. This is where, to Heidegger’s dismay, Being, however authentically approached, betrays a susceptibility to a value that lies beyond its circumspective scope. This ethical or metaphysical upheaval, in turn, also threatens the rewriting and reimagining of history in hitherto unimaginable, fundamental ways. The emerging value, hence, interrupts the very horizons of *Dasein*’s self-understanding, as if mocking the “fundamental” claims of ‘Being’ and ‘Truth.’ This new value, and the kind of “transvaluative freedom” that it wields, does not reconcile ‘the past,’ but (re-)de-fines it, *selects* from it and breaks out of it. This *selective* break – and here is where a “good historical sense” is crucial – authorizes and inaugurates a new “history,” by virtue of the power this value carries forth from the “prehistory” of ‘will to power’ struggles. These struggles, always beyond the pale, hold even this – active, powerful – value as conditional; no less ‘necessary,’ due to its ontological and epistemological mastery, but also no less coincidental for that. These struggles, like the persistence of time’s threats to any ontological enclosure, are the real sovereign; towards which even this, victorious, value had no choice but be passive.

Nietzsche’s ‘will to power’ means coming to philosophical terms with this passivity, a passivity whose radical nature dictates a double gesture that philosophy would always prefer to separate to two distinct positions or possibilities: one the one hand, such ‘passivity’ means that the lines between the ‘voluntary’ and the ‘involuntary’ are blurred; on the other hand, this “blur” is not something to be “compensated for,” but is precisely what needs to be thought, affirmed *as such*. It is only in holding on to both sides of this dilemma – confirming both the blur and the necessity to blur one’s thought with(in) it, that *responsibility* begins to occupy its status as a *philosophia prima*: just because my will betrays a non-influenceable an-archy – a passive ‘me’ that can neither grasp the *future* of its subterranean power-struggles, nor know their past becoming – does not absolve the ‘I’ from treating of this ‘me’ as its own, blurry and unstable, *raison d’être*. This ‘I’ speaks its presents – its philosophy of Being and the history that it entails – as the testimonial response to this passive ‘me,’ the witness to the struggle and the violent selection that it culminated in.

Neither the Aristotelian ‘wonder’ of an *already* separate(d) observer, nor the Heideggerian *Angst* of authentic *Dasein* whose ‘leap’ coils around its own ontological de-finition, will suffice to describe this Nietzschean method, highly personally responsible and dedicated as it is. His “gay scientist” might “leap” somewhere, but not in the name of Being or ‘Truth,’ nor in any attempt to achieve anything resembling a synoptic outlook. S/he is guided by something darker, more immoral, a hatred, a drive to

separation that cuts violently and unapologetically, and can cite no “search for Truth,” no “authenticity” for its act: the breaking ‘I’ will always have its ways of putting reasons for this break in this or that testimony, this or that ‘said;’ but the witness, the ‘me,’ retains its passive vigilance towards the an-archic violence that this ‘I’ had to commit.

Nietzsche’s “breaks” are profoundly break-throughs; from a ‘*Da*’ that – for unknown, unwieldy, *pathological* reasons – could no longer be abided in. To Levinatzsch, they are involuntary *responses* – affirmed precisely in their ‘pathos’ or passivity – to what I described above as the Lévinasian *il y a*; a “closure” within ‘Being’ that thought, as singularity, remains insomniacly awakened towards/against. Both Nietzsche and Lévinas concur on this point, that thought is given as an ethical, value-evaluating response to *a decision whose involuntariness/passivity does not release me from the duty of “signing” for it*; even when this decision was made in an immemorial, *an-archic* or “pre-historic” past. The call that seeks a response in this regard, like Nietzsche’s “*Anstoss*,” strikes the philosopher in a singular manner, ‘awakening’ him (Lévinas) to a new ‘daybreak’ (Nietzsche), causing a new “insomnia” in attending the birth of a new value. It is, in short, a decision towards which there is no absolute/infinite freedom, and yet from which there is heard the absolute demand for justice – a de-cision as a cut or a limit that is affirmed as a kind of “finite freedom.”

There is no “authentic *Da*” for Nietzsche, but only sudden, necessarily *indignant* breaks from a certain hospitable dwelling, a certain pathology/closure that is never known or contoured in advance. This indignation is essential, this ‘No’ unavoidable (and undeniable), when it comes to thought, especially thought about morality. Nietzsche both tells and shows that (this) thought does not begin in ‘wonder’ or in ‘*Angst*,’ it begins with *the moral indignation with which a new moral value is pushed against existence*. This “affirmative indignation,” is the profundity, the *method*, of Nietzsche’s “revaluation of values.”

Perhaps here is where Levinatzsch’s ethico-metaphysical point exerts the heaviest methodological weight: since thought *undergoes* time as an an-archic interruption – rather than being projected/thrown (Heidegger), or consisting in an “archic” fulfillment (Hegel) – the Nietzschean wager is only ever “redeemed” by *interruptions* that cut through *existing* knowledge/truth claims. This point is crucial for Nietzsche’s new method, for it is in the cloisters of these claims’ respective ‘*Da*’s that what Nietzsche calls *ressentiment*’s “sickness” propagates itself. Since there is no independent ‘Truth’ – outside of a largely inaccessible ‘will to power’ that brings it to an always-suspect ‘Being’ – a methodological tactic needs to be formed in order to *encounter* thought within this very intimacy; not in order to give its Truth

but, precisely to, as Nietzsche says, be its witness, “tell on it” – “catch the spirit in the act” (of forming and dubbing such “Truth”/“Being”).

This “catching” is itself presided-over by an ethical urgency that neither ‘*Dasein*’ nor the conscious ‘Will’ can avert, and that no ontological ‘Truth’ can absolve: Nietzsche’s “experiment” is, hence, neither wholly voluntary/conscious, nor does it entail some transcendental/‘authentic’ locus that can (or should) be accessed by just *any* thinker. The singularity of the latter, as witness, makes this urgency inaccessible even to a thinker immersed in the same ‘Da’ as Nietzsche himself. The elevation that this ethical questioning demands refuses to be “shared:” it cannot be absolved by proving its “general relevance” over and against various “contingent particularities” that are to be gently brushed aside; rather, by the power of an *explosive* ethico-metaphysical ‘Why?’ this question can breach all closures and severs all ties.

What this “catching” tries to speak, to *communicate with*, is already beyond the conscious presuppositions of thought, a pathology or passivity. This complicated relationship between the conscious will and the Nietzschean experiment/wager indeed suggests a “strange liberty” that no ‘Truth’ can “infinitize”.²⁶⁴ These “pathologies” of freedom are neither transcendental (Kant), nor ontological (Heidegger) – they are precisely ethico-metaphysical, the *il y a* towards-which thought bears a singular responsibility (slated neither by ‘universal categories,’ nor even by the authenticity of Being-towards-(my own)-death).

Nietzsche understands that what (Christian) theology had done to thought was far more radical and powerful than Heidegger allowed himself to imagine: much more than a mere prevarication and “covering over” of a ‘Truth’ or ‘Being’ bequeathed by the Greeks, it was an appropriation, a “blood-poisoning,” an infestation of Greek *nobility*. Nietzsche’s methodological “anti-theology” – unlike Heidegger’s – provides a new, decidedly more “conniving” relation to both Christian theology (‘Spirit’) and Greek ontology (‘Being’), for the latter can no longer be separated from the former. Hence, while Nietzsche might share Heidegger’s valorization of the Ancient Greeks, he does so with two profound differences: first, Nietzsche has no illusions about recovering the glory of the Greek kind of ‘Being,’ seeking, as he does, to reactivate the latter’s generative genius – rather than “uncovering” its ‘Truth’ – in the unprecedentedly dangerous metaphysical setting of a Europe “sick” with *ressentiment*; second, Nietzsche understands Greek Being and Truth as already beholden to a nobility, an elevation of power by those who hold the *value* of ‘good,’ and so he approaches ontology as something derivative of this power-of-valuation (and, hence, not “fundamental”).

It is these two points that evince the Nietzschean genealogy as, unlike Heidegger's, specifically attuned to the overriding nature of value and (its) power vis-à-vis to all thought concerning 'Being.' In Nietzsche's genealogical setting, the Greek-noble "Truth" is not, pace Heidegger, "covered over," but *subverted* – via "guilt" and "bad conscience" – by *ressentiment's* 'sickness.' Afflicted with this "poison," these "nobles" can no longer joyfully self-affirm their own value (as 'good'). Such is the dismal fate of a paganism that had been conquered by *ressentiment*. Nietzsche understands that a true "*Destruktion*" of theology in philosophy must – *first and foremost* (as "first philosophy") – *approach "ontotheology" through its 'will to power.'* This means tackling this "quiet problem" (GM I §5, p. 28) of value and valuation head-on, a problem *made quiet by ressentiment* (and kept quiet in Heidegger as well), and make it speak: in an already "sick" Europe, where the originating power of values is continuously made to turn on itself (subverted through guilt), Nietzsche's "*Destruktion*" means less removing that which "covers-over" this power, than giving thought the tools necessary to help new (and not just pagan/Greek) values break through this clever subversion. 'Genealogy,' hence, is not about recovering the 'truth' of some origin (pace Heidegger) – since any *logos*, including its own, is eternally *provoked* by its '*genea*' – but tapping into the generative power-difference that presides over this origin; a power that *ressentiment* had already made reactive by turning its activity back on itself.

To sum up, like Heidegger, Nietzsche sees a separation or difference as *the event* of thought, but, unlike Heidegger, is much less trusting of the 'spirit' that attends it, as if its "force" will authorize an authentic 'Da' from which the "Truth of Being in general" becomes attainable; *as if this "force" is always already justified*, under the implicit assumption that arriving at this 'Truth' is itself *valuable* (but is 'spirit' enough to justify or vouch for the value of this assumption, itself?). Nietzsche is, however, *suspicious* of 'spirit,' seeing it as that which also lulls to sleep, that which closes itself to difference and question (since it always already possesses its own justification). That is why 'spirit' cannot be trusted when one wants to ask the most difficult or "highest" question of metaphysics: the 'Why?' question. One could say, perhaps, that whenever an appearance is granted to a new *value* – or, more precisely, a novel manner with which to (r)evaluate *existing* values, ask about *their value* – it is itself only celebrated by Nietzsche as an "awakening;" but this sudden break-through is not thought-of and affirmed as, pace Heidegger, a shift towards any authentic 'Da,' or, *pace* Hegel, any "truer" or more "comprehensive" 'actuality' ('*Wirklichkeit*'). This new "value" has, to put it in Nietzschean terms, its own germs of 'spirit,' and it, too, must be broken away from in some glorious (and immoral) "*Morgenröthe*" to come.

What breaks thought away from itself toward untold and paradigmatically unknown futures is, for Nietzsche, not a ‘Truth’ (much less a truth of “Being in general”), but a new value. It is this principle of valuation that, in its absolute otherness and novelty – as a ‘saying’ (put in Lévinasian terms) – “chooses” and justifies (though not absolutely) the one who speaks/thinks it; As a new, yet de-finite, value – a new “holding to be true” (a kind of Lévinasian ‘said’) on the part of the thinker – its arrival also or asks after the justice of its selection in the coils of an inaccessible/“prehistoric” ‘will to power.’ It is not the ‘Truth of Being *in general*’ that is “fundamental” for Nietzsche, nor a comprehensive account of *all* “holding(s) to be true” that would eventually constitute “the Truth.” It is, rather, only the “holding” and the “holding *otherwise*” – the future breaking-away from the held/known (and *the future’s future* in breaking away *again*) – that Nietzsche finds worthy, necessary, to ascribe to. It is not, in short, the new value as such that is awaited and prized, but its ‘becoming,’ the opportunity it brings to re-valuate existing values.

Nietzsche’s ‘genealogy,’ hence, seeks a way to *question* thought with regards to its own inaccessible assumptions – its pathologies/convictions, its secret “holdings” – calling thought to responsibility in an “immoral” sense; not to arrive at a Truth that is somehow “clean” from, or above, all morality/valuation, but to question the value of the (always already operating) values and valuations that arrive with every de-finition, with every closure/“crust” of Being.

2.1 Nietzsche’s Peculiar Scruple: The Pathos of Witness

The question “what is that?” is an imposition of meaning from some other viewpoint. “Essence,” the “essential nature,” is something perspective and already presupposes a multiplicity. At the bottom of it there always lies “what is that for *me*?”

– Friedrich Nietzsche²⁶⁵

[...] The history of philosophy, during some flashes, has known this subjectivity that, as in an extreme youth, breaks with essence. [...] it has known the metaphysical extraction from being, even if, betrayed by the said, as by the effect of an oracle, the exception restored to the essence and to fate immediately fell back into the rules and led only to worlds behind the scenes. The Nietzschean man above all was such a moment.

– Emmanuel Lévinas²⁶⁶

As I have insisted above, Nietzsche’s *Genealogy* also harbors its own phenomenology, one which Nietzsche both “shows” (performs), and “tells” (presents) – though, to do justice to Nietzsche’s ‘will to power’ war-machine, the difference between showing and telling affords no stable designation, in much the same way to how the voluntary/involuntary difference is methodologically blurred.

The following passage from the Preface hails an earlier time than Nietzsche's methodological polemic with 'the English' in the *Genealogy*, before arriving at the "corrosive skepticism" with regards to Schopenhauer, even prior to the "hypothesis mongering" of his *Human, all too Human*. This *in nuce* "genealogy" of the *Genealogy*, performs two methodological innovations right at the outset: the first, already encountered above in the case of 'the English,' is that the question of 'origins, is always already, itself, a *historical-genealogical question*, a question that demands a critical temporal dimension; the second innovation, which will be my focus here, is that this question cannot/should-not be an *impersonal* question.

Because of a scruple peculiar to me [*mir eignen Bedenklichkeit*] that I am loth to admit to – for it is concerned with *morality*, with all that has hitherto been celebrated on earth as morality – a scruple [*Bedenklichkeit*] that entered [*auftrat*] my life so early, so uninvited [*unaufgefordert*], so irresistibly, so much in conflict [*Widerspruch*] with my environment [*Umgebung*], age, precedents [*Beispiel*], and descent [*Herkunft*] that I might almost have the right to call it my "a priori" – my curiosity as well as my suspicions were bound to halt quite soon at the question of where our good and evil really *originated*. In fact, the problem of the origin of evil pursued me even as a boy of thirteen: [...] I gave the honor to God, as was only fair, and made him the *father* of evil. Was *that* what my "a priori" demand [*Wollte*] of me? that new immoral, or at least unmoralistic "a priori" and the alas! so anti-Kantian, enigmatic [*räthselhafte*] "categorical imperative" which spoke [*redende*] through it and to which I have since listened more and more closely, and not merely listened? (GM Preface §3, pp. 16-17/6.2:261 [my underline])

This question of origins, then – owing to the Nietzschean method – hails back to a much earlier period, somewhere in Nietzsche's early adolescence. The son of a Protestant pastor – showing great interest and talent (if not fanaticism) in Christian theology, and living, *like Kant*, in a predominantly Protestant-Pietist German culture²⁶⁷ – Nietzsche's childhood immersions proved to hinder, rather than promote, the values that underwrote them. This irreconcilable kernel of self-differentiation, arising at the very heart of his surroundings, is all the more puzzling considering the relative homogeneity of Nietzsche cultural-religious context, not to mention the seriousness and devotion with which the young Nietzsche identified with his surroundings.²⁶⁸ As the passage above shows, it was this very devotion/immersion that came to surface morality as a *problem* for Nietzsche, one that would rivet all of this self-proclaimed "immoralist's" suspicion and curiosity. How could this "scruple" arise, where could it receive its "force," and, most importantly, why would Nietzsche identify with it so intimately as to call it *his own* "peculiarity"?²⁶⁹ Colloquially put: *Where* did this problem come from *all of a sudden*?

Following my discussion of Heidegger, I hope it is clear by now that his question of "where" is not "merely rhetorical," but is also inherently *ethico-metaphysical* in its purview, as it pertains to

Nietzsche's implicit phenomenology of the *arrival of thought itself*.²⁷⁰ Heidegger, to recall, said thought is "called" by 'conscience,' owing to a force of Spirit that originated in the "ground of being." Is this Heideggerian 'conscience' – given to the philosopher's *Angst* as she seriously faces the "impossible possibility" of her own death – the same as the Nietzschean "scruple"?

I believe not. Unlike Heidegger's 'conscience,' Nietzsche's is obsessed with the origin of value, suggesting that – rather than the "ground of Being" – his "scruple" comes from elsewhere. Thought, here, seems to command Nietzsche from where values are formed and de-formed, valued and transvalued. Counter to Heidegger's brand of "philosophical patriotism" of *Grund* and *Boden*, Nietzsche's phenomenology sees (t)his thought arise *in contradistinction to everything that provides him with a 'Da' in which to dwell*: environment (e.g. upbringing), age (e.g. maturity, closeness to death), precedents (philosophical/cultural tradition) and descent (e.g. "*Blut*," "*Boden*," "*Volk*"). Against all '*Da*,' regardless of the question of *Sein*, Nietzsche's scruple will obsess him with the justification, the 'origin' of morality; particularly – the method by which he is to proceed.

The German word Nietzsche consistently uses for this "scruple" is '*Bedenklichkeit*.' The word itself – the nominal form of the verb *bedenken* (to consider; to keep something in mind) – already includes thought, *Gedanke*, at its heart. But it is the relation between the '*denken*' verb (to think) and its prefix '*be-*' that is striking here: in German, '*be-*' denotes that the verb that follows it happens to, *is inflicted upon*, its object. Thus, in Nietzsche's use, the "scruple" that arose so early in his life, so miraculously and unexplainably, was indeed "his," but, perhaps counterintuitively, made 'him' an *object* of this new, enigmatic thought (rather than its subject); it 'originated in him,' but like in an evocation: an overpowering, but nonetheless intimate, necessity. This necessity is indeed Nietzsche's own, but he is still, in a way, *passive* towards it. This "scruple" suggests that it had its "origin" neither in Nietzsche's free will nor in his '*Da*' but precisely arrived *at* him as the interruption of the '*Da*.'

This thought that Nietzsche was subjected to, speaking an 'external' and *uninvited* demand/will ('*Wollte*'), is a coming forth or a stepping-up (the more literal meaning of '*auf-treten*' translated above as "entering"), but towards an unclear *telos* and from a mysterious source. It "steps up," but neither owing to a specific goal (for example, Nietzsche does not know himself to be driven by either a "thirst for justice," or for "God"), nor from a specific essence. What is "most his own" here, Nietzsche's *Eigen*, is a mysterious, "enigmatic" thought coming *at* him, not arising within him owing to some latent substance the content of which Nietzsche was to progressively actualize.²⁷¹

Indeed, true to the affirmative nature of Nietzsche's indignant No's, his "scruple," as he writes, manifested itself in a conflict, an objection or resistance (*Widerspruch*), wherein Nietzsche's childhood-seriousness, not to mention *piety*, would not play any reconciling role. This "*a priori*" refuses to reconcile itself to any other closure or necessity: neither the transcendental necessity of '*universal understanding*;' nor the ontological horizon, the "*ethical ground*" of his "*Volk*", nor even to Nietzsche's own existing identifications (his "*inertia*" so to speak). It is, especially after Kant's heavy use of the term, very strange *a priori* indeed: on the one hand, it is of an absolutely overriding and untamable character; on the other hand, it was not, strictly speaking, "in Nietzsche" to begin with. Rather, it erupts into his thought, resisting all his prior "*a prioris*" – which at some point were still very Kantian and law-abiding – and irresistibly demanding an absolute status.

It is perhaps worth our while to tarry for a while on this Kantian connection. Nietzsche's "scruple" came, like the Kantian imperative, as on the one hand a 'formal' demand that seems to override/dominate existing contexts and interests;²⁷² in this case, demanding resistance to everything which young Nietzsche was immersed in, both "internally" and "externally," in character and culture. On the other hand, this demand is utterly *unreasonable* from a Kantian Categorical Imperative standpoint, to which what matters is *necessarily* "the universality of the law".²⁷³ Not only does the Nietzschean scruple not fulfill the principle of universalizability, it almost explicitly counters it by touting Nietzsche's own "peculiarity." How could Nietzsche articulate his scruple as a Kantian, universal maxim? 'Always resist your surrounding contexts'? 'Always be passive with regards to thought'?

What makes the connection to Kant in this case is not only this formal character, but also its attachment to *morality* as the most urgent problem; the locus for this "scruple" to finally enact a *resistance* (*Widerspruch*) to all that, *until then*, Nietzsche had enthusiastically championed. Nietzsche's own 'imperative,' hence, is to be deemed "*anti-Kantian*" because it reverses the Kantian direction: while Kant insists on articulating a generalizable maxim for a given act and judging its 'goodness' from this generality, for Nietzsche, it is the *singular* act – both logically and ethically – that precedes generalization; and his 'imperative' demands precisely to be wary of the silent and soporific oppression of anything like a 'universal' necessity.²⁷⁴ As mentioned earlier, Nietzsche's phenomenology of thought is decidedly non-egalitarian: not every thought is "for everyone," *nor should it be*. The Nietzschean "good will," then, not only allows itself to prescribe self-contradictory maxims, but will posit an

absolute particular, an absolute self-distinction, as the very origin of *any* “will” – something which subjects the Kantian ‘universal’ to very severe bouts of indigestion.²⁷⁵

Indeed, as the ‘*auf-treten*’ verb of the previous quote already suggested, Nietzsche will only ever step-up to a fight, a confrontation.²⁷⁶ He attacks, as he writes in his *Ecce Homo*, not from a position of mastery or “voluntary freedom”.²⁷⁷ Steeped in a Europe wholly infected with *ressentiment*, Nietzsche attacks only from within and below; from within his “culture” (of *ressentiment*) and from under its domination. Generalizing the Nietzschean “a priori” would mean to deny the “*auf*” in his “*auf-treten*,” to deny, finally, the difference in power of dominator-dominated – precisely the ethico-metaphysical function of both Christian morality (as “love of all”) and the Kantian imperative (as universalizable for all).

In these methodological, *metaphysically systematic* generalities, the particular’s ‘word’ – as historically contingent, as face-to-face encounters – had been effaced or re-appropriated in a way that, as Nietzsche disdainfully realizes, made it philosophically untenable to conceive of valuation in any other manner. With the protracted victory of the Christian revolution in philosophy, particular moral values – born of a submerged hatred – held ‘universality’ to be an overriding necessity, citing Nature or Reason (or, further back, God) and the justifying origin of this necessity. This citation of origins consists, as Nietzsche shows, in a systematic denial of its own – hateful and “all too human” origins – and thus came to dominate the human *encounter*. The “human” necessity of making all truth generalizable and equally accessible betrays its origins in a Single Divinity which is all-benevolent, all-loving. The latter’s Being had been idolized or fetishized in an ‘absolute Good’ of love/reconciliation, a maneuver by which philosophy itself has become, to appropriate Lévinas’ words here, “*dupe de la morale*” (*Totalité et infini*, p. 5). Levinatztch will begin to identify its main adversary here.

Although elaborating *thematically* the ethics of ‘Jewish’ thought, Lévinas does so against the same kind of “quiet,” *ressentiment* that Nietzsche identifies in/as Western ‘metaphysics.’ Lévinas had always stressed how the latter had obviated the possibility of a truly ethical thought – expressed as the Judaic regard for the infinitely ‘Other’ – from gaining any salience in Western philosophy, which Lévinas identifies as a philosophy of the ‘Same’.²⁷⁸ As Nietzsche was the first to note, moral value can, *in principle*, no longer be evaluated in Western metaphysics without starting from a *theological* Sameness – universally-transcendentally or absolutely – of an “eternal Go(o)d” that is “immune” to the radical interruption of time.²⁷⁹

Moreover, both Nietzsche and Lévinas conceived of thought in terms of a personal-particular responsibility,²⁸⁰ arising as a response to an individuating, distinction-bestowing, appeal: what Nietzsche called his “scruple,” and Lévinas calls ‘me.’ Furthermore, this appeal, for both, could not be reduced to any “eternal” moral value. For Nietzsche it is an “enigmatic a priori,” and, for Lévinas, a ‘Saying’ never exhausted in the ‘Said’, neither of which could not be encompassed by any comprehensive totality, any specific ‘tradition’ or ‘community’ (i.e. neither ‘*Da*’ nor ‘*Sittlichkeit*’). This appeal, coming from no recognizable origin, also prescribes no eternally necessary direction or *telos* (e.g., ‘Truth,’ ‘Reconciliation,’ ‘Knowledge,’ etc.); a scruple or appeal which only serves to elevate, rather than obviate, the ethical *emergence/y* that haunts every thought. These ethico-metaphysical caveats are *not* “nihilistic,” since they do not in any way obviate the validity or necessity of *existing* moral values; all they seek is to open them up to a responsibility. All values, even “eternal” or “necessary/natural” ones – like ‘altruism,’ ‘love’ or ‘utility’ – are to be made responsible to an Other that will always exceed them (as *already thematized* understandings of the world, of justice), and hence always bequeath them a – however dangerous and frightening – futurity, a trans-valuation. In Levinatzsch I find the onset of an ethico-metaphysical critique of Western-philosophical methodology.

Nietzsche treats the phenomenology of thought as an instance of will to power. Thought, to him, always arrives multiple and unwieldy, ambiguous and nebulous. This multiplicity needs to be dominated, to be *selectively* approached – *interpreted*, yielding (to) a meaning. This, always violent and power-wielding selection denotes a process that, much like the French word *procès*, is inherently presided-upon by the demands of justice, giving this encounter its due. In his *Late Notebooks*, Nietzsche provides a succinct formulation of this phenomenology, where this entire “process” of thematizing and making sense, of things “coming into thought,” is indeed seen as an elevation, an – *however enigmatic and singular* – call to justice:²⁸¹

In the form in which it comes, a thought is a sign [*Zeichen*] with many meanings, requiring interpretation or, more precisely, an arbitrary narrowing and restriction before it finally becomes clear. It arises [*auftauchen*] in me – where from? How? I don’t know. It comes, independently of my will, usually circled about and clouded by a crowd of feelings, desires, aversions, and by other thoughts, often enough scarcely distinguishable from a ‘willing’ or ‘feeling’. It is drawn out of this crowd, cleaned, set on its feet, watched as it stands there, moves about, all this at an amazing speed yet without any sense of haste. Who does all this I don’t know, and I am certainly more observer than author of the process. Then its case is tried [*zu Gericht sitzen*], the question posed: ‘What does it mean? What is it allowed to mean? Is it right [*Recht*] or wrong [*Unrecht*]?’ – the help of other thoughts

is called on, it is compared. In this way thinking proves to be almost a kind of exercise and act of justice [Gerechtigkeit], where there is a judge, an opposing party, even an examination of the witnesses which I am permitted to observe for a while – only a while, to be sure: most of the process, it seems, escapes me. – That every thought first arrives many-meaninged and floating, really only as the occasion for attempts to interpret or for arbitrarily fixing it, that a multitude of persons seem to participate in all thinking – this is not particularly easy to observe: fundamentally, we are trained the opposite way, not to think about thinking as we think. The origin of the thought remains hidden [...] (LN 38[1], p. 34/KGW 7.3:321 [my underline])

This Nietzschean phenomenology and its attendant ethics of affirmation should already recall one to Lévinas' conception of responsibility towards the an-archival and immemorial Other. In his descriptions of this 'an-archy,' of this beginning that comes before the beginning – a past before the past, an "immemorial" or "pre-historic" past²⁸² – Lévinas advances a critique of knowledge in recalling the elusive difference between the present and its presentation. This difference both enables thought of Being/Truth, and at the same time traces an irreconcilable infirmity at its very "origin." Lévinas' ethico-metaphysical critique is, hence, distinctively compatible with Nietzsche's above descriptions of the way thoughts "come to his mind" (with their already implicit values/selections). Nietzsche understands that no amount of 'will' or mechanism that he, as "observer-author," might avail himself to can leap over this fundamental separation (so as to "recall" the truth, let's say). He affirms – i.e., he does not deny or "think around it" but works *with it*, *speak to it* – this fundamental *distance*; of which the 'will to power' – as concept, as *methodological principle* – is a constant reminder.

Here the issue is not fundamentally one of *truth* – since this separation already puts us beyond or "behind" Being²⁸³ – but precisely one of *justice*. The "what is it?" question is, hence, no longer seen as reducible to "what is it in truth?", nor even to Heidegger's historico-hermeneutic variation of a "what is it now/here?", but a "what is it *for me*?" – putting the demand of justice as *punctually* as possible. No longer can the question be protracted so as to become a "progressive accumulation of knowledge" or a 'fusion of horizons,' but is always-already pointed at *me* as my own, singular, elevation and necessity.²⁸⁴

Lévinas caught precisely this *excess* of responsibility on the side of conscious thought and would often cite this line from Dostoevsky's *The Brothers Karamazov*, as the "basis of ethics": "Each of us is guilty before everyone for everyone, and I more than the others". In the very same paragraph, Lévinas continues to explain this "ethical excess," in a way which bears a striking resemblance to the Nietzschean quote above. Hence, what Nietzsche offers as singular/peculiar "owning" of a prehistoric violence – of a truth that is first "held," selected, and only then comes into being – Lévinas offers as the ethico-metaphysical concept of *substitution*: 'I' did not "willfully" perform the selection, and yet this

responsibility falls on ‘me,’ substituting my “self” or “I” to this “prehistoric” Other that both underwrites and undermines my ‘power.’ The ‘me’ that hears the call to this substitution is, in short, my *ethico-metaphysical* “subjectivity:” singular rather than universal/general, justice- (rather than truth- or morality-) -bound; the subjectivity of the *witness*:

[...] The subjectivity of the subject is [...] a recurrence which is not self-consciousness, in which the subject would still be maintained distant from itself in non-indifference, would still remain somehow in itself and be able to veil its face. This recurrence is not self-coinciding, rest, sleep or materiality. It is a recurrence on this side of oneself, prior to indifference to itself. It is a substitution for another. In the interval, it is one without attributes, and not even the unity of the one doubles it up as an essential attribute. It is one absolved from every relationship, every game, literally without a situation, without a dwelling place, expelled from everywhere and from itself, one saying to the other “I” or “here I am” [me voici] [...] “Here I am” as a witness of the Infinite, but a witness that does not thematize what it bears witness of, and whose truth is not the truth of representation, is not evidence. (OB, p. 146 [my underline])

As suggested earlier, Nietzsche’s ‘will to power’ also bespeaks an asymmetry that demands justice – indeed Nietzsche often visits, however briefly, its “courts” – an asymmetry is somehow “under” or “besides” the “fundament” of ‘ontology,’ an asymmetry that is an absolute necessity for thinking the becoming of a new value. This new value/principle-of-valuation that can change the very meaning of ‘phenomena’ also tasks *me*, its fleeting witness, with a singular responsibility for its justification as something that “holds” (truth) or “selects” (meaning). This phenomenology sees a thought that comes “murmuring,” as Lévinas would say, its own *il y a*, the low hum that traces a lot of violent activity of ‘becoming’ that is muffled and contained; a ‘saying’ that is *necessarily* betrayed by the ‘said’ and yet maintains its appeal to justice from beyond this very necessity.

Nietzsche proceeds from, but does not get stuck on, his “perspectivism” with regards to truth. It will not be enough for Nietzsche to ask merely after my perspective’s “portion” of some presupposed “whole truth” that is supposedly aimed at and progressively recalled into Being/Knowledge. No, from the “limitation” of my perspective Nietzsche arrives not at the part-whole relation – whether as the Hegelian “the True is the whole” or the hermeneutic circle of Heidegger’s method of thinking through the “meaning of Being”²⁸⁵ – but at the absolute-singular *relation*. In short, Nietzsche arrives not at the project(ion) of truth, be it ‘spiritual-teleological’ (Hegel) or ‘historico-ontological’ (Heidegger), but the interruptive demand for justice, made by an Other that *diverges* from any project(ion) and/or *defects* from every “whole.” Thought, as it becomes ‘conscious,’ is already responsible beyond its own capacity,

but this responsibility should cause it to speak, to signify its self-affirmation vis-à-vis its immemorial past (which is *not the same as knowing* this an-archic ‘Other’).

The above ‘Levinatzschean’ analysis shows how the oft-repeated “(moral) relativism” accusation²⁸⁶ so often leveled against Nietzsche is only valid from this Hegelian/Thomistic, part-whole view of some ‘Truth;’ a view whose holistic essence, *by force* of a presupposition, is imputed to, in time, reconcile all differences. I emphasize “force” since this accusation itself already employs the violence and domination of its presupposition, even as it justifies the latter by citing some general/im-partial necessity²⁸⁷ in order to deny this violence. This is also where what Nietzsche calls “will to truth” shows its aggression – and, ironically, its power – vis-à-vis Nietzsche’s ‘will to power’.²⁸⁸ For this kind of “will” not providing a ‘truth statement’ or at least the dialectical fodder of a ‘position’ – as the will to truth’s choice manner or dealing with Difference(s) – is a botched and lacking ‘Science,’ and does not merit the importance of being considered a ‘Truth’.²⁸⁹ Truth, in this view, must be comprehensive, all-inclusive, having *always-already* appointed, at least *in principle*, and commissioned all differences to their proper place once and for all: following upon its theological upbringing, Western philosophy sees Truth, like ‘God,’ as Absolute; resistant to, or beyond ‘History.’²⁹⁰

Nietzsche’s “relativism,” in this Levinatzschean rendering, can be seen more of an insistence on affirming an originary *strife* of ill-defined forces that underwrite every ‘present’, like Lévinas’ attending to the ‘Saying’ behind the “crust” of their ‘Said’. Rather than their reconciliation in/as Truth, it is this strife that is seen to breach all historical closures, a strife that generates a multitude of values instead of reining them in, as if giving them the “metaphysical room” to ex-plode (rather than forcing them to double-back and implode instead, as resentment is wont to do). The traces or “scars” of this strife – its “pathology” or the *il y a* – suggest a prehistory in/as will to power, there where (and then when) an-*other* (morality, truth, presence) *might* have been possible. Indeed, it is the very impossibility to conceive of this “origin” in the ‘victorious’ metaphysics of his (and our) day – i.e., resentment’s denial of the power relation/difference (that its “philosophy” nevertheless follows from) – that Nietzsche, from his subordinate, resentful position, hates and fights.

As I will show below, from the standpoint of the philosophy (or metaphysics) of *ressentiment* Nietzsche’s ‘pathos of distance’ does not exist. That is why every “genealogy” that this philosophy tries to give concerning the *becoming* of moral values – what Lévinas calls ‘signification’ – will be drowned out in much the same way as “black” was by the “all” in the BLM example presented above. This drowning betrays the radical, ethico-metaphysical violence by way of what Nietzsche calls a

“democratic prejudice:” the denial, at the ontological level, that this “pathos of distance” – which is not a pathos of, say, ‘ground’ or ‘spirit’ – had ever any real *substance*; which also amounts to a denial, on the ethico-metaphysical level, that this pathos, this *Distanz*, in fact *matters*: I claim here that, rather than Nietzsche’s “relativism,” it is *this denial* that is ‘nihilistic.’

2.2 “*Passivus Passivum Invocat*”: The Proto-Moral Word

[...] What is positive in responsibility, outside of essence, conveys the infinite. It inverts relationships and principles, reverses the order of interest: in the measure that responsibilities are taken on they multiply. This is not a *Sollen* commanding the infinite pursuit of an ideal. The infinity of the infinite lives in going backwards. The debt increases in the measures that it is paid. This divergency perhaps deserves the name glory.

– Emmanuel Lévinas²⁹¹

The origin or becoming of moral value betrays itself in a proto-moral word – the ‘bad’ that designates ‘unhappy’ or ‘unlucky’ – which is verbally addressed from the ‘happy’ and ‘noble’ to the ‘unhappy’ and the ‘plebeian;’ two states or ‘beings’ that ought to have, or so it might seem, little to do with one another, *especially* in terms of value.

For the ‘noble,’ value is wholly present and felt, historically from self-distinction in combat, and in principle through an *inter pares* struggle against a strong, *worthy* adversary (GM I §10, p. 39). This was ‘distinction’ *as activity*, as the “*Bildung*” or “becoming” of the nobles *amongst themselves*. In contradistinction to this, *reciprocal*, relation of activity and “mutual recognition” with others like himself, the noble also engages in the *asymmetrical* and non-reciprocal relation with the plebeian’s passivity: the latter, “oppressed” and “impotent,” cannot pretend to (full) being/presence, and has no “*inter pares*” by definition. He comports the indigence of that which can only be acted upon, whether consumed in, or left alone to, its misery; the misfortune of being always passively available to be used/exploited by the noble, almost like a farm-animal or a tool.

[...] The “well-born” felt themselves to be the “happy”; they did not have to establish their happiness artificially by examining their enemies, or to persuade themselves, deceive themselves, that they were happy (as all men of *ressentiment* are in the habit of doing); and they likewise knew, as rounded men replete with energy and therefore necessarily active, that happiness should not be sundered from action – being active was with them necessarily a part of happiness [...] – all very much the opposite of “happiness” at the level of the impotent, the oppressed, and those in whom poisonous and inimical feelings are festering, with whom it appears [...] passively. (GM I §10, p. 38 [my underline])

The pagan noble finds happiness in pure activity, a kind of ‘positive freedom’ of (self-)formation, whilst the pagan plebeian just wants to be left alone, owing to the limited happiness of every “tool’s” ‘negative freedom’ – a freedom from being used/consumed by a *noble*’s initiative. While the plebeian is being *used* by the noble (by whatever manner), the noble’s “positive joy” is directed neither at this consumption itself, nor at the plebeian, but at that particular struggle that grants the noble being/presence. Owing to Nietzsche’s “polemical pathos”, perhaps one can even say that it is only the noble(’s) enemy that is ever *shown* this joyfulness. The plebeian’s passivity must be directed towards the noble as well, for it is the noble’s activity that sets the limits to plebeian’s “negative joy” as well.

What was the ethical meaning of “bad” – this “freely-given word” that the noble bestowed upon the weaker, the undistinguished and unlucky? And, furthermore, what is it that marks this as a question in the first place? The nobles “in contradistinction to all the low, low minded, common and plebeian [...] seized the right to create values” (GM I §2, p. 26). Hence, the first moral distinction/valuation, between ‘good’ and ‘bad,’ originated in “[t]he 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”” (ibid, ibid [my underline]).

Genealogizing on the basis of this *relation* means coming to methodological terms with how “[...] ‘good,’ in the sense of [...] ‘noble’ [...] necessarily developed: a development which always runs parallel with that other in which ‘common,’ ‘plebeian,’ ‘low’ are finally transformed into the concept ‘bad’” (GM I §4, p. 28). This etymological “parallel” is a direct result of Nietzsche’s decision to methodologically counter, through the ‘pathos of distance,’ the Christian/utilitarian attempted reconciliation between them, maintaining both a distance and a relation (a parallel still denotes a relation; unrelated lines will eventually cross one another).²⁹² Rather than making ‘the Good’ into the absolute telos of moral thought and the becoming of moral values, Nietzsche places the weight on *communicating* with the lower and subjugated across a constitutively necessary divide/distance. This is also what makes the Nietzschean ‘will to power’ – as historical sense, as genealogical and phenomenological method – so ethico-metaphysically responsible: it matters little if it is the dominated plebeian of morality or the dominated forces of will to power, Nietzsche will refuse to fantasize of their disappearance through the obviation of this *Distanz*; the *separation* that morality, as a *communication* (i.e., “beyond essence”), must always presuppose if it means to affirm itself, to become responsible for its own violence.

Let us look closer at this distinction and distance, this separation and the communication that it seems to enable, if not demand. The noble, it seems, gave a value (‘bad’) to the people whose only

“distinction” was that they were a *passive people of no distinction*. What the noble did with this “bad” designation is give the plebeians distinction in their very indistinction – foregrounding their “being in the background” so to speak – thus separating them, not only from himself as noble, but also from other lower and dominated beings (rocks, ants, horses, etc.). Since the noble gained his own distinction from combating other nobles, it surely served no *utility* to give distinction to the plebeian in this manner; the noble’s fullness of being and activity did not need such negative distinction(s). One arrives here at a higher question, beyond the question of utility, to a higher call for responsibility, a more primary/radical ‘Why?’ to be asked of this, original becoming of (a) value.

To make sure that he was being heard and not be sucked right back into the Christianity that he sought to “cure,” Nietzsche makes sure that this gratuitously-bestowed distinction does not get collapsed into (Christian) guilt, into the economy of lack that would posit this act of communication as the repayment of some debt or the rebalancing of an account. I think this is why he immediately adds that this designation of “bad” did not have any “inculpatory” (*verdächtigen*) implication (GM I §4, p. 28/KGW 6.2:276). In the next paragraph Nietzsche even goes so far as to spell his methodological struggle with Christianity directly: the above insight is seen as genealogically “fundamental”, and its late arrival is (genealogically *and phenomenologically*) traced back to “the retarding influence exercised by the democratic prejudice in the modern world” (ibid, p. 28). The German *Verdacht* means ‘suspicion,’ but is etymologically derived from *Vordacht*, where the “vor” prefix is coextensive with the “fore” one in English and “*dacht*” directly links to “*denken*,” the verb for ‘to think.’ What this etymology suggests – Nietzsche himself admits that it was etymology that first provided the “signpost to the right road” about the origin of morality (ibid, p. 27) – is that there was, literally, no “fore-thought,” no real “dwelling upon” or active interest towards the plebeian on the side of the ‘noble’. In short, no energetic or economic investment (and hence *no debt*) in this distinction; for the noble, literally, gave no (fore-)thought to the matter.

This new value was not the result of an *activity*, barely a *voluntary intention*. And so, a new doubt is raised, and the ethico-metaphysical interruption of a higher question now loosens the theological grip: If not out of lack or privation, if not out of following an eternal principle/rule like “utility” or an ethico-metaphysical assumption of an inculpatory guilt, then *why* did this value arise in the first place?

To see what Nietzsche’s genealogy implies here requires one to ask: In what *circumstance* would this “proto-moral” word ‘bad’ be *spoken* by the noble towards (or about) the plebeian?²⁹³ It cannot happen during times of activity, for then the noble’s “happiness,” that is to say, his *presence*, the totality

of his attention is directed elsewhere. The noble looks *on* towards an *equal* enemy and the glory of battle that awaits him, which exhausts his interest; he does not have a similar pleasure or reason to look *down*. And so one is led to ask *when*, in what circumstances, would the noble even “see” the plebeian enough to *consider* (*denken*) him at all?

If the noble does not *need* the plebeian for his own *distinction* (only the opposite is the case), why call the latter such a special, *new* name as ‘unhappy,’ or ‘bad’? Why offer such a “leap” that already implies or traces a certain regard towards the plebeian-slave’s *distance* from the good/noble? No other worldly creature, nor any tool or resource – however abject or miserable (or passive) its existence might have been – elicits this *new and gratuitous creation* on the part of the noble. If the slave/plebeian was always re-active, then moral value appears to denote a *unique relation* between the nobles and the slaves: the *word* (“bad”) that was thrown at the latter as the “afterthought” of the former, *almost* like a coin tossed to a beggar, provokes a new *discourse* altogether;²⁹⁴ a discourse of valuation that *begins by a non-guilty speaking* to the plebeian’s mishap and misery.²⁹⁵

‘Bad’ is a word, and not an act, of the noble; but a word that makes no sense in the noble’s *simple* world, a word with no direct function: the bird of prey does not need to “value” the misery of the lamb from afar, and, *a fortiori*, would not do so *while eating it*. Even if the exploitation of the plebeian/slave is “routine” for the noble, the *distinction* of the slave *as exploited* cannot be a part of that routine. Why, then, to go back to our initial question/interruption, does the noble “bother”? Or, more precisely, *why*, then, does *the noble’s passivity* bother? To recall, the,

[...] noble mode of valuation [...] acts and grows spontaneously, it seeks its opposite only so as to affirm itself more gratefully and triumphantly – its negative concept “low,” “common,” “bad” is only a subsequently-invented [nachgebornes] pale, contrasting image in relation to its positive, basic concept – filled with life and passion through and through – “we noble ones, we good, beautiful, happy ones!” (GM I §10, p. 37/KGW 6.2:284-285 [my underline])

This “afterthought” of the noble’s marking of its other, was never required by the noble as his “mark of distinction,” neither substantively (for he had battles for that), nor “ornamentally” (warriors have little use for those). I conclude, hence, that here Nietzsche posits a special *gratuity* in addressing the *other* from across a *fundamental separation*; addressing the other, not as a recognized equal (this was only the privilege of other *nobles*), but as (proto-)morally *different* from the noble.²⁹⁶ The noble, then, *selon* Nietzsche’s genealogy, has *two* marks of distinction: the primary or active one is owed the enemy (activity, thought); the secondary or passive one is the plebeian (passivity, afterthought).

The noble's essence comes through as pure activity. The inter pares struggle with other nobles is the epitome of the noble's excess *as activity*, as overcoming; it exhausts itself in the moment and affords no recourse to memory – I am only noble insofar as I act, and it is this always *present* action that gives me my self-distinction; the noble is “one who is, who possesses reality, who is actual” (GM I §5, p. 28). The noble's *other* other, however, is not, like ‘the enemy,’ his *counter-part*, and the regard towards him was a sort of absent-minded, *incidental* “looking down.” It must have been an *inessential* act in terms of the noble's self-centered (or at least nobility-centered) existence. The noble, as is suggested by the history of the knightly-aristocratic class, is shown to possess “a flourishing, abundant, even overflowing health, together with that which serves to preserve it: war, adventure, hunting, dancing, war games, and in general all that involves vigorous, free, joyful activity” (GM I §7, p. 33). What does this “overflow,” what does this excess have to do with the communication of “bad”? If we take the noble's excess in general as, “an excess of the power to form, to mold, to recuperate and to forget” (GM I §10, p. 39), then the proto-moral word exceeds otherwise: its “overabundance” still “forms” the plebeian as ‘bad,’ but as a kind of “light entertainment” or bemused reflection; an excess in/as the noble's (temporary) *passivity*.²⁹⁷

Owing to this conception of the word “bad” and its origins, then, the ethico-metaphysical question can, once again be asked: *Why* did the noble bestow this name ‘bad’ upon the plebeian? Not possessed of any forethought (much less an economy of guilt/debt), nor any other pre-existing moral values (for this marks their original emergence), the noble still communicates a value of which he finds neither need nor glory; *and yet – there it was*. What is decisive to note here is that it was only through Nietzsche's “immoral” investigations that *this ‘Why?’ question* can, *for the first time*, be asked; even if, for this question to be *heard*, a lot of Christian metaphysics, a lot of “democratic prejudice,” had to be, somehow, evaded.

Now, then, we could regard the origin of moral valuation as arising out of what Nietzsche calls the ‘*Pathos der Distanz*’ it based in an excess of passivity, or, more precisely, the passive expression – the Greek πάθη, sometimes translated as ‘affect,’ originally means ‘passive state’ or ‘that which (one) undergoes’ – of the noble's excess of power; a *side effect* of the noble's activity? The distance between the noble and the slave, hence, can be called ‘*pathetic*’ precisely because it is itself passive, itself neither born from the noble's activity nor borne by the slave's. Indeed, I claim this distance as precisely the distance between two passivities:²⁹⁸ the ‘noble’ passivity, the passivity of an ‘after-thought,’ is fleeting and inessential, never being allowed to come to (full) presence, while the slave's passivity is his essence, his very being and presence in the world. These passivities might not have a direct (i.e., “active”)

relation between them, they might have nothing “to do with one another,” so to speak, but, like the ‘parallel’ analogy that Nietzsche uses, they still admit of this one ethico-metaphysical caveat which they both share: to keep their distance.

The crucial ‘Levinatzschan’ link I am advancing here rests on the insight that, *unlike a horse or a hammer*, the plebeian *elicits a wholly other discourse*: being a nail or a pack-mule is not a pleasant fate (to imagine), and yet neither had been deemed “bad” by the noble; they were, unlike the plebeian, merely tools. This is not only an issue of language insofar as it is the expression or conveying of meaning (i.e. a ‘said’), but language as a communication, a ‘saying,’ what Lévinas calls a *signification for the Other*: even had this ‘bad’ value been conferred upon them, the horse or the hammer could never be *addressed* with it. That is the decisive difference that Nietzsche implies, where he approaches language in an ethico-metaphysical, rather than ontological, manner: moral value comes into Being through an act of signification (communication over a ‘distance’) that is considered as prior, in all senses of the word, to the significance (i.e., “meaning”) that it expressed. The moral word is fundamentally a *disinterested address*, an invocation of one passivity by another within which “I” and my “will” are held, suspended.²⁹⁹

What I glean from Nietzsche’s genealogy, hence, is that the proto-moral valuation springs forth from a fold within passivity itself, from a temporal tension that every thought, every present and presence, necessarily repeats. It was this tension, *before* the “slave-revolt,” that had elicited this new, proto-moral manner of linguistic relation, this new manner – issuing forth *a unique raison d’être* – of *communication*:

The great man feels his power over a people, his temporary coincidence with a people or a millennium; this enlargement in his experience of himself as *causa* and *voluntas* is misunderstood as “altruism”; it drives him to seek means of communication: all great men are inventive in such means (WTP, Book IV §964, p. 506 [my underline])

Another ‘Levinatzschan’ insight can be collected at this stage: moral worth, morality itself has its origin in a difference of power; a ‘pathos of distance’ that *passively elicits* from the otherwise indifferent or rather dis-interested noble a true gift of moral regard. This *gift* precedes any and all conception of debt and/or guilt. Perhaps, this also explains why/how the noble’s gratuity could be mistaken for “altruism” or “unegoism,” as was the case with ‘these English psychologists’: these, Christian, values only gain their salience, their value, *after* resentment’s economy of ‘*Schuld*’ (debt, guilt) – a Christian “giving *without owing*” displacing this Pagan “giving without *care/interest*”³⁰⁰ – had become

“victorious.” That was, fundamentally, how guilt came to be what it is: the decadence of all valuation, of all values.

2.21 *Noblesse Oblige* (or “Thou shalt not kill”)

Could it be that, in our vocation of man in Europe, we did not hear, even louder than the “good news” of real knowledge that purports to dispose of our wills without constraining them and to have oriented them toward peace, the imperative of the Decalogue: “Thou shalt not kill”? Behind the reciprocal and formal alterity of individuals composing a genus, behind their reciprocal negativity (but in which, within the human genus, they are equals among themselves through the community of the genus, and endowed with reason, each one promised by Reason to peace “for his part”) a different alterity signifies. It is as if, in the plurality of humans, the other abruptly and paradoxically – against the logic of the genus – turned out to be the one who concerned *me* par excellence; as if I, one among others, found myself – precisely *I* or *me* – the one who, summoned, heard the imperative as an exclusive recipient, as if that imperative went toward me alone, toward me above all; as if, henceforth chosen and unique, I had to answer for the death and, consequently, the life, of the other. A privilege which the logic of the genus and of individuals seemed to have obliterated.

– Emmanuel Lévinas³⁰¹

In *Beyond Good and Evil*, under the title of ‘What is Noble?’, Nietzsche articulates another relation between the noble (*Vorhern*) and the plebeian; this time as if depicting ‘will to power’ on a macro, anthropological scale. If ‘will to power’ conceives of any present or ‘Being’ as already a usurpation of an an-archic Otherness of dominated forces, then the *responsible* ethico-metaphysical approach would never deny this necessary price. Approaching “immorally,” without guilt, this thought has to allow Being to arise, as it does, in *good* conscience; not a guilty one that owes something (thus demeaning the origin of the moral regard), but a pure gratuity. Which is not to say, of course, that this gratuity comes cheap; it bears a necessity to maintain the power relation (and, as I show below, resist the temptation to obviate it):

[...] The essential characteristic of a good and healthy aristocracy, however, is that it experiences itself *not* as a function (whether of the monarchy or the commonwealth) but as their meaning and highest justification – that it therefore accepts with a good conscience the sacrifice of untold human beings who, for its sake, must [müssen] be reduced and lowered to incomplete human beings, to slaves, to instruments. (BGE ‘What is Noble’ §257, p. 201 [my underline])

The way Nietzsche continues his account of this ‘noble instinct’ in aristocracies is even more telling, for he compares this “sacrifice” of the lower and the slavish, not so much to a lamb being “picked-off” by a bird of prey, but to a tree in the grip of the vines called ‘*Sipo Matador*’ (“Murdering Creeper”); a tree-parasite that slowly covers its host – and, if left unchecked, utterly suffocate it –

usurping the tree's access to sunlight while using the tree's strength and height to gain more sunlight itself. There, upon this access to sunlight, upon the exploitation of another's strength, the *Sipo Matador* gives *flowers*. An interesting relation or "assemblage" is formed here: the tree, far stronger and higher than these "creepers," can never bear *flowers* if not for the dangerous usurpation of these vines; on the other hand, this excess burdens and *has the potential to kill* the host tree.

In this analogy, the nobility's *necessity* of domination, of "climbing to heights," is *not a moral prescription* for the strong to annihilate the weak, not the sole function/purpose of the noble's "free activity" – but a *constraint*, and hence indeed a *passivity* on the side of the noble: when Nietzsche says that the weak *must* be reduced and lowered, he uses the 'müssen' of 'analytic' or 'logical' necessity, rather than the 'sollen' ('should') of necessity as moral prescription. Nobility, in short, is *not free to decide* that "no such sacrifices will be made on its behalf" so to speak; its very Being is predicated on this sacrifice. The passivity of the noble obliges her to accept, with good conscience, that her own Being, and the value that attends it, necessitates others of lower value; that value, in and of itself, already opens up a distance of height. Nietzsche, "the immoralist," shows that it is at best naïve to arrive at this necessity "morally," already demanding the investment of guilt where value is precisely only coming into Being (yet to betray itself in a currency).

The aforementioned "constraint" on the noble's behavior affords us not only with the appropriative deed, but also with the aforementioned "proto-moral word" as the Murdering Creeper's '*flower*': it is a wholly new emergence that cannot presuppose any single antecedent (id)entity, that can rely on or cite neither 'ground' nor 'spirit', and that, hence, cannot be encumbered by a "bad conscience:" for that would terminate the unique product of this power-relation.

I read the proto-moral *regard* that the Nietzschean noble *gifts* – "primordial," and hence indifferent, to both the Western Subject's "autonomy" and Heidegger's "ontological-membrane" of *Dasein* – as precisely an ethical encounter with what Lévinas calls "the death of the other." In Heidegger, as has been shown, since it is only the Nothing that provides the de-finition of *Dasein*'s "Care" (her own death), the noble – this creature of "pure Being" in Nietzsche – has no basis to consider the plebeian as taking part in her own 'Da:' the noble's only "Being-with" projections are aimed at another, the inter-pares of an enemy noble; a "*Mitsein*" with another *Dasein*, so to speak (the Other has neither Being nor 'Da'). The passivities that speak to one another in the noble-plebeian encounter are neither fully present (for Nietzsche, the presence of Being resides in activity), nor is the saying they

produce a discourse built on the hermeneutic projections of *Dasein*. This saying exceeds, goes beyond the said.

Thus, since this nobility of pure activity is also the noble's pure affirmation of life in the face of death, it gives *Dasein's* *Angst* no quarter: the noble's trust in life, her "naïveté" (GM I §11, p. 38), is also in pure *indifference towards her own death*.³⁰² Given that, then, the moral word would not have emerged: the noble is the happy and the present and the active (GM I §3, p. 29), and, always forgetful, registers no "lacks" (e.g. of happiness, or presence, of activity) whatsoever; and yet the plebeian's own murmured "pathos" calls out to the noble.

This call is heard by no 'conscience', neither the Christian-theological, nor the Heideggerian-ontological one; or, to be more precise, these respective "consciences" could almost be said to have been erected as *barriers against hearing this call*. The noble's response to the pathos of distance does not follow upon the recognition or assumption of a debt or lack, whether they originate in his *Dasein* or in another's. Nobility understands that this situation is necessary for any value to emerge at all, parasitic and usurpatory as it is, and does not even allow itself to dream about closing this distance down or diminishing it.³⁰³ *Pace* Heidegger, it calls from beyond (the full) Being (of the 'noble'), and compels him from an "otherwise than *Da*." *Pace* Hegel's, 'Christianity,' it arrives from a fullness as an excess of itself, a glory, and decidedly not out of any kind of 'love'.³⁰⁴

The situation between the Murdering Creeper and the tree includes a mutual implication of both, but a decidedly asymmetrical one. There is no way to "egalitarianize" it that would not destroy 'value' or prevent it from becoming in the first place. A little Levinatschean insight allows one to spy here a face-to-face encounter with the Other: the I, as the noble that bears a value, is both always-already in usurpation of the parasited/weaker Other, and yet must affirm this very weakness for the strength it gives to the noble; on the other hand, the situation also puts the tree, the Other, in mortal danger, a mortality which *also* threatens the noble's "flowers of value." This is the "difficult freedom" that the command of a new value entails: on the one hand, the exploitation and distance *must be accepted*, not denied or averted; but on the other hand it is radically threatened by the demise of the weaker Other, *forcing nobility* to become, *with good conscience*, responsible to the death of the other.

The proto-moral word that echoes between two passivities, that is cajoled from the one towards and for the other, is where 'I' must acknowledge the demands that my noble status (as conscious, as value-bestowing) obliges me to attend. Hence, I can accept the sacrifice of the Other in good conscience (pace Christian guilt), but for this very acceptance be prevented from secretly fantasizing or dreaming of

my own expiation or absolution; since nobility – the light and power that Being and Presence must, by definition, wield – must presuppose this distance, its investment in guilt, its eschatological “repayment” is already the fantasy of murdering the Other as a way to eliminate the distance. Levinatzsch warns against the ethico-metaphysical ‘love’ – whether the assumed symmetry of recognition/*Mitsein* or a fantasy of guilt-expiation – between ‘I’ and ‘Other’; this ‘union,’ presupposed as an unquestionable telos of ‘reconciliation,’ averts the responsibility that I possess towards the Other by driving it, in all senses, “to the ground.”

This is what Lévinas means when, in the quote above, he refers to the *privilege* that had been *obliterated* by the logic of ‘genus’ that western thought lords over the ethical encounter: following the Gospel, the “good news” of ‘knowledge,’ this logic, reconciling all singular responsibilities as the “*Mitsein*” of egalitarian “individuals”, implies and employs precisely what Nietzsche calls a “democratic prejudice;” one whereby the particularity or singularity of “will,” can be neutralized in the “reciprocal and formal alterity” of the “individual” as genus, as that which shares a ground with other individuals and is ethically considered only with regards to this ground, only after this ground had been posited (ethics as a “*second* philosophy”). This assumption of sameness or equivalence with regards to the origins of the moral regard, the “philosophical patriotism” of a “community of genus” that is already promised its expiation and peace, “purports to dispose of our wills without constraining them and to have oriented them toward peace” – but in denying the constraint, the “difficult freedom” of the ethical encounter, by making the relation expiable in principle (be it by ‘History’ or by ‘Reason’). It is thus that the program of the ethical encounter – as expiable through knowledge, as payable through guilt can no longer attend its own violence; a “Murdering Creeper” that absolves itself from this relation, that can no longer hear the “Thou shalt not kill” of its essential ethical encounter, ending up effacing all value – and hence all responsibility, all ethics – from burdening its conscience.

Here once more we catch Lévinas addressing the *literally unspeakable violence* of a Christian/Hegelian theology that already dominates western ethical and philosophical thought, though coating it in the seemingly innocent and compact conjunction of “good news of real knowledge.” Once again, as in the BLM example, an ontological category is wielded to obstruct an ethical demand and, once more, it takes a particular set of ears to hear the cries of this category’s victims. More than care for the Other, this “democratic” assumption of equality seeks to close its ears to the call of the Other by eliminating the distance to the Other or by pretending it is not there. Levinatzsch argues that it is only across that asymmetrical distance, that echoing or mutual pro-vocation between unequal passivities, that

the *singularizing* demand of the separated Other's "Thou shalt not kill"; over and above its internalized version that, through the generalization implied in the *a priori assumption* of an ontological ground or closure, *invests* responsibility in a currency equally shared by all: "Thou art guilty like everyone else" (but, like everyone else, can work, from within this ground, towards your expiation/absolution). In this western/Christian ethico-metaphysical maneuver, the Other is perhaps not "sacrificed in good conscience" – a relation that would still allow the 'Thou shalt not kill' to be heard by the sacrificing noble – but at the price of being murdered in bad conscience; as a violence towards the other which is also a violence towards the self – and this is the nihilism that lurks underneath this egalitarian or symmetrical logic – it promises absolution, expiation of all guilt. It also, alas, precisely refuses the "difficult freedom" that responsibility entails.

Levinatzsch prescribes, against these ethico-metaphysically murderous tendencies, the paradox of a pathos of distance that is also an ethos of proximity; the paradox of language, of communication, as the ethico-metaphysical predicament of thought. Staying with this paradox, thinking through it (rather than thinking one is through with it) is the radical affirmation of life; it is assuring that one remains in *contact*, rather than denying or internalizing – the ethico-metaphysical assumptions of life:

[...] As signification, the-one-for-the-other, proximity is not a configuration produced in the soul. It is an immediacy older than the abstractness of nature. Nor is it fusion; it is contact with the other. To be in contact is neither to invest the other and annul his alterity, nor to suppress myself in the other. In contact itself the touching and the touched separate, as though the touched moved off, was always already other, did not have anything common with me. (OB, p. 86 [my underline])

2.3 'Levinatzsch:' Genealogy as Responsibility

When it comes to thinking about thought, especially when tracing its 'origins,' Nietzsche's philosophy of 'will to power' sees the conscious thinker placed in an asymmetrical predicament: both her "voluntary freedom" and her "understanding" are seen as merely a simplified and temporary end-result, jutting-out from under a much vaster realm of subterranean power struggles that are never directly accessible. Nietzsche admits only a strange kind of 'will,' a "passive will" perhaps, owing to the methodological limit that he places on 'voluntary freedom.' For Nietzsche, however 'authentic' the 'Da,' a "test drive" will *always* be hibernating within (t)his treacherous passivity; an implication which prescribes a methodology of constant vigilance – bearing more than a passing resemblance to Lévinas' insomniac "wakefulness" – awaiting its *time* to arise in protest and carry Nietzsche off with the force of the *becoming* of a new value.

In a way, one could say that for Nietzsche's philosophy of "fundamental valuation" (i.e. 'will to power') – and this also encapsulates 'Levinatzsch's' alternative approach to Heidegger's understanding of temporality – there is no "in general" to Truth, and each 'Da,' however authentic, gives way in the face of the more primordial *breaks* from it.³⁰⁵ Nietzsche's thoughts of Truth and Being in this context can, perhaps, be likened to a "Trojan" Matryoshka ("Babushka") doll, like recurring fractals of violent temporal breaks; there might always be a terrifying new value – inaugurating an equally terrifying and new 'Being'/history – just around the, fatal and painful, corner.

This Nietzschean 'will to power' is proposed here – in the context of the function of 'history' *vis-à-vis* 'value' – to be read as what Lévinas calls diachrony or an-archy, a veritable "scandal" in the "fulfillment" of time by the causal chains of a philosophical narrative; and Nietzsche's 'historical sense' is precisely the attunement to this, the will to power's, an-archy. In his *Otherwise than Being, or Beyond Essence*, Lévinas explains the ethico-metaphysical implication of any phenomenology, of the *signification* that literally underwrites any telling/narrative, as beholden to a radical diachrony of time (rather than the synchrony of the eternal): "[t]he otherwise than being cannot be situated in any eternal order extracted from time that would somehow command the temporal series." (OB, p. 9). Lévinas sees time's relation to Being in a way that recalls Nietzsche's since both understand that coming *into* 'Being' – what Lévinas will call the "monstration of essence" – is phenomenologically predicated on an irreconcilable, temporal break or difference; an irreversible "fatality" (from 'fate) or Being's "crust." Levinatzsch's philosophy of time, hence, sees all temporal flow/projection (recall Heidegger's 'ekstasis'), as already a "manifestation" that traces an immemorial, irreconcilable difference; a diachronic "falling out of phase with itself" at the origin of every 'now' and 'here' that sustains an 'I' or a 'will,' of every phenomenon, every present/instant:

[...] 'Time is essence and monstration of essence. In the temporalization of time the light comes about by the instant falling out of phase with itself – which is the temporal flow, the differing of the identical. The differing of the identical is also its manifestation' (ibid, ibid).

This point is crucial in order to understand the very subtle difference between Nietzsche's "holding to be true" philosophy and mere 'relativistic nihilism,' or between Lévinas' 'responsibility' that *signifies for* the Other and Christian guilt/love that *embraces* the Other (until it frustrates all of its resistances in a series of digestive coups). Lévinas' notion of 'responsibility towards the Other' refuses to absolve itself through 'knowledge,' however finite, transcendental or hermeneutic-ontological it is defined. Signifying for the Other always escapes the apotheosis of an 'I' expanded to a "we" so as to comprehend and neuter the Other out of its difference, using 'Truth' to internalize and "contain" its

interruptive/‘exterior’ appeal to Justice. Lévinas’ I-Other relation is akin to Nietzsche’s “historical sense:” they both methodologically *address*, and yet refuse to “grasp,” the beyond of all ‘voluntary freedom,’ however spiritual or systematic. ‘Will to power’ is how Nietzsche approaches the phenomenological problematic of encountering and communicating with a Difference that is irreducible to an Identity, that is not presentable as a function of identities and their inter-relations.³⁰⁶ It refuses the *unquestionable* grasp of the an-archic tension that *elicits* the I’s relation to the Other *from without*; a tension that is, fundamentally, irreducible to the economy of lack or debt that had been introduced into philosophy by Christian thought/guilt.³⁰⁷

That is also why, *in an ethico-metaphysical register* – that Western thought characteristically reduces to *ontology* (thus missing both Nietzsche’s and Lévinas’ points) – Nietzsche is, despite all appearances, *the first affirmer of the metaphysically weak Other*. On the one hand, this ‘Otherness’ remains behind the pale of consciousness and will; it is a confused array of ill-defined forces that are, in every present(ation), forcefully dominated by the consciously reigning Being/‘I.’ This Other, hence, is *as weak as it is impervious* to the conscious ‘will’ or the knowing ‘I;’ it traces a becoming that is both *dominated* by Being and, at the same time, wields a unique ethico-metaphysical resistance to its *appropriative* powers (direct control, knowledge). It remains external, separated and ungrasped, and yet still – much like “time” itself – “there:” an Other that reiterates the irreversibility and asymmetry of the relation between time and (any) Being; an Other addressed as such by Nietzsche’s philosophy of ‘will to power.’

Disabused from the “moralic acid” that prevents one from seeing (much less admitting) this “metaphysical loser,” Nietzsche is the first one who, as Lévinas would say, *speaks for* this Other. Will to power, after all, is itself beholden to a call to justice; irreducible to ‘morals,’ above and beyond the teleological justifications of knowledge/Truth. I read ‘will to power,’ in a “Levinatzschean” manner, as a thought, indeed a *method*, where Nietzsche is “peculiarly” sensitive to the *violence* that Being – in all “good will” and in all “necessity” – presupposes in (its) *becoming*. Nietzsche would *affirm* this violence to the very end, which also means that he would also affirm its victim as such, never trying to obscure her out of moral shame or redeem her via an ethico-metaphysical economy of guilt.

Lévinas alludes to the subtle difference I mentioned above – between responsibility and (Christian) guilt – when he speaks of *the Other’s* “superlative humility” that must never be internalized or equalized (as, say, a debt or a lack are repaid or how the swallowing of a difference prevents its external

manifestation/interruption); an excessive humility of an ethico-metaphysical difference, one that guilt must “progressively” *appropriate* if it is ever to redeem its economo-spiritual activities.

[...] The response of the responsible one does not thematize the diachronical as though it were retained, remembered or historically reconstructed. It can not thematize or comprehend. Not out of weakness; to what could not be contained there corresponds no capacity. The non-present is incomprehensible by reason of its immensity or “superlative” humility [...]. The non-present here is invisible, separated (or sacred) and thus a non-origin, an-archival. (OB, p. 11)

With Levinatzsch, what Nietzsche calls the ‘noble’ (in her full presence and activity) and the one he calls ‘plebeian’ (in his indistinction and baseness, his passivity), echoes the Lévinasian relation between the ‘I’ and the “neighbor” (i.e. neither ‘enemy’ nor ‘friend,’ but *a proximity towards which I, in all my nobility, have no freedom*). What I read here, in Nietzsche, as the “proto-moral word” – the designation ‘bad’ that the noble, gratuitously, coins towards the ‘plebeian’ – is *precisely* what Lévinas calls ‘signification’.³⁰⁸

[...] The present is essence that begins and ends, beginning and end assembled in a thematizable conjunction; it is the finite in correlation with a freedom. Diachrony is the refusal of conjunction, the non-totalizable, and in this sense, infinite. But in the responsibility for the Other, for another freedom, the negativity of this anarchy, this refusal of the present, of appearing, of the immemorial, commands me and ordains me to the other, to the first one on the scene, and makes me approach him, makes me his neighbor. It thus diverges from nothingness as well as from being [read: from the primacy of ontology; SC]. It provokes this responsibility against my will, that is, by substituting me for the other as a hostage. All my inwardness is invested in the form of a despite-me, for-another. Despite me, for-another, is signification par excellence. (OB, p. 11 [my underline])

The second difference between Nietzsche and Heidegger in this context is, has of course (as Heidegger kept complaining) to do with the question of *metaphysics*. Nietzsche understands both Truth and Being as themselves wholly *pathetos*; they are only ever “held” and possess their power or validity (due to a pathos of distance) only in this, “pathetic,” trait. By this “holding” Nietzsche allows metaphysics to creep up behind Heidegger’s ontological “fundament,” and puts any Truth of Being to a cruel vivisection: Truth is not *in itself* important or fundamental, but only the “holding to be true,” the *principle of valuation*, that is “fundamental.”

This, second difference connects to the first precisely in the methodological weight that Nietzsche gives to *value*, a question that, as shown in the previous chapter, will forever transgress the horizon(s) of ‘Truth’ (and make Nietzsche appear quite “mad” in Heidegger’s eyes). Here it is important to note that Nietzsche does not affirm some kind of conscious control over ‘Truth’ in his “holding to be true” (as if one could “will Truth into being” so to speak), but rather that this ‘holding’ is itself *the nexus of two*

passivities: Truth is passive towards, “held” by a ‘will to power,’ while this ‘will to power’ itself is passive towards time (rather than, as is normally assumed, toward the conscious or free ‘will’).

It is, hence, within the fold between these two passivities that the Nietzschean “wake-up call” is echoed; it is through the singularity of the “me” – “more passive than any passivity” as Lévinas says – that the philosopher or thinker *themselves* are addressed. The resulting Truth that they profess is, hence, already given in/as a *response*, already an expression that owes its existence to the “superlative humility” of this passivity; the Truth ‘I’ give in ‘testimony’, on this ethico-metaphysical terrain, forever carries the trace of a more primordial, an-archic diachrony of being a ‘me,’ a *witness*. This ‘me’ holds the thinker singularly responsible for his (philosophy of) Being, evincing what Heidegger disdainfully called an “uprootedness” that can question *any and all of Dasein’s projections*, a conditional “abiding” that can be interrupted, questioned, at any moment. Here neither history nor destiny, neither projection nor Truth, can protect me.

Heidegger would never accept such a radical exposure, which he saw as a dangerous groundlessness that obviates all serious engagement with (ontological) thought. For Heidegger, as he famously said, a philosopher’s life, her “biography” or “personality” is irrelevant; she is born, works, and dies.³⁰⁹ At best an empty detail, a mere object of curiosity and “chatter” that even death cannot redeem, a mere “*existentiell*” interpretation of *Dasein*.³¹⁰ or The relevant “work” to be done needs to be rooted in the Da, a grounding of *Dasein* with regards to which all else is merely an irrelevant vessel or a contingent detail to the “work;” it is only in the fallen uprootedness of ‘*dan Man*’ that such “passing fancies” are taken seriously. This closure allows Heidegger to rely upon ‘authenticity’ and ‘Truth’ for support (if only ‘*das Man*’ is left behind), her ‘leap’ *secured and justified* as a fundamental thought of Being; beyond which – and Heidegger, as shown above, indeed carried this conviction to truly tragic heights in the course of his “public life” – the philosopher can, or *cares* to, say nothing, remaining silent.³¹¹ The “thought” never touches the “life” in any philosophically relevant way; but under this assumption, the *Da*’s with which *Dasein* is identified become secure in their ontological closures.

Nietzsche’s radical mistrust of these identifications – as project(ion)s and closures – becomes apparent in the *Genealogy*’s main goal, which is questioning the value of morality; for this is precisely where the responsibility of the ‘me’ springs to the highest height. For Nietzsche, engaging the question concerning the “worthiness” of a new value necessitates affirming *the chosenness and an elevation that asking this question requires*; a singular rising to the challenge, or, as Levinatztch would put it, responding to the (in-de-finite) call of the Other. It is not “justice” but the *question* of justice that opens

up in the new value; a value which *must not be considered as pre-absolved* by anything: neither its direction (Kant), nor *telos* (Hegel) nor ‘horizon’ (Heidegger). The philosophical separation is what elevates it to the status of being put in radical question – the “meta-ethical” or “immoral” question of the value of value – rather than what sets it on an already justified path via an always-justified “force of spirit.”

Unlike Heidegger, as well as Hegel, Nietzsche’s ‘spirit’ never absolves itself in/as ‘Truth,’ but always possesses the irony of a vain “holding to be true” force that, eternally treacherous, awaits its own future/break. Even if one attributes the new value that comes with or out of the Nietzschean break to a kind of ‘Truth,’ and even if this ‘Truth’ is then related back to ‘Being’ or the (new) ‘*Da*’ which it hails forth, this break is categorically not beholden to Heidegger’s “Truth of Being in general;” in these terms it would have to be regarded as the “truth of Being” *in the singular*, a ‘truth’ itself never assured any privilege or ‘authenticity,’ a ‘truth’ whose temporal implication exposes it to radical change, even destruction, rather than assuring it its fair ontological share in ‘existence.’

It is for these reasons that my “Levinatschean” reading of Nietzsche’s philosophical method proposes to see the “experiment” in the epigraph to this section as *the repetition of an Abrahamic ‘revelation;’* where a perfectly coherent system of values, accustomed-to and reconciled with its own pathologies, is broken-off from by one of its members (like the Pagan culture from which Abraham separates himself), abiding the commands of something *completely* Other (like the Judaic One God). If this abyss of utter otherness was the “gift” of Judaism to life and thought (their “abysmal hatred”), and the self-affirming power-difference of the higher/‘noble’ Pagans, the Nietzschean repetition will operate the Pagan affirmation in/to the metaphysical space opened by the Judaic abyss.

The “*kvetsch*” violence to Nietzsche which I can admit here – though I will show it has some support in his own writings – is that I see this Abrahamic break as the opening of a new *ethical* space, a height and a depth never before seen on earth: “Rome against Judea [...]: – there has hitherto been no greater event than *this* struggle, *this* question, *this* deadly contradiction” (GM I §14, p. 56).³¹² It would seem that with the onset of Judaism and its metaphysical abyss, the *stakes* of the question of value have increased exponentially; no longer is it a pagan-national value to be measured against other national/worldly values and valuations, but a value radically questioned, eternally repeating its rupturing demands for justification beyond the temporal closures of history and ontology. Rather than enclosed in self-justification, be it in the “worldly” manner of the Pagans, or the “other-worldly” manner of *ressentiment*, this new principle of valuation – that can rise to that challenge, to the “meta-ethical” – is

precisely the awakening to that “deadly contradiction” that Nietzsche’s “breakthrough” wagers his thought (and life) for.

The reactivation of this question takes, I believe, as dire an ethical toll as it takes on Abraham’s first summon by an unknown and unseen God. This dire toll is precisely why Nietzsche will afford no generalized “genealogical method” to be followed by *any* ‘Man’ or ‘*Dasein*’ (as if it were redeemed by the universality of thought’s ‘transcendental’ conditions or by the Truth of an authentic ‘Da’), but implicates ‘me’ as singularity responsible for this, dangerous, “reactivation”.³¹³

2.31 The Levinatschean Secret: (En)countering a Hegelian Priest

In the current, (contra-)Hegelian context, it is important to elaborate why and how for Nietzsche, *pace* Hegel, this aforementioned ‘contradiction’ should be encouraged to *ex-plode* rather than *im-plode*, *to propagate difference(s) rather than reconciling them*: Nietzsche’s methodological “breaks” offer the eternal repetition of singular divergences, whose own justification poses an ethical problem with which Nietzsche’s ethos prescribes struggling, every time; in Hegel’s case this means reigning all difference(s) in, in a higher, more comprehensively reconciled state of ‘spirit,’ a “sublation” for which the thinker herself was merely contingent (her individuation is only afforded by “the right time and place”). Indeed, the explosion/implosion problem had already been *decided* by what Nietzsche calls resentment, turning decisively towards the latter. Since Nietzsche diagnoses so much volatile and reactive hatred in *ressentiment*, it follows that any community where *ressentiment* is dominant – the more it is “victorious” from the standpoint of value – would itself become mortally threatened for missing the one necessity of its reactive, “slave morality” principle: the “hostile external world” (GM I §10, p. 37). What to do when – once the surrounding world has been conquered (Nietzsche would say “made sick”) by resentment values – the external is no longer hostile; when the post-Judaic community begins to expand and annex, “reconcile in(to) itself,” more and more peoples?

When missing an *external* enemy to hate (so as to establish oneself as ‘good’), the ‘community’ of *ressentiment* starts to turn on itself, threatening to tear itself apart owing to the very same principle that brought it to being (the reactive principle of identifying a hated other and claiming a decisive moral difference from her). As this community’s “shepherd,” the ascetic priest – in order to prevent this difference-propagating dispersal of his herd – needs to somehow redirect the forces of mutual-repulsion, a need that grows exponentially the less available that “hostile external world” becomes (i.e. the more resentment becomes victorious, infecting more and more of the world). Hence, as Nietzsche intimates,

the ascetic priest knows *to alter the direction of ressentiment* (GM III §15, p. 127). Hence, what Nietzsche calls “bad conscience” – which is an acceptance or recognition of moral guilt – is a *systematic internalization* of this power of other-repulsion that redirects the hatred back towards the individual(s) who feel(s), and might have otherwise enacted, this potential schism within the herd.

Bad conscience, as Nietzsche puts it at one point, is “cruelty directed backwards” (GM III §20, p. 140). Thus, if I, as a member of the *ressentiment* herd – due to a certain lack of sufficient threats that can provide me with the warmth/justification of having a “hostile external world” – start identifying (some of) my own herd members as, say, ‘evil,’ the priest is there *to redirect my animosity back upon myself*. The priest uses this redirection to *systematize* what is already the lot of the “loser” or ‘slave’ – that they are denied the capacity for direct action and can only ever afford to re-act.³¹⁴ If the Jews had the terrible wisdom of identifying their entire *people* with the “loser” position, the ascetic priest’s genius is to take this dynamic of forces and *generalize* it so that it can – for the first time in history overriding all ‘national’ *distinction* (i.e. nobility) – produce positive values in all *individuals* (the people of Israel never sought expansion, only separation and survival): hence, from Jewish hatred and mere “gain-negating” of all those that were stronger, comes a Christian morality that had distilled positive moral values out of this negation, values in which it is weakness that is actively sought and preached-to, containing an ethico-metaphysical attack on the ‘higher men’ and the pathos of distance that they open.

This opening of metaphysical space – seen here in the new *depths* that the Jews and their *abysmal* hatred (*abgründlich*; GM I §7, p. 34/KGW 6.2:281) had inaugurated – cannot exhaust itself in any definite moral value, in any ‘said.’ Indeed, it is precisely this infinite capacity to claim a difference (hence “abysmal hatred”) that allows the Jews, according to Nietzsche, to “reverse” any and all values, thereby opening up a previously unheard-of space for the revaluation of values.³¹⁵ This space, this new height and depth³¹⁶ – a space of metaphysical difference (of separation, of “hatred” towards what is/present) – opens up the ‘Why?’ question to untold, utterly novel and *more risky* futures; and it does this, precisely, *by allowing the ‘Why?’ question to be asked about moral values themselves* (something that the pagan ‘nobles’ would have never done on their own – why would they?). This newly-formed “ethico-metaphysical” space releases the ‘Why?’ question from all of its former *constraints*, be they national (Paganism), transcendental (Kant), historical/ontological (Heidegger) or metaphysical (Hegel).

For Nietzsche – and here is an important aspect of his ‘anti-Christian’ ethos – ‘spirit’ *always* contains its own pathologies, and always lulls one to reconcile oneself to them. This is very much a Hegelian view, but with this – subtle but decisive – difference: Nietzsche will insist on affirming these

pathologies, even as he fights and rejects them; his “image of thought” neither assumes nor wishes them to diminish or “play themselves out.” Like Hegel, he understands that ‘pathology’ always bespeaks a difference, a “*Distanz*,” the promise of something other, or new; but, *contra* Hegel, he will do everything in his power to rid metaphysics of the (Christian) “drive” or “instinct” – which Hegel posited *as absolute* – to spiritualize/sublate this difference; to claim some higher universal ‘actuality’ or ‘comprehension’ that pertains to “all.” Thought, hence, does not go “forward” for Nietzsche, nor does it grow in an essentially centripetal, self-directed knowledge, but explodes outwards, in absolute risk, towards an *essentially unknowable* future, affirming a multitude of future values rather than Hegel’s ‘One Truth.’ Here, in Nietzsche’s *Pathos der Distanz*, it is ‘Difference’ that *takes precedence to ‘Identity,’* just as, against Heidegger, ‘Time’ takes precedence to ‘Being’ (the ‘*ek*’ as the “prehistory” of the ‘stasis’). In denying the pathologies that must subtend every “distance,” ‘spirit’ lulls to sleep; as if a difference, an Other, were not always already calling out – from within any contoured closure/sign, within the *il y a* of any moral value – from beyond this sleep, demanding something more, something other, demanding *justice*.

In this sense, I see Nietzsche’s breaks and breakthroughs as geared precisely to “catch” this ‘spirit’ *in the act of effacing these grumbling murmurs*; these pro-vocations of distance and height that arrive neither from the ground of Being (*pace* Heidegger), nor from the Christian God (*pace* Hegel), but from the *beyond* of an absolute futurity. Attending to the ‘pathos of distance’ is attending to this beyond, and affirming it; that is, precisely, Nietzsche’s ethos: “condemned to the solitary spheres of a perpetual proving grounds”, as Avital Ronell intimates at one point.³¹⁷ This is an ethics or a meta-ethics where “freedom” is always temporary, miraculous, *and unreliable* – always strangely passive, somehow between “given” and “won” – a punctual interruption rather than the ‘*pneuma*’ under Man’s spiritual wings. Nietzsche’s “hyperborean” thirsts, rather, after thunderstorms and lightning: “[t]his tolerance and largeness of heart which ‘forgives’ everything because it ‘Understands’ everything is sirocco to us” (AC §1, p. 127). He will allow no narrative continuity/unity, no Christian-Hegelian ‘progress’ *to be presupposed*; or, at least, to be presupposed without a fight. It is this fight against morality – in the name of a *becoming* of value – that Nietzsche calls his “*a priori*.”

3. *Ressentiment* and Metaphysics: The Horizon of the ‘All’

Love and justice [*Gerechtigkeit*]. – Why is love overestimated as compared with justice, and the fairest things said of it, as though it were of a far higher [*höheres*] nature than the latter? For is it not obviously the stupider of the two? – Certainly, but for precisely that reason so much more pleasant for everybody [*Alle*]. It is stupid and possesses a rich cornucopia; out of this it distributes its gifts, and does so to everyone [*jedermann*], even when he does not deserve them, indeed does not even thank it for them. It is as impartial as the rain, which, according to the Bible and in accordance too with experience, soaks not only the unjust man but, in certain circumstances, also the just man to the skin.

– Friedrich Nietzsche³¹⁸

Philosophy, in any case, can be defined as the subordination of any act to the knowledge that one may have of that act, knowledge being precisely this merciless demand to bypass nothing, to surmount the congenital narrowness of the pure act, making up in this manner for its dangerous generosity. [...] The act, in its naiveté is made to lose its innocence. Now it will arise only after calculation, after a careful weighing of the pros and cons. It will no longer be either free or generous or dangerous. It will no longer leave the other in its otherness but will always include it in the whole, approaching it, as they say today, in a historical perspective, at the horizon of the All. From this stems the inability to recognize the other person as other person, as outside all calculation, as neighbor, as first come.

– Emmanuel Lévinas³¹⁹

The question of the “otherwise than Being,” which allows thought the *distance* that it needs to contemplate the ethical relation as primary, touches on the dialectic between Judaism and Christianity – already there in germinal form in Nietzsche’s *Genealogy*. What Nietzsche calls “the fateful initiative of the Jews” (GM I §7, p. 34) had opened-up an opposite direction to the pagan noble’s height from the plebeian. As the “most fundamental declarations of war” (ibid, ibid), Judaism reverses the noble’s mode of valuation, evincing “the most abysmal hatred” by which “the wretched alone are the good” and “the powerful and noble, are on the contrary the evil” (ibid, ibid). Here was “a radical revaluation” – the kind of which had been, up to that point, unprecedented – at the most pronounced point of tension; this is also where ‘Levinatzsch’ will always be in danger of glossing-over or falling short of, where my argument becomes, ostensibly, most open to attack.³²⁰

Here is the famous Nietzschean passage from the *Genealogy*, concerning the ‘No’ of resentment as the weapon wielded by the Jews against the pagan nobles. After having identified earlier that “with the Jews there begins *the slave revolt in morality*” (GM I §7, p. 34), Nietzsche writes the following:

The slave revolt in morality begins when *ressentiment* itself becomes creative and gives birth to values: the *ressentiment* of natures that are denied the true reaction, that of deeds, and compensate

themselves with an imaginary revenge. While every noble morality develops from a triumphant affirmation of itself, slave morality from the outset says No to what is “outside,” what is “different,” what is “not itself;” and *this* No is its creative deed. This inversion of the value-positing eye – this *need* to direct one’s view outward instead of back to oneself – is of the essence of *ressentiment*: in order to exist, slave morality always first needs a hostile external world; it needs, physiologically speaking, external stimuli in order to act at all – its action is fundamentally reaction. (GM I §10, pp. 36-37)

The argument is seemingly simple, especially if it is treated as a mere “statement of fact” (or of ‘truth’) on the part of Nietzsche: the pagan nobles had activity and reality, truth and joyfulness on their side; the weak, unable to compete, to rise to the same level and fight the nobles for power and domination, invent another realm, an imaginary and “subterranean” one, where they could avenge this “impotence,” this lack of power, as Nietzsche says, “*in effigie*” (ibid, p. 37). Thus, “*ressentiment*,” the Jewish declaration of war – switching the battlefield to this *imaginary* one – can finally gain the upper hand, if only as a “lie” or “fiction,” the “imaginary revenge” of the impotent. In this imaginary realm, the Jews effect a complete reversal: what in nobility was an unabashed affirmation, a ‘Yes’ towards itself, becomes an equally unabashed ‘No’ towards its outside.³²¹

This, indeed, was the essence of the Jewish nobility: that they were special, chosen people, except that this nobility was based on an imaginary and abstract, “otherwise than Being” principle – a transcendent God, wholly separate from and invisible to the world – that assured this, unprecedented, nobility. This nobility is, then, utterly immune – because of its unique ‘No’ – to historical contingencies, something which the pagan nobility did not possess: if a noble people would be conquered by another, their “nobility” would vanish because it would, literally, cease *to be*. Their gods, being pagan, were still very much of and in this world, and, as such, subject to the vicissitudes of fate;³²² the Jewish God was wholly transcendent, even to fate.

However, to recall us back to the ‘Why?’ Question, why is Nietzsche engaged in this genealogy, in this polemic? What is he trying to achieve here? As I have been trying to point out, Nietzsche’s goal is – rather than merely “moral” – more of a methodological polemic. He wants to show both *how to approach* the problem of justice (and the attendant one of morality), and *how and why this approach had been so difficult to see/hear* until his own *Genealogy*. His goal, the “new demand” that he is trying to respond to, is this: “we need a *critique* of moral values, *the value of these values themselves must first be called into question* – and for that there is needed a knowledge of the conditions and circumstances in which they grew” (GM Preface §6, p. 20 [my underline]); the problem being, indeed, that “[o]ne has taken the *value* of these

values as given, as factual, as beyond all question” (ibid, ibid). One must learn, first and foremost, *how to ask the question*.

The particular “morality” which Nietzsche set about combating had always been, as he confirms early on, the “morality of pity” (ibid, ibid). Was this morality ‘Jewish’ or ‘Christian’? The *Genealogy* makes the distinction between the Jews and the Christians very difficult, and Nietzsche switches back and forth between them with hardly any caveats whatsoever. Thus, he can give the example of how “the Jews” felt about Rome, and immediately give the Christian New Testament’s book ‘The Apocalypse of John’ (GM I §16, p. 53) to support his claim; and then proceed to denote the “Jewish” victory by alluding to the fact that Rome had become Christian (ibid, ibid). Likewise, he continues to associate the “victory of Judea” with the Protestant Reformation – one more step, following the Catholic Church, in the progress of the Jewish poison – which he calls “the thoroughly plebeian [...] *ressentiment* movement” (ibid, p. 54).

And yet, this elision is somewhat recuperated when Nietzsche talks about how the Jewish hatred had been transformed into Christian love; something, which has become *hard to see*:

But you do not comprehend this? You are incapable of seeing something that required two thousand years to achieve victory? There is nothing to wonder at in that: all protracted things are hard to see, to see whole. That, however, is what has happened: from the trunk of that tree of vengefulness and hatred, Jewish hatred – the profoundest and sublimest kind of hatred, capable of creating ideals and reversing values, the like of which has never existed on earth before – there grew something equally incomparable, a new love, the profoundest and sublimest kind of love – and from what other trunk could it have grown? (GM I §8, p. 34 [my underline])

Nietzsche knows that he is speaking to the deaf ears of a Christian audience and a Christian Europe. He knows himself to be thoroughly surrounded by a Christian anti-Semitism that blames the Jews for the betrayal and murder of God(’s incarnation). It is, hence, against this Christian outlook, against the pseudo-distinction between Jewish hate and Christian love – a view that had become victorious and hence difficult to see – that he reminds his Christian audience that Jesus was born, and, indeed, *had* to be born, a Jew. Nietzsche’s subversive act here consists in *reversing the anti-Semitic gesture*: if the anti-Semite blames the Jews for having *killed* Christ, Nietzsche will blame the Jews *for having given birth to Him*. That is why he insists that “[o]ne should not imagine it [Christian love; SC] grew up as the denial of that thirst for revenge, as the opposite of Jewish hatred! No, the reverse is true! That love grew out of it as its crown” (GM I §8, p. 35).³²³

This Christian love, as Nietzsche shows it, is directed at the world as the secret tool of the people of Israel’s revenge on its outside(s). Here, however, the Jewish ‘No’ to the outside also becomes

transformed from a *self-exclusive* ‘No’ to an *other-inclusive* ‘No:’ the original Jewish ‘No’ that gave birth to resentment is taken up by the ascetic priest who, precisely, changes its direction (cf. GM III §15, p. 127). This is how the originally Jewish resentment lost its menacing and abject appearance and became a seduction, a danger: the priest makes this hateful ‘No’ appeal to the rest of the world as “love” and ‘Yes’ towards it (a ‘No’ to the previous ‘No’), but this is bought at the price of a ‘No’ that is now directed inwards, a ‘No’ that is *turned-back* on those who, before, had turned it outwards (i.e. the Jews). The ascetic priest understands what neither the Judaism of the Old Testament, nor that of the Diaspora, had been able (or willing?) to grasp: that in order to attain and hold on to political power – and this is, according to Nietzsche, how the “grand politics” (of revenge) begins, in Christianity, to take over the world – the Jewish ‘No’ could be used against the world as a seduction, as a Trojan Horse. Thus “the real instrument of revenge” is the *symbol* of the Jewish God that is nailed to the Cross, “the self-crucifixion of God for the salvation of man” (GM I §9, p. 35).³²⁴

The so-called all-accepting Christian love, hence, has to be predicated, following Nietzsche, upon the “lowliness” that inaugurated the Jewish privilege in the first place – the privilege of the low, of the weak. In the Jews, however, this privilege was distinctive; it maintained its own nobility as a counter to the pagan’s, and so erected a ‘No’ turned outside to counter the pagan ‘Yes’ turned inside. The “Judeo-Christian” *priest* – which was *paradigmatic* in St. Paul³²⁵ – buys the seductive power of a ‘Yes’ that is turned towards *all* ‘outsides’ (inheriting the Jewish No’s ability to self-distinguish *no matter what historical or political circumstance it encounters*), but at the price of turning this ‘No’ against its own (Jewish, self-distinguishing) ‘self.’ Hence, at the “roots” of the Christian God in/as all-comprehensive love, Nietzsche shows a kind of “generalized” Judaism; and it is my main contention in this chapter that this generalization of Judaism – owing to the seductive symbolization of the non-symbolizable God and the reversal/internalization of Jewish resentment – constitutes a radical, “ethico-metaphysical” anti-Semitism.

What the Christian ‘Yes’ becomes, in short, is not the Jewish reversal of values any longer, but a radical *de-valuation* of values; an attack on the very concept of distance (and, hence, of ‘master’) that gave birth to value (what, in the Jewish ‘No,’ was still conceivable, even if turned upside down). The Christian revolt, then, will not attack pagan nobility, but attack the Jewish nobility that had defeated it; it will attack the very idea of nobility, and then seduce all pagan value-systems with it. That is, I maintain, the essence of Christianity’s theological anti-Semitism, that, in Luther and in Hegel, became systematic and relentless (and, not least, invisible and victorious). This is why Nietzsche will insist that Christianity

is the religion of the sick/weak that *makes* sick/weak, the humiliating religion of the humble:³²⁶ *the very idea* of ‘nobility’ and ‘mastery’ is therein turned on itself, denied. How on earth, then, can such a discourse even consider the value of mastery, of strength and privilege and the *responsibility* (not guilt) that comes with it?³²⁷

3.1 Nietzsche’s Style: A Vitriol Free of Moralic Acid

If we remain non-violent, hatred will die as everything does, from misuse

– Mohandas K. Gandhi³²⁸

Nietzsche is defending a *difference* that the metaphysics of *ressentiment* effectively subdues: this difference, crucial for the creation of moral values as ‘*Pathos der Distanz*’ is subsumed by this system that, consequently, *makes its genealogy itself inaccessible*, impossible. This, in a nut-shell, is the essence of Nietzsche’s methodological polemic in the *Genealogy*. The victory of resentment over Europe took the form of “[...] a long-drawn-out slave revolt, at first secret, then more and more self-confident, against every kind of master, ultimately against the very concept of ‘master’ [...] (Nietzsche, LN 2[13], p. 68 [my underline]). This impossibility is assured, according to Nietzsche, because of Christian metaphysics having been *victorious* – in discourse, in philosophy, in history. Nietzsche’s methodological innovation lies in recognizing where and what he is – “we, too, are still victims of and prey to this moralized contemporary taste and ill with it, however much we think we despise it – probably it infects even us”; GM III §20, p. 139) – and devising a *method* from which to resist this condition.

Nietzsche, however, radicalizes his rejection of the “ideal spectator” philosophical fiction – a kind of (over)view from nowhere of a “subjective” consciousness entirely free from its “objects” – and hence does not stop at the “formal” level of method, but enacts it through its “content,” its *style*. I argue that Nietzsche’s style consistently echoes his method, and hence will always proceed through the question of power (-difference); he might resist the nihilistic mastery of the priest’s *ressentiment* with the resentment and hatred reserved of the defeated and the weak, but he absolutely refuses to go the way of resentment and approach this question as if the very concept of ‘master’ is absent or irrelevant to his “moral investigations.”

For all Nietzsche’s disdain towards the “sickness” of Europe – its *principle* of “No saying to all that is outside” and the “pettiness” of its affects – he himself, as discussed above, boasts of a ‘No’ to his entire immediate environment, not to mention with what fervor he heaps barrages of insults upon the priests that led the “slave revolt” to victory. It is this ‘No,’ this resistance and resentment, that makes

Nietzsche's style seem to clash with his preferred (i.e. pagan) moral examples: there we find contemptful fulminations against "[...] the repellent sight of the ill-constituted, dwarfed, atrophied and poisoned" (GM I §11, p. 43), or the "regression of mankind" (GM I §11, p. 43), joining a, quite visceral, disgust that cries "Bad air! Bad air! [...] that I have to smell the entrails of some ill-constituted soul!" (GM I §12, p. 44), when in the presence of "ill-smelling Jewish acidity" (AC §56, p. 187).

What can a philosophy of 'will to power' have to say against those "in power"? After all, and almost by definition, no such bitterness and venom might be expected from Nietzsche's chief "positive example," the noble Pagans. Nietzsche's consistent and bitter struggle against the "victorious" priests of resentment seems to contradict precisely this noble comportment, since "[t]o be incapable of taking one's enemies [...] seriously for very long – that is the sign of the strong [...]. [...] [the noble/strong] can endure no other enemy than one in whom there is nothing to despise" (GM I §10, p. 39). Furthermore, immersed in the 'Da' of European resentment, Nietzsche's gesture also seems, just like the "slave morality" he combats, to "say no to what is 'outside'" (GM I §10, p. 36). Does not Nietzsche's "break-through" gesture do exactly that? After all, the morality that is intrinsic to *resentiment* – what Nietzsche calls "*die Sklaven-Moral*" (GM I §10, p. 36/KGW 6.2:284) – also "needs a hostile external world"; it also wields a "vengefulness of the impotent" (*ibid*, p. 37), which is the only gesture open to the weak/defeated.

There is, however, an important distinction to be made here, for it is not the weak as such that Nietzsche attacks, but the "moral augury" that inscribes ideals that assure that it should be 'weakness' *itself* that ought to reign.³²⁹ The victory of resentment means a victory of 'weakness' and 'reactivity' through a generalized principle of reversing noble values; that is how Christianity "waged a war to the death against [the] higher type of man" (AC §5, p. 129). The point important to grasp here is that Nietzsche readily admits that he is on the "losing side of history" with regards to *resentiment*; that he is – though attempting to "cure" it and say 'No' to it – also sick with it. Him and his fellow (and few) "free spirits," he admits, are "sick with modernity:" "we became gloomy [...]. Our fatality – was the plenitude, the tension, the blocking-up of our forces" (AC §1, p. 127). Indeed, "[w]e have had the whole pathos of mankind against us" (AC §13, p. 135).³³⁰ Yet, the crucial difference to understand here is that while Nietzsche's 'No' is always contextual, always "in life" and proceeding from the contexts/'Da's he finds himself immersed in, the 'No' of resentment is, as Nietzsche often says, a 'No' to life, a nihilistic, principled 'No' that had become a *state*, a *stasis*, rather than, as with Nietzsche, an event.

Thus, for example, though Nietzsche will prescribe that “[t]he weak and ill-constituted shall perish” (AC §2, p. 128), it is important to underscore here that “weak” relates to that which has *reactivity* as its *only principle* of valuation, of which “perishing” is not annihilation but an absorption by the strong for sustenance and regeneration. The merely *defeated* in terms of the ‘will to power,’ can, *in principle*, be either active/strong or reactive/weak. Hence it is possible for Nietzsche to recount the defeat of the ‘strong’ noble pagans to the ‘weak’ priests of *ressentiment*³³¹ which implies that any vanquished force or affect (i.e. any not-yet-emerged principle of valuation) can, *in some unknowable future*, be victorious as well. Nietzsche, hence, is indeed speaking the “language of the impotent,” but not their values: he speaks in the name of the *defeated nobility* that *ressentiment* had conquered, speaking for *defeated activity/strength* (in this case the noble and his positive/active instincts), *but not for the victorious reactivity/weakness* (the priest and his “theological instinct”). It is, hence, against this *nihilistic metaphysics* that Nietzsche rails.

A reading of the Genealogy in this vein reveals that Nietzsche is grateful and even (cautiously) respectful towards figures like Schopenhauer or ‘the English;’ he sees them as somehow “*on par*” with him, even if from “the other side” of the struggle, evincing a respect that opens the path to a kind of “love of enemies” (GM I §10, p. 39). When it comes to *ressentiment* and its priests, however, he allows himself an animosity that uses the most hateful and petty language, as if he were, himself, one of those priests who, as he says, make “the most evil enemies;” GM I §7, p.33). The priests of *ressentiment*, however, only made such “evil enemies” *when they were still in a struggle* against the ‘knightly aristocracy’ and its values (GM I §7, p. 33), meaning that the latter were not as yet defeated. The priestly “victory” – achieved and cemented over a long, protracted period of millennia – made its own values, its “slave morality,” become “bold;” not by becoming more and more explicitly resentful and vitriolic towards nobles and masters, but, on the contrary, more and more “understanding” and “forgiving,” less openly hateful and more ostensibly “tolerant” of them. The *boldness* of this, principled, hatred consists, in the end, not in resisting this or that ‘master,’ but in resisting ‘mastery’ in itself, taking this *question of power* out of the (metaphysical) picture. It is only when the priests have won, when this question is no longer heard/remembered – since it is no longer allowed to be asked without guilt (i.e., “internal”/conscientious pain or “external”/discursive moral punishment) – that *ressentiment* starts “loving,” starts being polite.

In Nietzschean terms, then, *ressentiment* (and its agents) cannot be considered his ‘enemy,’ since it is no longer on par with Nietzsche himself: he is already “sick” with it, it has already won, which means

that Nietzsche must address it with all the resentment and force of his own, defeated, position. What Nietzsche disdains as the “democratic prejudice” of Western metaphysics would prescribe a far more “measured” or “sober analysis” than the one he gives to *ressentiment*.³³² The latter’s denial of power-difference prescribes a “neutral” treatment that tries to adjudicate “*all*” perspectives while holding them all, *equally*, in view – as if thought, as ‘subject,’ were in principle *free* from all of them, equally. This metaphysical presupposition of equality/equivalence is precisely what Nietzsche means when he suggests that the more slave morality becomes victorious, the more turns against *the very concept* of ‘master.’ This, seemingly moot question of Nietzsche’s (vitriolic) “style” echoes, hence, his ethico-metaphysical critique in *performing* (t)his methodological polemic.

This, here, constitutes the core of Nietzsche’s slander and vitriol towards the Jews; but, as alluded above, this is not the same kind of hatred as that of anti-Semitism. His is, in fact, the precise reversal of Christian anti-Semitism. Here we must not forget two important things: the first is that Nietzsche was brought up in a very antisemitic, Christian-Lutheran environment; the second, that his “scruple” consisted in precisely rebelling, from within, against his environment. The meaning of this goes to the very heart of Nietzsche’s difficult method of radical affirmation, his ‘*amor fati*.’ It concerns the manner in which Nietzsche catches the anti-Semitic spirit “in the act;” again, a kind of “indignant affirmation.”

As Yirmiyahu Yovel was also keen to observe, Nietzsche uses almost all the tropes of the Jew as ascribed to her by centuries of anti-Semitism. The cunning, vengeful, vain, self-segregating and hateful Jew, figures prominently both here and elsewhere in Nietzsche’s texts. Nietzsche’s radical psychological genius comes precisely in the manner discussed above: he submerges himself in the (anti-Semitic) sickness so as to overcome it, to realize its maneuvers and subtleties, its “nooks” and hiding places, and force them to a difficult, perhaps even unsustainable self-affirmation. His reversal of antisemitism consists precisely in releasing it from the nugatory clutches of guilt (in *ressentiment*) by making it speak; a speech that also means exposing all the places where, and the methods through which, it had been suppressed. Nietzsche understands this very suppression as *essential* to Christianity, which is why he names antisemitism as a privileged locus to study Christian *ressentiment*. After all, in Christianity, the national separation of the Jews – explicit and visible – had been internalized, and this means that its “hatred” becomes that much harder to study, to “observe.”

Yovel confirms this when he writes that, “[a]t the root of the religion of love, Nietzsche’s genealogy has uncovered hatred”.³³³ This “root” is based in a certain interiorized image; and it is against this interiorization that Nietzsche pours his own “genius,” his own hateful invectives: “[...] Christianity

continues “priestly” Judaism not in its overt ideological content but in its underlying, covert psychological structure” (ibid, p. 151 [my underline]). This “content” is for Nietzsche precisely the radical one of “God on the Cross” (ibid, pp. 150-151).³³⁴ If the ‘Jews’ are vilified and resented so bitterly by Nietzsche, it is only on the basis of this image/incarnation of God (which, as discussed above, is also a sin against Jewish *nobility*). Thus, *reversing the claims of anti-Semitism while using its very tropes*, Nietzsche returns the “compliment” to Christianity; for he rails against the “Jews” not, like run-of-the-mill anti-Semites, for having “killed Christ,” but precisely for having given birth to Christ.³³⁵

Why is this the case with the (victorious) discourses of *ressentiment*? It might be – recall von Trier’s “tragic” case – because today’s Western philosophical and Academic discourse is still harboring, silent and undisturbed, a persistent metaphysical assumption; where the ‘*Distanz*’ is either “no longer there” (‘secular/liberal democracies’ replacing the Medieval religious monarchies), or is inessential, a kind of unwanted parasite that would just “die off so long as we don’t feed it” (as in Gandhi’s “non-violence” quote above)... The “Academic,” measured and sober style – which Nietzsche sometimes utilizes, *but only towards his “equals”* (e.g. ‘the English psychologists’) – belies a metaphysical equivalence that Nietzsche is trying, consistently throughout his *Genealogy*, to both expose and combat.

Of course, owing to his treatment of the problem of Truth, Nietzsche does not disdain a “lie” in itself, but only when elevated to the metaphysical heights that no longer allow *this* lie to be replaced by a *different* one (i.e., foreclosing upon the ‘*Why?*’ question via the ideal of an a-temporal, all-encompassing ‘Truth’); as he writes “[u]ltimately the point is to what *end* the lie is told. [...] [In Christianity there are] only *bad* ends: the poisoning, slandering, denying of life [...]” (AC §56, p. 187). It is not the fact that some particular moral value or other had become “victorious” that Nietzsche takes issue with, but the fact that an entire metaphysical apparatus has been put in place to deny that it is, indeed, a value – that could, *justifiably*, be otherwise – in the first place. *Ressentiment* does not only extol the “meek” and the “weak,” it *presupposes* weakness – “humility” on a metaphysical level, as *ideal* – thus denying the very origin of any and all moral valuation (including its own, eventually). This is how, and why, its ‘victory’ is also the victory of nihilism, since it evinces a system that denies – by metaphysically blocking access to, making “impossible” or “unthinkable” – its own origins.

Nietzsche knows that his “project” will be nearly impossible, that there will be “few ears” to hear him, for this structure, this “sickness” or “bad conscience” had already infected the deepest realms of thought and science – now administering its soporific poison *as a methodological assumption* of equality or equivalence that is presided over by an always-already absolutely justified ‘Truth’.³³⁶ Thus,

when Nietzsche addresses *ressentiment* he is perfectly consistent in addressing it venomously, violently, with no hint of sobriety. That is, indeed, the essence of his critical immoralism, which he uses as a weapon against Western thought's methodological moralism. His resentful animosity is a necessity of the predicament that he is placed in, that he speaks from and about, and which he, nevertheless – even if “hopelessly” or “unrealistically” (*vainly?*) – fights against.

3.2 The Democratic Prejudice of ‘Love’

The democrat, like the scientist, fails to see the particular case; to him the individual is only an ensemble of universal traits. It follows that his defense of the Jew saves the latter as man and annihilates him as Jew. [...] [...] Taking this point of view, he fears the awakening of a "Jewish consciousness" in the Jew; [...]. His defense is to persuade individuals that they exist in an isolated state. "There are no Jews," he says, "there is no Jewish question." This means that he wants to separate the Jew from his religion [...] in order to plunge him into the democratic crucible whence he will emerge naked and alone, an individual and solitary particle like all the other particles. [...] [...] For a Jew, conscious and proud of being Jewish, [...] there may not be so much difference between the anti-Semite and the democrat. The former wishes to destroy him as a man and leave nothing in him but the Jew, the pariah, the untouchable; the latter wishes to destroy him as a Jew and leave nothing in him but the man, the abstract and universal subject of the rights of man and the rights of the citizen.

– Jean-Paul Sartre³³⁷

Now before faith came, we were held captive under the law, imprisoned until the coming faith would be revealed. | So then, the law was our guardian until Christ came, in order that we might be justified by faith. | But now that faith has come, we are no longer under a guardian, | for in Christ Jesus you are all sons of God, through faith. | For as many of you as were baptized into Christ have put on Christ. | There is neither Jew nor Greek, there is neither slave nor free, there is no male and female, for you are all one in Christ Jesus. | And if you are Christ's, then you are Abraham's offspring, heirs according to promise.

– Saint Paul³³⁸

The difference I have tried to elaborate, between Nietzsche's will-to-power and its “might makes right” caricature, manifests itself also in the distinction I allude to above, between *resentment* and ‘*ressentiment*.’ between the “negative affect” that still testifies to a (power) *distance* (viewed from “below”), and the disavowal of *all* affects, both “negative” and “positive,” that might attend it. The “defeated” or “impotent” are never begrudged by Nietzsche their resentment or envy towards the victors, just as the latter are affirmed in their ‘carelessness’ towards the latter: the “weak” are affirmed their “right” *to resist* (and feel resentment towards) the “strong,” just as the strong reserve themselves the

“right” of consuming the weak. Nietzsche will however fight when weak-ness had become victorious, when ‘resentment’ no longer speaks with hatred and venom but camouflages itself (and this camouflage works *both on itself and others*), as some divine-like acceptance or love, the all-encompassing ideal/value or ressentiment.

Though also a mark of the impotent – the one who envies and yet cannot *act* upon this envy – ‘resentment’ is *still a ‘pathos of distance’* – it signals a difference of value and affirms the affect that this difference entails. *Ressentiment*, however, is precisely a repudiation, both of this pathos (as a “negative,” separation-endowed affect that *ought* not to arise), and, more radically still, of its attending ‘*Distanz*.’ *Ressentiment*, perpetually disavowing the absolute difference that it turns on itself, cannot abide such negative affects to surface, to break through the guilt that keeps them grumbling under its “good will” and, as I put it above with von Trier’s example, allow it to speak *in turn*. *Ressentiment*, in short, needs to maintain an image or ideal of sobriety or impartiality, where the “[...] prudence of the lowest order [...] clad itself in the ostentatious garb of the virtue of quiet, calm resignation [...]. This type of man [i.e. the “man” of ressentiment; SC] needs to believe in a neutral independent ‘subject’ [...]” (GM I §13, p. 46). This is also where ressentiment lies to itself through its own ideals/values, like when the weak’s “inability for revenge is called unwillingness to revenge, perhaps even forgiveness” (ibid §14, p. 47). In ressentiment’s discourse, as Nietzsche comments, not only does “[i]t see[m] [...] that someone is lying;” but also that this lie coats itself, in addition, with “a saccharine sweetness [that] clings to every sound” (ibid, ibid). These values of neutrality, freedom, forgiveness are how the weak surreptitiously wield power; in Christian ressentiment this meant that, rather than merely redefining this weakness as “distinction-bestowing” strength (in the manner of ‘the Jewish reversal’), the imposition of an “all” – as some kind of “natural” or “universal” (moral) law – makes distinction itself a source of Sin. In time, because of this very structure of purloining and flattening-out a violence that once had pride and visibility, ressentiment spreads a moral and ethical framework where validity and legitimacy – indeed value itself – are *trained* to be blind to their violent origin.

Neither as ‘resentment,’ nor as ‘envy,’ does Nietzsche ever fulminate as he does towards *what became of this resentment* after ressentiment has become “creative” of values and, subsequently, victorious. As argued consistently – and in a consistently vitriolic style – this victory meant that resentment itself – as a phenomenon, a signaling of distinction (albeit from below) – had become systematized/generalized; and, hence, impossible to see. Corresponding to the argument that I am advancing following Nietzsche where, to use Nietzsche’s words, Christianity “Judaized the world” (GS

III §135, p. 187)³³⁹, the victory of *ressentiment* means that *the phenomenon of resentment ceases to be “recognized,”* present (in short, ceases to be φαίνεσθαι). If it was the Jews’ (ig)noble charge to reverse their own impotence (eliciting the ‘resentment’ of the surrounding peoples and their respective nobilities) the Christian mission would be to eliminate all traces of resentment by its ethico-metaphysical attack on difference, amounting, as Nietzsche says, to a psychological and ideological attack on *distinction* itself.

To recall, in Nietzsche’s *Genealogy*, that the plebeian should feel resentment against the noble is quite understandable; he says this quite clearly: “[t]hat lambs dislike great birds of prey does not seem strange: only it gives no ground for reproaching these birds of prey for bearing off little lambs” (GM I §13, p. 44). Nietzsche will often say that it is quite appropriate for the weak to resist and resent the strong, just as it is appropriate for the strong to dominate and control the weak. It is his basic affirmation of the will to power.³⁴⁰ This ‘dislike’ of the lambs/“losers” – a word that also designates resentment in German (*gram*; cf. KGW 6.2:292) – is neither the onset of *ressentiment* in the Jewish “slave up-rising” (*Sklavenaufstand*; cf. GM I §12, p. 44) against pagan nobility, nor its victory once the ‘value’ of the ascetic priest had successfully “infected” Western/European thought.

It is only when the ‘*priest*,’ dominating and recapitulating (indeed *redeeming*) the plebeian’s suffering, manages through/as a universalized system of ‘guilt’ to “change the direction of *ressentiment*” (GM III §15, p. 128), that *resentment* is *no longer felt*. The revenge that had become imaginary and subterranean in the man of *ressentiment* – a path towards complete sublimation (opened up by the Jewish transcendent God) – has been finally assured victory by what I alluded to earlier as the ascetic priest’s (e.g. St. Paul’s) genius. The priest, as Nietzsche intimates, “despises [*verachtet*] more readily than [he] hates [*hass*l]” (GM III §15, p. 136/KGW 6.2:390). Indeed, the forgiveness and understanding of the priest are predicated on this buffer between the Christian “lover” and the Jewish “hater.”

While the origin of *ressentiment*, as shown above, lay in the reactive opening of plebeian *depth* so as to counter the active con-descension of the noble’s height (the latter calling the former ‘bad’; the former calling the latter ‘evil’), it was still too *external*, too outward-directed (GM I §10, pp. 36-37), making itself profound so as to *accuse* the noble of ‘shallowness.’ Indeed, the ‘slave revolt’ (*Skalvenaufstand*) was, literally read, an up-rising or a standing-up-to (*auf-stand*) the privilege of nobility, a protruding or interruption that started with the Jews’ “fateful initiative,” but then, owing to its *décadence*, would slowly deny itself and vanish from the Christian landscape.

This uprising, in other words, did not yet possess the characteristics of what Nietzsche calls “the herd” (*H(e)erd*), for it is only the ascetic priest that brings it into existence (GM III §13, p. 120/KGW 6.2:384). Before the priest, this up-rising is indeed too volatile, too *ex-plosive*. As Nietzsche says, resentment always seeks a cause for its suffering, it resents its suffering, for it is always pointing its finger towards “a hostile external world” (GM I §10, pp. 37 [my underline]). As discussed earlier, unlike the pagan noble’s self-regarding ‘Yes,’ the Jewish “chosen” says ‘No’ to the outside; this, however, is an *ex-plosive* – hateful, self-distinguishing – drive that always threatens that the people become unruly and begin disintegrating their community. Hence the necessity of finding some manner to “herd” them:

[...] [The ascetic priest] fights with cunning and severity and in secret against anarchy and ever-threatening disintegration within the herd, in which the most dangerous of all explosives, *ressentiment*, is constantly accumulating. So to detonate this explosive that it does not blow up herd and herdsman is his essential art, as it is his supreme utility; if one wanted to express the value of the priestly existence in the briefest formula it would be: the priest alters the direction of *ressentiment*. (GM III §15, p. 127 [my underline])

With this alteration of direction, the ascetic (Christian or proto-Christian) priest brings the slave’s uprising under control; he renders it *harmless* (GM III §16, p. 128). In this way, all of the “explosive” feelings that might have made the “sick” people of *ressentiment* despair of themselves – unable to maintain the *solitude and uselessness of their suffering* – are brought in check and can finally be used to neutralize the height that the up-rising, as such, still *testifies* to. The ascetic priest’s historical mission is, indeed, “[d]ominion over the suffering” (GM III §15, p. 126).

Hence, with the appearance of the ‘priest,’ *ressentiment* becomes easier – more manageable, blind to its own sickness, more seductive. It replaces the Jewish attitude of “regard me and learn (but keep your distance, you heathen!)” with a “we love you – become one of us!” By getting the herd “hooked” on the *anesthetic* that is the ascetic ideal (GM III §15, p. 127) – which is the deeper meaning of the priest’s alteration of *ressentiment*’s (previously outward-turning) direction – the priest “deadens[s] pain by means of affects” (ibid, ibid). This means that s/he is driving this pain – these dangerous, explosive potentials (like resentment and envy) – “out of consciousness” (ibid, ibid [my underline]). This is how the Jewish *ex-plosion* of hatred can be re-directed: what had been turned outwards is now turned inwards, and the herd-creature no longer hates those around it (whether fellow “sheep” or fellow peoples), but *itself*; freeing it to ‘love’ all others and seduce them into its own sickness (and its own anesthetic); a sickness whereby all externalizations of self-distinction (through other-hating) will be denied/revoked but assured the appearance of love, or peace.³⁴¹

What's more, is that the aforementioned internalization (operating as/through the priest's reversal), must, in the Christian "flock," become an *individual* internalization: this was the meaning of making a Son of 'Man' out of who used to be the God of *Israel*; that the self-distinction and separation of the Jewish people be usurped insofar as the separation now resides within "individuals," thus allowing for potentially all such "individuals" to reach Salvation, to become a part of the Christian "family of Man" (those who possess a 'soul').³⁴² When weak in political power and miserable, according to Nietzsche, this new "interiorized Jew" begins looking outside himself for some-thing/-one *outside himself* to blame. While not a problem for the Jewish people – whose separation was from the rest of the worldly nations (and could maintain cohesion based on the rejection of these "externalities") – this does become a problem for this "proto-Christian" priest: being a member of one big family where "all" are, *essentially* (i.e. at least in potential) "Jews," the guilty party, the target of hatred, now threatens to become *anyone* around me, anyone I come in contact with. While the Jews, as a people, maintained their separation, not to say segregation, with fervor and consistency, I, as an individual, find it much more difficult, since I cannot offer myself the social supports of an entire community.

With regards to its ever-expanding 'herd,' the priest needs to face a new necessity of *ressentiment*: the larger the "herd," the more keeping it together is difficult; the self-distinction of the Jews, generalized through its internalization in/through 'Man,' threatens to turn into what Thomas Hobbes famously called a '*bellum omnium contra omnes*'.³⁴³ The herd is marked, according to Nietzsche, with the "reasoning common to all the sick" (ibid, ibid); a "*ratio*" that traces any and all plebeian pains back to a cause, to a *guilty party* (GM III §16, p. 128). If the Jewish accusation towards its outsides opens a radical 'Why?' question towards every thing that appears, every difference that is felt or perceived as *external*, the ascetic priest will find a mechanism whereby this 'Why?' could be used as an engine of cohesion rather than dissolution; where the question is both teased out of the "sheep," and used to accuse the sheep for its guilt and sin (for, if the question arises, it denotes an infirmity of its faith in God).

The old, *proud* Jewish 'hatred' gives birth to a (generic) 'self' that is made to feel guilt for this hatred; a hatred that is now directed at the remaining "Jew" – buried within this 'self' – that yet fulminates against its outsides. If the Jewish 'Why?' was dynamite – always opening and multiplying differences/distances – this was how the priest appropriated it into a kind of "spiritual combustion engine;" one that advances and embraces like love, but also disperses the "Jewish toxin" (like an engine's "emissions") throughout the world. This, I believe, is also the source of Christianity's blindness to their own basic stance, their own sickness; a blindness that could perhaps be compared to a good-

willed “hugging machine,” but with a poisoned spike coming out of its chest. Nietzsche will never cease to mention, in amazement, the “price” of the ascetic ideals that come out of this structure (whereby *ressentiment* is directed-back, *against* the uprising slave), at “[...] how much blood and cruelty lie at the bottom of all “good things!” (GM II §3, p. 62) First, the priest redefines every ‘individual’ as *equal* to every other individual, and then I offer this, reduced or “flattened” creature – whose power is denied *ex hypothesi* (except it’s *God’s* “hypothesis” – “we are all equal in the eyes of God”) – my ‘love’ as a Christian, as an equal member in the same family of guilty and sinful ‘souls,’ *all of whom* seek Salvation from *the same God*

The Jews, fearful of a vengeful God, indeed had already brought about the connection between ‘guilt’ and ‘suffering:’ the Jew who sins against God’s Law is made to suffer for it, “pay” for her “sins.” But there is an important distinction to be made here: while the Jew might be guilty in the eyes of God for specific infractions against God’s Law – and be, moreover, convinced by her priest that any suffering incurred is the direct result, the effect, of these infractions – the very fact that God’s Law is *written*, external(ized), exposes it to endless disputes and (re-)interpretations; this maintain the community in constant peril of dissolution, effectively forcing it to limited numbers (which is the only way, *in this relation to God*, to maintain cohesion). No ‘self’ arbitrates its own guilt in Judaism, but only God’s Law – as an infinite hermeneutic swamp – which remains not only external, but *wholly* so.

Christian guilt is altogether different: whether in the Catholic Church’s ‘Dogma’ (that “dries the swamp,” thus obviating the Jewish praxis of interpretation and argument over God’s Law/Letter), or in the Protestant internalization that dreams of – as with what Laurence Dickey calls the “protestant civil piety” of Kant and Hegel³⁴⁴ – an ‘invisible Church’ that no longer requires such external artifices or “dangerous supplements,” Christian guilt effectively neutralizes *all* claims to height/difference from within its community. Its Doctrine of Original Sin, combined with its concept of the ‘soul,’ will always insist that all are equal insofar as all are “equally guilty in the eyes of God.” It is, in essence, a *generalization*: what, *in Judaism*, was a principle of justifying *specific* pain and suffering, *every time* they arise, and with reference to an *external* Source, becomes ‘Man’s condition’ of ‘sin’ and ‘guilt;’ the all that presides over the concept of ‘humanity,’ owes much of its own cohesion to this theological origin, this ethico-metaphysical gesture.³⁴⁵

This question of cohesion is also why I have been avoiding, as far as possible, to refer to Judaism as a ‘religion’ in an unproblematic way. If one accepts Augustine’s etymology of the Latin *religio*, the verb *religare*, which means a binding together, does not do justice to how Judaism conceives of itself.

The latter, rather, refers to its “faith” in the Hebrew word “*Dat*,” which literally means *Law*, and the emphasis hence shifts – but this was an original emphasis, shifted by Christian theology – from the binding togetherness of the ἐκκλησία (Ancient Greek for ‘assembly’), to the externality and singularity of a chosen people’s reception of God’s Law (the ‘Torah’). This Law, and this is what so annoyed both Luther and Hegel (and, mutatis mutandis, Heidegger and Kant), forever remains “there” – infinitely High, yet present in/as Holy Text – as the object of this “faith.”

The Jews, it seems, cannot claim to love God since God’s Law is always there to mediate between them; hence the difference between the vengeful and proud Old Testament God, and the loving and forgiving God of the New Testament. In his “Jewish works,” Emmanuel Lévinas makes an interesting point. In a short essay – properly titled ‘Loving the Torah more than God’ – Lévinas treats the post-Holocaust short story *Yossel Rakover Speaks to God*, describing a scene wherein, having witnessed the Nazi horror, Yossel exclaims:

[...] I believe in Israel’s God even if He has done everything to stop me from believing in Him. I believe in His laws even if I cannot justify His actions. [...] I bow my head before His greatness, but will not kiss the rod with which He strikes me [recall Nietzsche’s “affirmative indignation;” SC]. I love Him, but I love His Torah more.³⁴⁶

To which Lévinas rejoins, saying,

[...] Here I believe we see the specific face of Judaism: the link between God and man is not an emotional communion that takes place within the love of a God incarnate, but a spiritual or intellectual relationship which takes place through an education in the Torah (‘Loving the Torah more than God,’ DF, p. 144 [my underlines])

If Yossel Rakover, the Jew, refuses to kiss the rod with which God strikes him, this is because of the *singular and exceptional* status of God’s Law, the Torah: if there is no *generalized* ‘guilt,’ then any and all suffering, even if it could and should be traced back to “God’s will,” must pass through the mediation of the Law (a Law that, moreover, is *only addressed to the Jews*): How and why was the Law broken? What is the meaning of the Law with regards to this specific breach? This aforementioned “hermeneutic swamp” necessarily interjects the Jews’ own (unstable) judgment concerning the justice behind their suffering (as ‘punishment’).³⁴⁷

I understand Yossel to intimate that, in the eyes of the chosen Jew, God is never *automatically* justified (as ‘guilt’ allows Him to be). Jewish ‘guilt’ arrives always and only as exception, as interruption, in contradistinction to the Christian *state* of ‘guilt,’ which makes *all ‘human’ existence* already a “fallen” existence, and thus obviating all need to search for, to question after, a reason for its arrival (there is either a Dogma and a priestly hierarchy that mediates the Law as ‘God’s will,’ or there

is, with the Reformation, an individual internalization and faith that reconcile it). Yossel, unlike the reconciled Christian, will not kiss the rod with which God beats him, precisely for this Jewish suspicion, this Jewish questioning and tradition of (re-)interpretation, this Jewish indignation and “hatred;” they love the Torah (the Law) more than God. *En bref*, there is no such thing – at least in this, “Messiah-less” world/history – as a Jewish theodicy.

Another key difference between *ressentiment* before and after the ‘victory’ of Christianity has to do with the *particularity* of God’s Law, which relates back to the question of (Jewish) ‘vanity’ or ‘nobility.’ As mentioned earlier, a certain birth-right is maintained in Judaism with regards to God’s Law, which is only ever valid for the Jews as God’s chosen people; it was *never* an ‘evangel,’ never a Law destined for indoctrination in others (be it via missionary proselytization or military conquest), but one that was intended to shine forth as a beacon in the darkness.³⁴⁸ As this direction-bestowing example – but recall that this mission was to attend Judaism until the Messiah arrives and this light could be concentrated in Zion/Jerusalem and the new (and last) Holy Temple – this function needed to self-differentiate, *needed to be both visible and external*, something which fit well with the *nomadic* life that the stateless Jews have had, for centuries, in their Diasporic existence/behavior (an existence which, again, was almost antithetical to that of the Christian missionaries, explorers/entrepreneurs, Crusaders or civilizers).³⁴⁹ A ray of light would drown in a world full of light – here lay, in essence, the genius and radicality of Christian metaphysics’ attack on Jewish exceptionalism, precisely proceeding as an ‘Enlightenment,’ a knowledge-seeking, ‘scientific’ project.

As it has been repeatedly in the Bible, any other pain and misery in the world *could* be explained by God’s Law, but not *necessarily in the same way*. The hateful Jew, who *distinguishes* himself from all the other nations (Gentiles; ‘Goyim’), had elevated this hatred to the most transcendent heights, and, as Nietzsche says, spiritualized his vengeance upon the rest of the world (that fought with and eventually conquered and dispersed the Jews). The latter’s hatred and self-differentiation achieves the most “spiritual” inscription in their *transcendent* God, who *should not* be represented, and that knowledge of Whom, categorically, cannot be found “here below” (and indeed should not even be sought) – leaving the Jews to forever “wonder” (though this is a non-Aristotelian, indeed quite *obsessive*, kind of “wonder”) after God’s Justice and the meaning of God’s Law. Hence they needn’t ever look outside of their own (chosen) people to other people – their God assures their privilege and their separation. Towards the end of Lévinas’ short essay on Yossel’s story, then, we read the following, Jewish,

depiction of “spirit,” where the relation to God is not made immanent by guilt and debt, but retain the Letter of Law/Torah and its elevated separation, its *transcendence*:

Man’s real humanity and gentle nature enter into the world with the harsh words of an exacting God. Spirituality is offered up not through a tangible substance, but through absence. God is real and concrete not through incarnation but through Law, and His greatness is not inspired by His sacred mystery. His greatness does not provoke fear and trembling, but fills us with high thoughts. To hide one’s face so as to demand the superhuman of man, to create a man who can approach God and speak to Him without always being in His debt – that is a truly divine mark of greatness! [...] Nurtured by a faith that is produced by the Torah, he reproaches God for His inordinate Greatness and excessive demands. (DF, p. 145 [my underline])

Just as Christian metaphysics does not take kindly to this con-descending separation of ‘God’ and ‘World’ – a *Deus Absconditus*, whose *Revelatus* nature occurred *as an event* to a *particular* people (rather than persisted as a ‘human condition’ that narratively “evolves,” pro-jected, through history) – Christian morality does not take kindly to this privilege, deeming it proud and “scandalous,” vain. Indeed, the sin of ‘Pride,’ in Christian theology, is the defining Sin of the Devil Himself; the sin where one possesses “the appetite for excellence in excess of right reason”.³⁵⁰ The Christian God’s “favorite” was always only ‘Man’ – hence His incarnation in human form as Jesus Christ. Through Christ God had signaled the New Testament of His Will, no longer as an exceptional, interruptive Law – that comes, *seemingly without reason*, to persecute His chosen *people* – but as a generalized state of ‘Guilt’ (for Original Sin) that envelopes and *comprehends*, or ‘loves,’ the *entirety* of the world and its various people. God descends to Earth in human form, in the form of His Son, to redeem the world of its sins through the example of Christ’s Divine goodness and suffering (or goodness-cum-suffering).

The question now becomes what to make of the fact that Nietzsche, time and again reminds us that Jesus was, indeed, born Jewish? How does the hateful and suspicious Jew, who self-differentiates and clings to his privilege with an unexampled stubbornness (against all odds and all historical calamity), become the reconciled, loving Jesus Christ – in whose *ekklesia* all are welcome, who is the Son of God and is the conduit for the collective salvation of ‘Man’ as such (regardless of any “nobility,” of birth or creed or otherwise)? Where, in short, did all the ‘hatred’ go?³⁵¹

I venture to conclude that this problem – of an external hatred that was swallowed and denied by an “inclusive,” reconciling ‘love’ – is what lay at the basis of Nietzsche’s genealogical project. His oft-stated complaints are to be read in this vein: viz., concerning how and why modern ‘science’ and ‘philosophy’ consistently misconstrue, indeed have not even the basic tools to understand, the hatred that pulsates at the heart of their ‘moral world order’ and ‘truth’ (GM III §27, p. 161); the vehemence of

the Christian denunciation of noble privilege, the will to power behind ideals of ‘impartiality;’ their humility before God’s Truth and Will as it unfolds in-and-throughout history, a world composed of ‘subjects’ (or ‘souls’) who are all *equally* guilty (and equally deserving of redemption from this guilt) in His eyes... Could this new “equality” and “impartiality” with respect to the Jewish God – who, as “Christian,” no longer discriminates and elevates, no longer selects and privileges – be done any justice once *ressentiment* has been victorious? What would it take for this, previously vengeful (born of a hateful and resenting people), God, to suddenly become a ‘loving’ God, announced by the most gentle and loving, the most forgiving of human beings? How much blood and pain, how much violence would have to be *both* perpetrated *and* denied in the name of this God? These are the questions that Nietzsche, the “immoralist,” tries to address in his *Genealogy*.

It is this aforementioned totalizing (and tranquilizing) equality – and its attendant hope of redemption – that Nietzsche calls with disdain “the democratic prejudice.” It should not be read, hence, as a mere state-political stance, a Nietzschean prescription/policy or interdiction against a particular kind of state rule or regime in themselves, as if the ‘state’ were somehow endemic to his ethico-metaphysical inquiry.³⁵² It is only the specifically modern appearance of democracy – its *Christian interpretation and recuperation from Greek nobility* – that Nietzsche disdains. He recognizes that some glaring problem with its origin had been systematically glossed-over, and denied. The ‘democratic prejudice,’ hence, is not an attack on Ancient Greek ‘democracy,’ but on *its metaphysical distortion*: the Greek achievement was heavily based upon a privileged nobility of a select few, separated and elevated above the rest of the *polis*; the Greek values of equality (*iso-nomia* and *ise-goria*) were only enforced, only made sense, in the *agora*’s assembly of Greek *citizens* (excluding women, merchants and, of course, slaves). The way that Christian Europe, the Europe of *ressentiment*, appropriated Greek “democracy” reflected precisely this blindness to Greek nobility, hence making ‘democracy’ more a prejudice than a viable concept/project: this prejudice allowed itself to, somehow, “forget” this initial selection and privilege, this initial separation and elevation, thereby denigrating and falsifying – and here is Nietzsche’s “beef” with ‘metaphysics’ – the conditions that gave rise to this Greek culture, conditions which Nietzsche identifies, precisely, in the ‘pathos of distance.’

When Nietzsche complains of the genealogists of morality, as shown above, that they have no ‘historical sense’ – it is, hence, this debilitating influence of a metaphysically distorted ‘democracy’ that he aims to critique. This is Nietzsche the phenomenologist, the psychologist, the *teacher*: it is not enough to “know what you do”³⁵³ – like having a “right to make promises” – it is necessary to go

beyond, to breach this veil of “Truth,” this procrustean bed of “Knowledge,” and confront the (more *divisive*) metaphysical question – ‘Why?’. Only when this ‘Why?’ is done justice to in this manner, can it be affirmed, can it cease to be turned against itself and against every interruption to its ‘spirit’ – whether in the good faith of the Catholic Church or in the bad faith of the, Protestant-born(e), ‘secular democracy’ in Europe.

This is also why the question – which is often treated by various “good willed” Christian interpreters as a riddle or an enigma – of how the most intense and lasting hatred of a particular people in the history of the world was the Christian hatred against the Jews is of supreme importance. If Christian metaphysics had imposed a certain blindness on the followers of Christ, a certain denial of the Judaism that still stands at the origin of their Christianity and still marks the “identity” of Jesus Christ, then perhaps one might bring it closer to acknowledging the *unchecked* hatred that is allowed to persist, unannounced and unrecognized in all of their ‘good works’ (an endeavor which, for all that, *should not* be reduced to shaming or “guilt-tripping” Christians), through studying the various traces that are still visible when ‘anti-Semitism’ makes a brief, paroxysmal, appearance (be it in discursive cases like von Trier’s case, or the paroxysmal eruption of Jew-lynching that pepper European-Christian history). I am not alone in claiming that the so-called “secularization” of Europe, in the aftermath of the Christian Reformation and then the Enlightenment, only served to conceal and efface such appearances, though I will forcefully bring this to bear – and here I might have fewer allies³⁵⁴ – on the ethico-metaphysical nature of the modern methodologies of ‘science’ and ‘philosophy,’ especially when it comes to the crucial, and *painful*, questions of violence and justice.

3.3 Justice to Noble Haters: Greek Envy

[...] What weighed upon [the Jew] originally was that he was the assassin of Christ. Have we ever stopped to consider the intolerable situation of men condemned to live in a society that adores the God they have killed? Originally, the Jew was therefore a murderer or the son of a murderer – which in the eyes of a community with a pre-logical concept of responsibility amounts inevitably to the same thing – it was as such that he was taboo. [...] if the anti-Semite has chosen the Jew as the object of his hate, it is because of the religious horror that the latter has always inspired

– Jean-Paul Sartre³⁵⁵

[...] Attend to them! These cellar rodents full of vengefulness and hatred – what have they made of revenge and hatred? Have you heard these words uttered? If you trusted simply to their words, would you suspect you were among men of *ressentiment*?

– Friedrich Nietzsche³⁵⁶

When, in a work that long precedes the *Genealogy*, Nietzsche turns to the problem of resentment or envy (*Groll*) in Greek paganism (i.e. *before the onset of ressentiment*), he not only treats of it in a “non-resentful” style, but finds himself alone in extolling this “negative affect,” particularly against his (Christian) contemporaries’ blindness to its useful, “life-affirming” side. Envy, for Nietzsche, only ever becomes a problem (deserving of his vitriol) when the “best” in a community remains within it, instead of being broken-off from it; resentment would be the affect that envy becomes with regards to this internal-yet-uncontestable “best.” Ressentiment is the result of the ideals that naturalize resentment. Owing to its essentially negative and reactive nature, resentment – not only *envy* of a “happier” other, but also her *moral condemnation* (i.e., the Jewish reversal) – arises in anger and indignation.

Here, right after the Jewish reversal of pagan values, is the critical role of the priest as reversing the reversal itself. The priest needs to “de-fang” resentment so that it does not disintegrate his “flock.” The Christian theologian Thomas Aquinas – fitting here for his own “spiritual” commitment to, much like Hegel, reconcile Christian theology and Greek (Aristotelian) philosophy – says of envy that it ought, “[...] not to be taken for a passion, but for a will”.³⁵⁷ Considering the above discussion about the priest’s breeding of ‘conscience,’ with its the ethico-metaphysical assumption of (free) will, the priest focuses on envy as one of the two most “spiritual” – and hence most dangerous and pervasive (the other one being, of course, Pride) – of the “deadly sins.” As a ‘spiritual’ sin, envy, like pride, is a sin that devolves upon a defect in the will;³⁵⁸ a will that is not sufficiently ‘good’ or ‘free’ (and, indeed, is so dangerous that it can – and has (in the case of Satan and His followers) – also affect God’s Angels)³⁵⁹. The priest makes sure that for each such “failing,” the herd animal will self-chastise, feel the *pain* of an internally inflicted punishment, since, “man is punished with sorrow on account of the pleasure taken in sin” (ibid, Q.64.3). If ‘envy’ arises, it becomes a sign of a want of something inferior, a private, rather than a universal/comprehensive, good; and hence – an illegitimate, *guilty*.³⁶⁰

This, I argue, is the reason that in Nietzsche’s-day climate (a Europe sick with *ressentiment*) ‘resentment’ indeed becomes the *sign* of a problem, of an envy *not sufficiently stifled* by guilt, to be more precise, and hence considered bad or shameful. When it comes to the Ancient Greek, however – where ‘resentment’ had not yet become accused/guilty – it appeared as a height-affirming function, making the entire community rise to excellence (“height” is taken to mean, here, possession of an affirmative value and its capacity to generate meaning and authorize action):³⁶¹ the ‘lower’ feel envy towards the ‘higher’ and wish this height on themselves (and so try harder to emulate it), and the “*höheren Menschen*,” as the *better* (but not wholly “best”), have other nations’ “higher men” to measure

up against (with the gods remaining both differentiated enough and multiple enough so as to not “monopolize” value in the Christian manner). It is only when ‘envy’ is treated by the priest that it becomes ‘evil,’ or a ‘deadly sin of spirit.’

Under the height-/mastery-denying power of *ressentiment*, then – where the ‘best,’ as *unreachable*, is internalized, and remains festering *within* the community (as a totalizing, non-nation-specific, ‘ideal’ or ‘symbol’) – the frustration of both lower and the higher grows, both losing their taste for the *distinction of height*: the weaker are both discouraged by feeling twice-removed from the height of the ‘best,’ and “anaesthetized” by *sharing* “one remove” with the strong; and the stronger are discouraged by being both *humiliated* by this aforementioned “sharing,” and themselves discouraged for being *denied enjoyment* of their height, which becomes insufficient, “lower.” The “best,” for Nietzsche, should have been allowed its own (self-)distinction – hence always “homeless,” inaugurating *new* values *elsewhere* (e.g., Zarathustra) – instead of being *distributed evenly to all* in the community in/as an ‘ideal’ that applies to *all men* and at *all times*. That is how *ressentiment* suffocates the *distinction* of value itself – of that which in it bears testimony to *Distanz* – which was *ressentiment’s* way of, as Hegel puts it, “negating the latter’s negation/difference,” its infinite powers of (self-)distinction, making it “gnaw” on itself to the point of losing itself, in a nihilism that can neither engender new values, nor even properly conceive of their genealogy any longer.

In a ‘Preface’ to *Homers Wettkampf* (‘Homer’s Contest’ – an 1872 work that Nietzsche never published), Nietzsche sets out to study the *expressions* of hatred (i.e., shameless cruelty), this time, not of ‘Jews’ or ‘Christians,’ but of the noble Greeks themselves. The text of the preface unfolds from an interest in the relation of ‘humanity’ to ‘nature,’ but essentially becomes an attempt to conceive of ‘humanity’ in light of its glorious beginning in the Ancient Greek ‘spirit.’ Nietzsche, specializing in Ancient philology, is poring over Homer’s and Thucydides’ texts to find brutal scenes of the most minute and grisly detail of violence and torture. The *explicit* scenes where enemies are tortured, dragged on the ground by horses, their women raped, their children sold to slavery, etc. – these scenes are so detailed that Nietzsche indeed exclaims in wonder: “Why did the whole Greek world exult at the [brutal] images of the Iliad? I fear that we do not understand this “Greekly” enough, indeed that we should shudder if we should for once understand it Greekly”.³⁶²

“We look here”, Nietzsche writes, “into the abyss of hatred [*die Abgründe des Hasses*]” (ibid, ibid). The Greek, as Nietzsche notes in this early text, “[...] thought of letting his hatred [*Hasses*] stream outward completely as a serious [*ernste*] necessity” (ibid, ibid [my underline]). Here Nietzsche’s serious necessity is

a prescription for, or the described “instinct” for, looking at hatred and cruelty head-on. This means – and here one should keep Foxman and “our instinct” in mind – not only studying ‘hatred’ in a “despite-our-instinct” manner, where some imputed “impartiality” might isolate the researcher from the more “morally compromising” or “inhumane” aspects of this act of “seeing.” It would seem that the Greeks – though the inventors of what European thought understands to be “democracy” – possessed none of that “humane instinct,” and, in fact, possessed the opposite instinct of making cruelty into a spectacle, a celebration or an enemy’s defeat. Perhaps something in Foxman’s “instinct” responds to the aforementioned “shudder” that Nietzsche surmised would become the European researcher upon encountering Greek ‘cruelty;’ that “our instinct” suggests that something in “our understanding” already dictates some affective aversion to the whole scene, the scene where cruelty and hatred are not only allowed to “stream out,” but given constructive moral roles for this pagan noble sensibility.

The genealogy of “our instinct” thus turns to the Judeo-Christian appropriation and understanding of such cruel pagan nobility. Interestingly enough, the phrase “abyss of hatred” is repeated in the *Genealogy* with regards to the Jews, who, “with awe inspiring consistency,” – having inverted the noble values – “hang on to this inversion with their teeth, the teeth of the most abysmal hatred [*abgründlichsten Hasses*]” (GM I §7, p. 34/KGW 6.2:281). What is important to note here, in the following analysis, is how the very ‘*Abgründe*’ of hatred is, according to Nietzsche’s critique, *consistently* misconstrued by its Euro-Christian interpreters.³⁶³ This misconstrual can be articulated with the tools gained from the discussion above, where the English psychologists, as “sick” thinkers of *ressentiment*, show complete ignorance towards the *Distanz* necessary for moral valuation: Christian morality, having obviated the Jewish “*abgründlichsten*” (*most* abysmal) hatred, *a fortiori* obviates, can no longer “see the evil” of – just like Christian metaphysics had obviated the Jewish, infinite *Distanz* – the Greeks’ “*abgründig*” (abysmal) character. The instinct to look away thus begins as the historical/external removal of the Jewish people from all pagans (and their cruelty), but ending up with the ahistorical/internal mechanism whereby the historical/geographical separation becomes internalized as an “instinct;” an instinct which, as a new, perhaps one could say *conditioned* response to cruelty and violence, generalizes and internalizes the Jewish worldly aversion to the “evil” of the pagans, losing both its historical bearing/dimension and its externality/visibility. Now, “our instinct to look away” – since it is “within” and operates directly on the affects (a little like the auto-suggestion of hypnosis) – allows us to maintain this aversion to “hatred” *even when directly facing it*; as if “our instinct” somehow tells me I should “see no evil”...

In ‘Homer’s Contest,’ Nietzsche seeks the genealogy of the Greeks’ honest, serious (*Ernst*) cruelty and violence, this Homeric “*Rechte des Kriegs*” (right of war). However, even Homer, for Nietzsche, is still too “civilized,” too “artistic” and “deceiving;” and so he seeks what lies behind Homer’s universe, where Homer will no longer protect the reader from the horror that must lay behind it. This is where it will be revealed – and to this end Nietzsche will read Hesiod’s poems and Theogonist myths – the horror of “a life, over which alone the *children of the night quarrel*, lust, deception, old age, and death rule” (ibid, ibid). He identifies the difference between his own (German-Protestant) culture and the Greek’s in the latter’s approach to battle, particularly to the pleasure in victory; a cruel pleasure, an affirmed and celebrated, *externalized* one.

Nietzsche locates this difference in the ethico-mythological concept of ‘Eris’ – the goddess of strife and discord (ibid, p. 83/KGW 3.2:280). Hesiod’s *Works and Days*, Nietzsche notes, begins with an account of Eris, and straightaway declares “[t]here are two goddesses Eris upon the Earth” (ibid, p. 84). These two goddesses, Hesiod continues, have each a distinct, and indeed ethically opposing, kind of “temperament:” one ‘Eris’ “promotes the bad war and discord,” a burdensome ‘Eris’ associated with bodily needs; the second one, however, “planted” by Zeus himself, was the Eris of envy and resentment (*Neid, Groll*): it “drives even the unskilled man to work” and “is good for human beings”; it is the mutual envy in Greek society that drives their people to prosperity and heights (ibid, pp. 84-85).

It is in this context of envy/resentment that Nietzsche arrives at a curious “mistake” made by his present day philological scholars: they seem to *always relate these concepts to the “bad” Eris*, concluding that they are inauthentic and/or badly positioned (ibid, p. 85/3.2:281). Nietzsche, characteristically, wonders what this interpretation is *symptomatic* of, perhaps what kind of ‘will to power’ (though this name would be anachronistic in 1872) stands behind these scholars’ *decision* – interpretation, selection – concerning the text. He arrives at a very similar conclusion to the ones he would achieve, more than 10 years later, in his *Genealogy*: “they must have been inspired [*inspirirt*], unnoticed, by another ethic than the Hellenic” (ibid, ibid [my underline]). He further notes – corroborating his insights with Aristotle’s treatment of the Hesiodic text³⁶⁴ – that “the collected Greek antiquity thinks otherwise about resentment and envy” (ibid, pp. 85-86). In re-thinking the *difference* between the two goddesses, Nietzsche understands that resentment and envy belong, are the impetus to, not the “bad” Eris that rules over wars of annihilation but, rather, the “good” Eris that belongs to the Greek concept(ion) of the ‘Contest,’ of the testing and trial of forces within the community (ibid, p. 86). It would appear, then, that in Nietzsche’s Europe the two motivations – those of murder and competition

– had been short-circuited, and the *difference* between them – morally, or “spiritually,” effaced. Hence Nietzsche’s exclamation: “what a cleft of ethical judgment between us and him! [i.e. the Greek; SC]” (ibid, ibid).

We have here not only a difference in the ethical relation (a difference, moreover, that authorizes the domination/interpretation of the Greek text by Nietzsche’s Christian peers), but also a metaphysical difference (insofar as the “Erises” are directly related to Zeus). Considering, what Nietzsche says in the following is very telling. This passage merits a longer quotation, for here the noble Greek not only “admits” of envy, but accords it *an ethical dignity*, which he directly relates to *divinity*:

[...] Because he [the Greek] is envious, he also feels with every excess of honor, riches, brilliance, and fortune, the envious eye of a god rests upon him and he fears this envy; in this case it warns him of the transitoriness of every human lot, he dreads his fortune and offering the best therefrom he humbles himself before the divine envy. This idea does not, as it were, alienate him from his gods: their significance is therewith circumscribed in opposition [Gegentheil], that with them the human being may never dare a contest [Wettkampf], he whose soul blushes jealously against every other living being. (ibid, p. 86/KGW 3.2:281)

It appears that envy and its attending ‘resentment’ are not only “divinely ordained,” but are, like the ‘Eris’ of the ‘contest,’ *essential* to the entire Greek conception of nobility and value, up to and including their “most high.” Thought metaphysically, it denotes “the effect of a *beneficent* divinity [*noblthätigen Gotttheit*]” (ibid, ibid), whereby – and here we begin to touch on Nietzsche’s un-Hegelian understanding of Greek tragedy – envy appears as a divine right and a mark of divine distinction. The very same Zeus that instills in the Greek the noble charge to always be envious of “every living being,” interjects his own privilege, his own ‘nobility’ (i.e., *Distanz*), by *defining his separation in these terms*, a “code” of envy, if you will. Greek elevation, in other words, is only ordained from on high to rise from below, but *retaining the “most high” as forever unreachable* by it, ungraspable. Hence, Greek nobility’s ascension to height, is – in a structure reminiscent of the Biblical Tower of Babel story – marked by the divine as already a kind of (nobility-authorizing-while-limiting) “transcendent:” a self-overcoming that ought never to breach Zeus’ divine limit, i.e., never challenge the gods themselves to ‘contest.’ Greek ‘tragedy,’ then, can be seen as the following condition of the Greek noble: “the greater and more sublime [*erhabener* (*Erhabenheit* – transcendence; elevation)] a Greek human being is, so much brighter does the ambitious flame break out of him” (ibid, p. 87/KGW 3.2:281), so much more envy does he feel (even, Nietzsche adds, towards *the dead*).

At this point, where this interdiction is broken in Greek society, Nietzsche identifies the origin of the punishment of ostracism, and here one can spy a more “literal” relation to *otherness*, that

complements the above analogy of ‘transcendence.’ Nietzsche, hence, proceeds to quote from Heraclitus: “Among us no one should [*soll*] be the best: but if someone is it, then let him be elsewhere [*anderswo*] and with others [*Anderen*]” (ibid, p. 88/KGW 3.2:282). This *dynamic* of nobility will be more relevant when we discuss Hegel’s treatment of Abra(ha)m’s self-exile from his native soil, but for now let us think of this in the Greeks-Jews-Christians constellation that we are following; for it appears that what Nietzsche says about the depths of *ressentiment* and the height of nobility are here linked as in a mirror image. Something, to anticipate, is being left in “reserve” by both Greek and Jew, and some kind of incarnated ‘perfection’ troubles both their nobilities in radical ways. While the “*Distanz*” to ‘perfection’ is categorically different for both – trans-historical and absolute in Judaism, historical and tragic/fatal in Greek paganism – the role of the ‘other’ is similar in their nobilities: “best” is always relegated to an elsewhere, precisely for their “un(con)testable” otherness.

Let us start at the end, pretending we are dealing with a Greek noble society in all cases, in order to surface the differences between the three “religions” and their relation to this contest-immune “best:” a Greek *polis*, for example, within which a Man claims to be the Son of Zeus, that is, of divine substance, would be ostracized according to the laws of ‘envy’ that the Homeric contest prescribes. Here is a creature that Zeus himself would be threatened by, a Man on Earth that Zeus could be envious of – and this, as shown above, Zeus would never allow. The Greek people themselves, as a community, would be resentful of the unique, *individual* privilege, which violates the *collective* privilege that keeps their people “upwardly mobile,” as it were (what would be the point of the Greek’s envy if the ‘most high’ had already been achieved?); immune to all human contest, making the contest pointless, taking away all of its appeal (and function).

Now, to return to the Monotheist realm, we turn to the Christian Gospel,

The Jews took up stones again to stone him. Jesus replied, “I have shown you many good works from the Father. For which of these are you going to stone me?” The Jews answered, “It is not for a good work that we are going to stone you, but for blasphemy, because you, though only a human being, are making yourself God.” (John 10:31-33)

We can see here a similar *structure* to that of the Greek nobility; a similar way, all-but-forgotten by now, with which ‘nobility’ *defends itself*: the Jewish God, no less jealous of His transcendent privilege as Zeus (recall the Tower of Babel), will not allow for any competition, any presence or *immediate incarnation* that does not pass through an interpretation of His Law (indeed the traditional source of Jewish jealousy and pride). No “good work,” no “achievement” will allow any individual to claim access to the ‘most high,’ the transcendent, for this will lower Divinity itself, thereby losing the –

people's (in the case of paganism), or the entire world's (in the case of Monotheism) – sense of nobility and privilege.³⁶⁵ In condemning Jesus, then, the Jews seem to be following the Greek instinct of promoting and defending a “healthy” envy whereby all of them are competing for God's favor without anyone ever declared “best.” As a famous verse in the Talmud (discussing the manners of performing the duty of teaching God's Law to children), reads: “Jealousy among scholars increases wisdom”.³⁶⁶

Of course, while both of these self-distinguishing, *noble* societies – the Jews and the Greeks – share a similar structure, they are neither geared towards the same goals, nor are they beholden to the same transcendence. Nietzsche says with regards to the Greek *nation's* pedagogy (*Volkspädagogik*), “the goal of the agonal education was the welfare [*Wohlfahrt*] of the whole, the national [*staatlichen*] society” (*Homer's Contest*, p. 89/KGW 3.2:283 [translation modified]), while the Jewish community, alas, always prostrated itself before God and claimed only to follow His Laws regardless of their “welfare” of worldly fate. The “jealousy” of the Jews was a scholarly jealousy, wholly directed towards wisdom, to rise to the challenge of having been chosen.

And yet the point remains that both the Greeks and the Jews had, “religiously,” affirmed a *Distanz* attended by a conception of height as the measure of value and valuation; even if the historical/actual values of the Greeks, the intra-historical *Distanz* between ‘noble’ and ‘plebeian,’ were reversed and exponentialized by the “imaginary revenge” of the Jews, where the *Distanz* was made virtual and trans-historical. Beholden to an utterly transcendent God, *only competing amongst themselves* – for only they are chosen by the *one* God (just as Monotheism allows no “divine competition” between various gods, it cannot accord any lasting importance to the “political competition” between various *Volkes*) – the Jews react to Greek nobility with their own, dangerous and *deep*, ‘spiritual’ nobility.

The “virtualization” of *Distanz* in the world-reclusive Jews is less visible – less “in being” Nietzsche would say – than the historical *Distanz* of the Greek. In order to study it better, one has to find those rare, perhaps forgotten, times where what I am calling here ‘Jewish nobility’ – ordinarily reclusive shying-away from confrontation – does in fact assert itself; an important way-point in tracking the “spiritual” practice of war that the “slave revolt” had initiated, a war more insidious and clandestine, inaugurating a “secret black art [*schwarze Kunst*]” (GM I §8, p. 35/KGW 6.2:283). Here is how, in the *Genealogy*, Nietzsche makes the *juxtaposition* between the Greek and the Jewish/Priestly ‘nobility.’

[...] The knightly-aristocratic [*ritterlich-aristokratischen*] value judgments presupposed a powerful physicality, a flourishing, abundant, even overflowing health, together with that which serves to preserve it: war, adventure, hunting, dancing, war games, and in general all that involves vigorous, free, joyful activity. The priestly-noble [*priestlich-vornehme*] mode of valuation presupposes, as we have

seen, other [*andere*] things: it is disadvantageous for it when it comes to war! As is well known, the priests are the *most evil enemies* – but why? Because they are the most impotent. It is because of their impotence [*Ohnmacht*] that in them hatred grows to monstrous and uncanny [*Unheimliche*] proportions, to the most spiritual [*Geistigste*] and poisonous kind of hatred. The truly great haters in world history have always been priests; likewise the most ingenious [*geistreichsten*] haters: other kinds of spirit hardly come into consideration when compared with the spirit of priestly vengefulness. Human history would be altogether too stupid a thing without the spirit that the impotent have introduced into it – let us take at once the most notable example. All that has been done on earth against "the noble," "the powerful," "the masters," "the rulers," fades into nothing compared with what the *Jews* have done against them; the Jews, that priestly people, who in opposing their enemies and conquerors were ultimately satisfied with nothing less than a radical [*radikale*] revaluation of their enemies' values, that is to say, an act of the *most spiritual revenge*. (GM I §7, pp. 33-34/KGW 6.2:280-281 [my underline])

The Jewish priest, as noble, shares some qualities of the Greek nobility, except for two important differences. While still beholden, *as a particular people*, to a transcendent God, and still *disallowing its own activity to ever "catch up" with God's transcendence* (thus allowing the aforementioned 'envy' to work in the service of wisdom – a mark of the Jewish *Ohn-macht*), these people of *ressentiment* open up, as it were, a whole new "battle-field" in human history, a 'spiritual' one. The second difference follows from the first, and yet is no less crucial: this battlefield is radically marked by history, for within it history becomes interesting – and this, in Nietzschean terms, means that it becomes a new locus for will to power: the nobles' conception of history – being, as they are, the personification of activity/presence – has no stake in it, which is why 'history' had remained "stupid" (uninteresting, barren, irrelevant) before the introduction of that Jewish "higher sense of depth." Here we see the fateful transition between national wars of interest (pride, resources) and ideological wars of justice; man gains a new distinction in the Jewish revolt, a much more alternative to that of the pagan nobles:

[...] it was on the soil of this essentially dangerous [*wesentlich Gefährlichen*] form of human existence, the priestly form, that man first became an interesting animal, that only here did the human soul in a higher sense [*höheren Sinne*] acquire depth [*Tiefe*] and become evil [*böse*] – and these are the two basic respects in which man has hitherto been superior to other beasts! (GM I §6, p. 33/KGW 6.2:280 [my underline])

The human animal, just like its history and its values, becomes interesting and dangerous with the Jewish-priestly way of life and mode(s) of valuation, precisely due to the new, "higher sense of depth" of their reclusive/resentful 'spirit.' The genius, the energy, the 'agon' that in Greek nobility – due to Zeus' interdiction (e.g., the famous Greek ὕβρις)³⁶⁷ – turned both outward and inwards (outwards towards other nations and lands; inwards as wisdom-contests held between themselves), becomes, in the

priestly *invention* of a kind of ‘spiritual depth,’ solely turned inwards. As beholden to “other things” – than their surrounding people and their own welfare – the Jews alienate themselves from force (and war) so as to avenge themselves of, *react* to, the other, Pagan, nobilities that shared the Earth with them. The exemplarity that, for the Greek nobles, consisted in their *radical exposure* to a worldly ‘fate’ (e.g., being absorbed by another, stronger, national nobility), and the Jewish ‘example’ that, in its ‘*Ohnmacht*,’ evinces a *worldly aversion* of/from precisely this ‘fate,’ is projected on the Jewish ‘beyond’ as an example that, for the first time, is above and beyond fate: the symbol of Jesus Christ, like the Jewish example, constitutes an *ethico-metaphysical aversion* to fate.

3.4 “*Sub Hoc Signo*” Exemplary Reconciliation Between Witness and Testimony

The true light, which gives light to everyone, was coming into the world. | He was in the world, and the world was made through him, yet the world did not know him. | He came to his own, and his own people [i.e. the Jews; SC] did not receive him. | But to all who did receive him, who believed in his name, he gave the right to become children of God, | who were born, not of blood nor of the will of the flesh nor of the will of man, but of God. | And the Word became flesh and dwelt among us, and we have seen his glory, glory as of the only Son from the Father, full of grace and truth. | [...] | For from his fullness we have all received, grace upon grace. | For the law was given through Moses; grace and truth came through Jesus Christ.

– John the Apostle³⁶⁸

[...] [T]he incapacity for resistance here becomes morality (‘resist not evil!’: the profoundest saying of the Gospel, its key in a certain sense), blessedness in peace, in gentleness, in the *inability* for enmity. What are the ‘glad tidings?’ True life, eternal life is found – it is not promised, it is here, it is *within you*: as life lived in love, in love without deduction or exclusion, without distance. Everyone is a child of God – Jesus definitely claims nothing for himself alone – as a child of God everyone is equal to everyone else...

– Friedrich Nietzsche³⁶⁹

If an immanent content was bound to usurp the Jewish *Distanz*, to immanentize its transcendence and thereby establish a content, a “truth,” to this new ‘spirituality,’ the question arises as to the ethico-metaphysical meaning of this “content” itself. This question brings us back to von Trier’s gesture from the introduction to this chapter, except now Nietzsche’s analysis in the *Genealogy* can be complemented with his insights concerning Greek nobility’s height-affirming envy.

This, Christian kind of “internalization,” as Nietzsche often states, is “dangerous,” and this danger leads us back to Christianity as the *décadence* of Judaism: how long can a people maintain a purely internal struggle, completely exposed to the ravages of fate (‘history’) and other national nobilities – a

wholly “virtual” or “spiritual” war that, nevertheless, will never bear any “real” fruit and thus remain, forever, incredible, *uncanny*? How would such a people be able to maintain this tension – this new, deeper, more spiritual and dangerous distance – without succumbing to the entropic laws with which a physics always threatens a metaphysics? And, finally, how can a people keep growing in numbers (and territories) without exponentially elevating this very risk? These questions bring me to consider the Christian “fulfillment” of Judaism in light of the Ariadne’s thread of ‘witnessing’ that runs through my analysis; how the Jewish witness of difference and vanity comes to be usurped by the pure (for it remains a question of faith – hence uncontested) testimony of its guiding example/symbol. Therein, I will show, the Christian “fulfillment” of Judaism (also known as ‘Pleroma’), finally yields ‘the Truth;’ in ‘Jesus Christ’ the word of God, written in ‘letters’ for the Jews, is made flesh by the Holy Spirit.³⁷⁰

When Judaism gives birth to its “best” Jew, then, it is a Jew so *intimately* related to God that – and here’s the first difference – he cannot be said to have been, properly speaking, *chosen* (only the already existing can be chosen); indeed, here chosenness itself loses the *Distanz* that it presupposes. The *Distanz* that persisted between the Jews and the rest of the world was maintained precisely upon the presupposed *Distanz* of their *Deus Absconditus* God; hence the immediate collapse of the former upon God’s incarnation in the world. While the Jews are squabbling between themselves in interpreting God’s Law,³⁷¹ God Himself suddenly descends from Heaven in the form – not of a command/Law (spoken by this or that angel/messenger/prophet), but – of a Man, as cited above: “you, though only a human being, are making yourself God.” What is the point, then, for the Jews to argue over the meaning of God’s Divine Codex, if His Son is right there to tell them God’s will – i.e. the reason, the ‘spirit’ behind His Law – directly and voluntarily?

The “sacred task” of “redeeming mankind,” Nietzsche writes in the *Antichrist*, “already places one outside all merely reasonable valuations” (AC §12, p. 135). And, of course, once the possibility of elevation had been taken from the Jews with this, the “best Jew” (or, if you will, “*Rēx Iūdaeorum*”), the *Distanz* that gives distinction to the nobles (in this case the Jews as a “chosen people”), gives way with the elimination of the metaphysical *Distanz*, between the world and God, that Judaism found it so important to maintain (hence its privileged position as the Second Commandment; the First being the assertion of Monotheism). Once such a *Single* God no longer has a single *people*, his “flock” extends to every ‘Man’ under the sun. This, however, spells the disaster of the Jewish mode of valuation, for “[a] people perishes if it mistakes its own duty for the concept of duty in general” (AC §11, p. 134); hence my earlier claim that the generalization of Judaism by the Christian priest was, in fact, an ethico-

metaphysical antisemitism. It was, after all, only “logical” (though it weren’t the Jews who *deified* ‘logic’³⁷²): “The ‘holy people’ [...] produced for its instinct a formula which was logical to the point of self-negation: as Christianity it negated the last remaining form of reality, the ‘holy people’, the ‘chosen people’, the Jewish reality itself.” (AC §27, p. 151 [my underline]).³⁷³

This is still, however, only half the story. From birth to crucifixion, Jesus might have had no long-term effects on the Jews (and the Romans) whatsoever; if a Jewish madman came and declared himself (the Son of) God, then preempted and killed, what is it to the Jews themselves? Indeed, as with all “best” community members, as in Nietzsche’s *Wettkampf*, Jesus’ disappearance or death would actually be salubrious for the Jews, who would then still maintain a height-affirming envy without being constantly reminded that “the best,” the highest, had already been achieved. Except, of course, that Jesus Christ, as dead, had become *a symbol*; the birth of a new religion and a new faith. In this new religion, one no longer had to envy one’s peers for their hermeneutic skills concerning God’s Law – all such hermeneutic questions were settled by the ‘spirit’ through mere faith in Jesus Christ. The character that this faith was to take had several stages, but – especially when it comes to German philosophy – it was bound to “settle” precisely where God Himself chose to “settle;” in an individual ‘Man’.³⁷⁴

This Man taught that all are One big ‘Family of Man,’ that all are born with equally guilty (and equally ‘immortal’) *souls*, and that the path to salvation passes through general(ized) love and care towards all, up to and including death. The crucified Jesus – “God on the Cross” – was *a symbol that defines the Christian “best”* as an ideal of self-sacrifice; the Son of God was *born without sin*, and only ever took upon himself to expiate the sins of (*all*) others. A human animal, by comparison, is already born guilty, and hence will never attain this Divine example – it will always be at least slightly accused, even for its own salvation (for it is only “its own”). Thus, even if a man (or a woman?) were to repeat Jesus’ deeds, emulating wholeheartedly his sacrificial acts and nature, it would still not achieve the “best” that was Jesus, who was in the (impossible, divine) position to do everything *for others*. Thus an ‘ideal,’ an image (*Bild*) of God, remains forever ‘there’ – due to the imaginary realm that Judaism had opened – to make everyone, me and all others (friends, enemies and strangers alike) equally sinful.

The Christian movement is a degeneracy movement composed of reject and refuse elements of every kind: it is not the expression of the decline of a race, it is from the first an agglomeration of forms of morbidity crowding together and seeking one another out- It is therefore not national, not racially conditioned; it appeals to the disinherited everywhere; it is founded on a rancor against everything well-constituted and dominant: it needs a symbol that represents a curse on the well-constituted and dominant (WTP §154, p. 96)

Contemplating this perfection of loving self-sacrifice effectively suffocates all ‘envy’ and ‘pride’ – the only ‘spiritual sins’ according to Aquinas – for it posits all of us, “here below,” as infinitely removed from this ideal, with only death (and the ‘final judgment’ that follows it) to ever prove our value/worth with regards to it. Only the ‘soul’ – owing to its internal separation from this world (usurping Judaism’s external separation) – will go on to be saved or damned according to God’s judgment in the beyond of soul’s immortality, in the non-life that is the “afterlife”.

The Saints are the closest to follow in Jesus’ footsteps, and for this reason they join Jesus in Heaven, in that imaginary realm where they, like Jesus, can no longer be touched, interrogated, *revaluated*. Their own achievements were only ever closer approximations of Jesus, and hence – whatever it is they are/do – they neither wield their own merit, nor can Jesus’ merit be reevaluated according to theirs. They cannot be envied, for, after the example of Jesus Christ, they did not envy; they cannot even be valued as such in life – for sanctity is only ever given upon death. Even these Saints were recognized by Luther to already be revaluative threats to the spirit of Jesus Christ – a *bifurcation* of faith in Him, and love for Him – which is why he accorded them none of the merits of the Catholic Church, and, indeed, generalized them so that all who are Christian (re-)born are deemed saints.³⁷⁵

In the aftermath of the religion that spawned through the symbol of ‘Jesus Christ on the Cross,’ envy had lost its “pride of place;” it is assumed, on a deep, ‘spiritual’ level (recall Aquinas and Augustine) to be sinful, and hence can no longer be active, or, more precisely, can no longer be affirmed in its activity. It is already placed under a *generalized* guilt, comprehending in advance all of its singular appearances, and hence must not let itself be known; every sign of it, every expression, is already a scandal, a stumbling-block on the way to Salvation. With this symbolization, all earthly *comparisons* lose their height-oriented functions, and replaced by the impossible comparison with the infinite self-sacrifice of a dead God.³⁷⁶ Thus the moral fate of envy spells the metaphysical fate of *Distanz*, of the *unsanctioned* difference: the historically contingent ‘examples’ – provided by a warrior-nobility of Pagan origin, becoming a single, trans-historical (or, more precisely, eschatological) example in the “people of the Book” – had been, finally, made eternal and transcendent in the symbol of ‘God on the Cross.’ Now that an ahistorical symbol usurped the worldly expression, or activity, of *Distanz*, it became itself – recall the English psychologists – a sole *standard* of valuation. Such a metaphysically-immune ossification of value, such a stable taming of *Distanz*, entails an absolute equalizer, imposing a humility upon all ‘Mankind.’

This is how, Nietzsche confirms, Jewish *décadence* expressed itself, since,

[...] when a people is perishing; when it feels its faith in the future, its hope of freedom vanish completely; when it becomes conscious that the most profitable thing of all is submissiveness and that the virtues of submissiveness are a condition of its survival, then its God has to alter too. He now becomes a dissembler, timid, modest, counsels ‘peace of soul’, no more hatred; forbearance, ‘love’ even towards friend and foe. He is continually moralizing, he creeps into the cave of every private virtue, becomes a God for everybody, becomes a private man, becomes a cosmopolitan... (AC §16, p. 138)

And this is, indeed, what had happened to the Jewish God with the onset of Christianity, the *décadence* of which so astounds (and infuriates) Nietzsche.³⁷⁷

This new principle of valuation shifts the activity of *Distanz* inward, effectively taming the subject that it creates: the challenge, the overcoming of resistance that had always been the warrior exemplarity of pagan nobility, had been made transcendent by the Jews and their *ethical* example as “the chosen people,” and then internalized by a morality that demands an *actualization* of Jesus’ holiness. Therein, what Hegel calls the “bad infinity” of the (Jewish) ‘most High’ becomes the “true infinity” of the (Christian) ‘inner:’ the “ethical exemplarity project” of the Jews takes their noble alienation and makes it into the plebeian/mundane *condition of all* ‘Man;’ what had been the *last* worldly (external, visible) signs of the Jewish God’s radical metaphysical separation became, with this move, effaced *de facto* and denied *de jure*. The ethical exemplar is dead, set up there on the Cross, and will remain so regardless of all historical contingencies, untouched by ‘fate.’ Like the Jews, whatever happens to this new “soul-possessing” individual will be interpreted – not with regards to the Jewish Bible and the Letter of God’s Law, but, with regards to the inner “affects” that show the essence of every act more “truthfully,” following the New Testament of the ‘spirit’ of these Laws, rather than the Old Testament of their ‘letter’ (this was the essence of what Martin Luther calls ‘faith’).³⁷⁸

The “pure intention” that had previously only been divine and accessible only through *mediation* (‘Law’), is now tasked to become, like Jesus Christ, an incarnate intention; the act is not as important as the intention of the act, as the affects that accompany it. The “spirit,” or “truth,” of the act now pertains to the internal affects that attend it rather than its “external manifestation,” its *vanity*; an internal(ized) standard of the ‘Good’ – which in Judaism, as Lévinas emphasizes, was “beyond Being” – that must now be enforced by the new moral construct called ‘the (free, subjective, *conscientious*) will’.³⁷⁹ It is this will that is constantly forced to internally (and eternally) “manage” these inner affects – as opposed to outer circumstances/conditions – so as to always be “in the truth,” and this means to make *the affect that attends the act* more important than the act itself.³⁸⁰ This is, above all, what Lévinas meant when he stated (above) that in Western metaphysics, the act – not just the violence of the *agon* (struggle between

nobles) or *exploitation* (noble use of the ‘slave’), but also *the proto-morality* of the noble’s “word of peace” – “loses its innocence.”

The infinity of the Judaic *Distanz* means, in this internalization, that the will has also infinite “work” to do: one can always be more selfless, find more “depths” to subject to the divine example, what Nietzsche calls a “conscience vivisection”³⁸¹ – infinitely deep, “subterranean and slowly advancing” – fabricating a ‘will;’ it is through this ‘will’ that ‘Man’ is *directed* so as to “overcome” *internal affects*, instead of, either targeting external physical/actual obstacles/enemies (as in pagan nobility), or remaining itself external and wholly indifferent to them (as in Judaism); ‘will’ is now wholly directed at the individual and her affects. And it is the symbol of God on the Cross that presides over, and indeed spelling the victory for this “slave revolt in morality:”

Was it not part of the secret black art of truly *grand* politics of revenge, of a farseeing, subterranean, slowly advancing, and premeditated revenge, that Israel must itself deny the real instrument of its revenge before all the world as a mortal enemy and nail it to the cross, so that "all the world," namely all the opponents of Israel, could unhesitatingly swallow just this bait? And could spiritual subtlety imagine any *more dangerous* bait than this? Anything to equal the enticing, intoxicating, overwhelming and undermining power of that symbol of the "holy cross," that ghastly paradox of a "God on the cross," that mystery of an unimaginable ultimate cruelty and self-crucifixion of God for the salvation of man?

What is certain, at least, is that sub hoc signo [under this sign] Israel, with its vengefulness and revaluation of all values, has hitherto triumphed again and again over all other ideals, over all nobler ideals. – (GM I §9, p. 35 [my underline])

Why, however, would this bait be so seductive to pagans? In Antichrist Nietzsche writes of Christianity’s victory against the “barbarians:” “Christianity desires to dominate beasts of prey; its means for doing so is to make them sick” (AC §22, p. 144). Indeed, Nietzsche ascribes to Christianity all sorts of lures that accommodate the “barbarian” taste – like the drinking of “blood” in the Sacrament of the Communion or the pomp of public worship (think ‘televangelist’) – but by what artifice was their ‘health’ approached and corrupted? Nietzsche’s presupposition here, is “[...] that Christianity desires to become master on a soil where the worship of Adonis or Aphrodite has already determined the concept of what religious worship is.” (AC §23, p. 145).

At this point I will be better able to elucidate the various allusions I gave in the introduction of this chapter with regards to Lars von Trier’s “Christian” response to the violence he has met. If the Jews were supposed to have been God’s ‘example’ for the rest of the world, it is indeed their very existence/life that generates a tension, a contradiction, with the ‘Most High’ nature of their transcendent

God. This, of course, makes their “example” all the more enigmatic and mysterious: what does it mean that God is represented through His Law, and that this representation is only partial to a self-secluding (non-proselytizing) *Jewish* worship? It is precisely this contradiction that comprises the Jewish pathos of distance, and it is precisely when they were no longer able to hold themselves to the demands of this, infinitely excessive height that they become *décadent*, become ‘Christian.’ The latter’s constitutive denial of this contradiction, of the Judaic “pathos of distance,” is also why the Christian, unlike the Jew, can no longer even “see” the ‘contradiction,’ the height/value, of other nations; the “inclusivity” of the Christian precludes this *in principle* – what Nietzsche calls Christianity’s “democratic prejudice” – while the Jew could despise and hate the latter from within their *exclusive* existence.

In turning to von Trier’s example, it becomes clear that, as a Christian, he could not (or would not) *argue* for the tenability of his position (in which he believes to the end). The radical, schismatic nature of this position – which dares approach that which Western discourse today deems closest to “absolute evil” – was already dismissed in principle. This principle, however, is the principle of a transcendent symbol that *ought only concern Jesus Christ* (not even the ‘Devil’ has such symbolic immaculateness); projecting this honor on anyone or anything is, in the end, sacrilege to the Christian faith (for otherwise there would have been a schismatic externality to the Most High that cannot be reconciled – as opposed to the *inner* differentiation of the ‘Trinity’). That is why von Trier’s move to see the “human,” the redeemable, behind this symbolic projection (of ‘evil’) follows an ethos of Christian reconciliation, a telos that finally rids itself of all “schisms” in the all-comprehensive nature of its symbolic ‘love.’

Unable to follow this ethos of reconciliation in schismatic means, von Trier sacrifices himself, his own ‘subject position,’ saying, effectively, ‘I am evil.’ This statement, from the perspective of reconciliation, can only be a self-sacrificial capitulation to violence, which – citing ‘love’ – does not overtly fight over “what is right,” but finds redemption in sacrificing itself for it, showing its truth/sincerity *rather than arguing* (for) it. This, almost literal “I will stake my life on it” gesture, prefers to sacrifice itself for the sins of others as the only legitimate, perhaps even “non-violent” form of protesting them, thus giving testimony that a wrong was being done here by oneself becoming the evidence of this wrong. For those that have “ears to hear,” Lars von Trier fights an implicit violence with an implicit violence: he effectively moralizes against the silence imposed by Western discourse by capitulating to an admittedly violent prejudgment (of him, of ‘Hitler’), protesting it as a symbol rather than through signs, showing the truth of the ‘spirit,’ of his pain, but remaining silent as to its law, neither complaining of the injustice, nor questioning the justice, of this violence.

To this sensibility – which is one of *ressentiment* – the ‘good’ never prove their goodness by attempting to overcome the resistance they encounter; or, more precisely, any resistance is “overcome” by means of internal affect (proto-Christian priest), rather than external signs (Jews) or acts (pagan nobles). This “affect-morality” evinces a kind of “immediacy fetish,” whereby the most high is identified either in its immediate, “idiotic” innocence, or the ‘*factum brutum*’ immediacy of the corpse, both of which are presumed to be outside mediation and representation, and hence outside the problems of falsity and lies. Nietzsche calls Christianity the religion of pity because it “undercomes” resistance; instead of overpowering it (in the manner of the Greeks) it underpowers it, evoking the pity of the stronger through this self-subjugation. This ‘passivity,’ of course, is not in itself passive, but quite active (hence its underhanded “aggression”), and particularly designed to win the power struggle by obviating it: once a ‘noble’ has no more resistance to overcome, she is left with no reason to pursue the struggle in the first place. The struggling partner ab-jects themselves to the point of nothingness, a passivity that betrays only the shapes of the violence perpetrated upon its exposed/destitute body (this is how ‘infinite love’ is expressed as self-sacrifice).

The will to power recoils at this sight, for it is a locus from where the joy of power had been evacuated, its free expression (cruelty) reflected back on itself; it can no longer identify the power status/difference that makes for a ‘slave,’ a ‘friend,’ or an ‘enemy’ – but only power’s “zero degree,” as it were, in a ‘pure victim.’ The utter subjugation of Christ takes all the “tension” out of the power dynamic and renders it ineffective, pulling the ground (i.e. the *Distanz*) beneath nobility’s feet. This ‘love,’ then, appears as a highly clever and very calculated maneuver with which the weak do not (as through envy) become equal or closer to the strong, but by which the strong are brought down to the level of the weak.³⁸²

When von Trier is attempting to save Hitler’s ‘humanity’ (or ‘soul’) from an imputably pristine symbolic “evil,” he is trying to bring Hitler to “our level,” consider the ‘Man’ beyond his ‘evil plan,’ the ‘soul’ that “all of us” have and is – or at least was at some point, at least *in principle* – redeemable and deserving of God’s grace; a soul whose ‘final judgment’ is reserved solely for God. As ‘Hitler’ progressively becomes an untouchable Taboo – the historical Hitler absorbed into the symbolic evil of/as ‘Hitler’ – it must be approached with either the ‘loving’ attitude of an impartial science (completely denying, or refusing to see/consider, *any* moral predisposition towards Hitler), or a Foxman-*esque* regard that “instinctively” wishes to look away, averting itself due to this awe-ful ‘evil.’ Hence, von Trier’s offering any kind of moral affirmation, or even leniency, towards this symbol, is going

against an almost “holy” moral conviction of his age, against the “history” written by (a victorious, *and vindicated*) Winston Churchill (and his ilk). As a moral regard that flies in the face of his surrounding moral convictions, von Trier, like Jesus, can only beseech his audience *in support* of a truth he feels to be good or legitimate, the Christian sentiment that ‘Man,’ however fallen – even Hitler – can be “saved” and go to Heaven. As a truth “of the soul,” as a spiritual truth that states that even the basest and most wicked is redeemable (and seeks this redemption) in principle – it cannot consistently rely on mere externalities, on arguments, it cannot be told; to show its ‘inner truth’ one has to, finally, like Jesus Christ, sacrifice oneself. Only in this symbolic manner – a ‘self’ that reconciles itself to its own sacrifice – was Jesus ‘message’ finally capable of its “seduction.”

Unlike Lévinasian signification, here is a new, loving, relation to ‘injustice.’ No longer provoked to (Lévinasian) ‘signification’ by it, it appears as the final truth of the symbol whereby the sign is imputed to be utterly “fulfilled,” where the signifier and the signified no longer imply any difference. At bottom, Nietzsche says this procedure is not even “truly” moral, precisely because it is not an act achieved truly “for the other. But this is true only when judged from an ethico-metaphysical sensibility:”

[...] That there is something great in self-denial, and not only in revenge, must have been inculcated into man only through long habituation; a divinity who sacrifices himself was the strongest, most effective symbol of this kind of greatness. As the overcoming of the foe hardest to conquer, the sudden mastering of an affect – that is how this denial appeared; and to this extent it counted as the summit of the moral. In reality what is involved is the exchange of one idea for another, with the feelings remaining at the same level of elevation and flood. When they are grown sober again and are resting from this affect, men no longer understand the morality of those moments [...]. Thus: these acts of self-denial also are at bottom not moral, insofar as they are not performed strictly for the sake of others; the case, rather, is that the other only offers the highly tensed heart an opportunity to relieve itself through this self-denial. (HH §138, pp. 74-75 [my underline])

Unlike the ‘example’ of the pagan nobles, who were, in principle, exposed and vulnerable to fate (the historical circumstances of their welfare and physical strength), and unlike the Jews, who were, in principle, only to become ‘exemplary’ at “the end of days,” the Christian example, insofar as it had made the Jewish Sign-mediated Divine (‘Law’) into an incarnate, immediate symbol (‘Truth,’ ‘Love’), becomes *exemplary for all*, and *for all eternity*. The *mortality* that the Greek nobles bet on with every ‘agon,’ the envy that they had enacted to achieve a higher *Distanz* (and hence a *new* value) in the world, became, thus, thoroughly denied by this “ghastly symbol” that now transcends life and demands of ‘Man’ only ‘faith’ (as moral “affectation”), and a self-denial and self-sacrifice redeemed by death. If the

Jews “keep their *Distanz*” by their reclusive survival as privileged witnesses of God’s Law, the Christian symbol prescribes the effusive egalitarianism of humility of the ‘soul’.³⁸³

To return full-circle to Nietzsche’s discussion of *resentment* (which I hope, by now, is sufficiently differentiated from *ressentiment*), we could say, in summary, that the Jews opened a whole new dimension of distance – a virtual, infinite, wholly transcendent one – in response to the initial, Pagan *Pathos der Distanz*. By doing so, they created a powder-keg, where hatred had to be accumulated and directed by the priest this way or that so as to not consume the Jewish “herd,” so as not to disperse it altogether. Yet, even then a pathos of distance was maintained, although it became insurmountable, infinite, other-worldly; to use a favorite metaphor of Nietzsche’s, it has made the bow tauter and hence its arrow faster, deadlier, farther-reaching (cf. GM I §12, p. 44). This pathos of distance made man, indeed, interesting, and dangerous, precisely for the radical explosion that it enabled, the radical departures and singularizations that – though still open to future returns and assemblages – reshuffles the deck of thought. Nietzsche’s famous “death of god” threatened precisely such a calamity, a calamity to all Monotheism that used ‘god’ in a religious way, as a beyond that assures coherence and assembly, rather than their radical question.

The Jews had still maintained their distinction and nobility, except that they refused to put it to any earthly test (which, as Nietzsche says, they would anyway lose – though this is true of all *this-worldly* nobilities sooner or later³⁸⁴). By the descent of the Christian God to Earth, however, and by His admission that *all* are worthy of His comprehensive love, the *specificity* of the Jewish people – and hence, necessarily, their reclusive nobility (for Nietzsche, nobility always only belongs to *the few*; cf. GM I §16, p. 24) – becomes what Nietzsche called the “audacious generalization” (BGE Preface, p. 2).

This is how, at bottom, the singular witness – after the worldly example of Jewish chosenness – becomes “fulfilled” or “sublated,” annulled in ‘letter’ and preserved in ‘spirit’ after the other-worldly example of Jesus Christ (and its symbolic effects). The *Distanz* traversed/annulled – by a God that had been transcendent and returns to merge with Man – makes a mockery of the very basis, the very origin of all value, thus making this infinite acceptance and love of all (and all possible values) into an equally infinite contempt toward that which infinitely *values itself as particular*: the Pagan hubris becomes transcendent in Judaism, and is reversed to an immanence that can no longer abide transcendent self-differentiation (Hegel). It must swallow everything, comprehend everything, have “*total coverage*,” in short, it must – in principle and, indeed, in ‘spirit’ – be driven towards an *absolutes Wissen*. This

usurpation of *Distanz* must also, eventually, annihilate all values insofar as they make distinctions, insofar as they *refuse to reconcile* themselves to one another, insofar as they refuse to recognize one another as part of the *same* family of man, of *Geist* (an “I” that refuses to be made a “we”). This is what is, “at bottom,” devaluating and nihilistic in Christian morality as a manifestation of Western *décadence*.³⁸⁵ Christianity, for Nietzsche, is a Judaism grown old, *tired*; something that had proved particularly detrimental to philosophy, what he calls “the Circe [the Greek goddess of enchantment] of the philosophers.” It offered the comfort of making the Jewish “bad” infinity – good, positive; not an infinite reclusiveness and distance but an infinite comprehension:

Error as comfort. – You can say what you like: Christianity wanted to free men from the burden of the demands of morality by, as it supposed, showing a shorter way to perfection: just as some philosophers thought they could avoid wearisome and tedious dialectics and the collection of rigorously tested facts by pointing out a ‘royal road to truth’. It was an error in each case – yet nonetheless a great comfort to the exhausted and despairing in the wilderness. (Nietzsche, *Daybreak* I, §59, p. 36 [my underline])

4. Levinatschean Nobility: Otherwise than Knowledge, or Beyond Guilt

The putting into question of the self is precisely a welcome to the absolutely other. The other does not show it to the I as a theme. [...] He challenges me from his humility and from his height. [...]. [...] the putting into question of the Same by the Other is a summons to respond. The I is not simply conscious of this necessity to respond, as if it were a matter of an obligation or a duty about which a decision could be made; rather the I is by its very position, responsibility through and through. And the structure of this responsibility will show how the Other, in the face, challenges us from the greatest depth and the highest height – by opening the very dimension of elevation.

– Emmanuel Lévinas³⁸⁶

Both Nietzsche and Lévinas identify a stifling of all value (re-)generation through a denial of this “difficult” freedom, the ethico-metaphysical question concerning the passivity that this freedom must admit to and affirm. The slave morality that dominates Nietzsche’s Europe still maintains a certain *faith* in ‘Subjective freedom’ that according to Nietzsche’s *Genealogy* is precisely geared to *seduce* the Pagan nobles into the Christian economy of guilt: in the long-forgotten “prehistory” of modern philosophical thought, the freedom of the ‘Man’ genus had still cited the theological assumption of a *soul* – a kind of “divine essence” that enjoys something of a *divine/infinite freedom* (e.g., free from body/death), and is *only hence* held ethically accountable, only then considered a moral ‘subject.’ Metaphysically this Subject was bought at the price of internalizing the Judaic ‘transcendent’: it is this internalization that

suddenly “plants” a “divine essence” in and through the ‘Man’ genus, thus also allowing to posit *any* ‘deed’ as the ‘subjective act’ (i.e. *presupposing* a “doer,” the only one with “the right to make promises”). Christian theology/morality had both internalized (Son of Man) and generalized (Son of God) the Judaic ‘spirit,’ that which gave only the Jews an ethical status:³⁸⁷ *everybody* now carries a fundamental (soul/body, doer/deed) separation, taking part in the egalitarian embrace of an infinite freedom (except, of course, the Jews themselves). It is this “redemption” of the Jewish “difficult freedom” – for the non-difficult, uncomplicated kind was attributed only to their God – that Nietzsche decries as an ethico-metaphysical blinder that perverts or corrupts any thought about morality as a problem; as if God had given *every* ‘Man’ a simple, uncomplicated “kernel” of freedom (i.e., ‘soul’) which now must only be properly cultivated:

[...] morality also separates strength from expressions of strength, as if there were a neutral substratum behind the strong man, which was free to express strength or not to do so. But there is no such substratum; there is no "being" behind doing, effecting, becoming; "the doer" is merely a fiction added to the deed [...] [...] our entire science still [...] has not disposed of that little changeling, the “subject” [...]; no wonder if the submerged, darkly glowering emotions of vengefulness and hatred [in *ressentiment*; SC] exploit this belief for their own ends and in fact maintain no belief more ardently than the belief that the strong man is free to be weak and the bird of prey to be a lamb for thus they gain the right to make the bird of prey accountable for being a bird of prey (GM I §13, p. 45 [my underline])

This brings us to the idea of Jewish election, and how Lévinas “translates it to Greek” in/as his phenomenology of communication – of ‘consciousness’ as a responsibility for the Other – his ‘ethics as first philosophy.’ According to Lévinas, already insofar as there is consciousness, there is a difference of power, there is an ‘I’ that dominates/usurps an ‘Other’. This Other, as in Nietzsche’s will-to-power philosophy, is multiple, incoherent and an-archic. It had been there “before” as a constellation of various forces that, nonetheless, *had to be* arbitrated and selected-from, *dominated*; no simple freedom or simple guilt here, only a difficult freedom and its responsibility. Levinatzsch affirms this necessity as that which gives rise to a signification for the Other, a “proto-moral word” which marks the origin of value. Affirming this necessity one has to puncture through philosophy’s systematized antisemitism, since this necessity attests to the fundamental predicament that opens the height of all value claims; betraying, in the process, that these values are always, as such, claims to distinction – “*noblesse oblige*”. If not itself a Lévinasian project, Nietzsche’s genealogy at the very least opens up a methodological space for it: only the chosenness of a self-separating Judaism recalls the height and nobility of the Greeks – negatively, but at least “externally,” *in the open*. Both nobilities are subject to an appropriation: the Greek/Pagan

one through what Nietzsche calls “seduction,” the Jewish one – well, the success of this appropriation is left to the testimony of millennia of Christian antisemitism.

What is implied, for Lévinas, in the idea of Jewish election? In the Jewish reception of the Torah on Mount Sinai, there where ‘the Jews’ become a true “Volk,” they respond to Divine election and the prospect of receiving God’s Law by the following phrase: “We will do and we will hear”³⁸⁸, *committing* to act *before knowing* the contents of the act. Lévinas takes this encounter as a paradigm of ethical responsibility: where free will and/or the subjective act are always-already a *response* to an an-archical command, anterior to the I’s own (subjective, “egoical”) affirmation, and yet constitutive of its very subjectivity/freedom. This is a far cry from Nietzsche’s “animal with the right to make promises:” by what “right” did the Jews make this excessive, almost insane promise? Surely *they did not know what they were saying/doing...*

Here is where I can offer a brief account of the counterintuitive yet decisive connection I am drawing here between the Pagan nobility and the “chosenness” of the Jewish people, and how it relates to Nietzsche’s genealogical questioning of history and memory. This will also help in understanding how is it that Nietzsche can vilify the Jews so much for having given rise to the *ressentiment* that had, through Christianity as the “fruit” of Judaism, conquered Europe and yet maintain that *the* paradigmatic locus of *ressentiment*, where betrays its noxious mechanism, is ‘antisemitism.’

Described in terms of Nietzsche’s ‘*Distanz*,’ one could say that both the Jewish nation and the strong pagans evince and affirm a *separation* from their others: this separation had been *actual* in the noble Pagans, whose very presence/activity comprised their distinction (from other Pagan nobles as well as the passive/plebeian); with the Jewish reaction to Pagan *Distanz*, the latter is preserved as a “nobility” and “distinction” but becomes imaginary, conceptual/abstract (“*in effigie*”; GM I §10, p. 37). This meant that the Jews had to, at least, *maintain a concept of Distanz*, tracing, despite itself, the original *antagonism* which led to its creation. The Jewish “most fundamental of all declarations of war” (GM I §7, p. 34) must affirm a *conception* of nobility, because it is “parasitic” on and wholly negative towards the nobility of the Pagans. That was the counter-move with which the Jews, with their “genius” of self-exclusion, “hang on [...] with their teeth, the teeth of the most abysmal hatred” (ibid, ibid).

The abstract or imaginary character of the Jewish *Distanz* also means that, while pagan nobility’s separation had been subservient to the “actualities” of history/fate,³⁸⁹ the Jewish separation could maintain itself in almost complete detachment from it (i.e., the Jews can remain ‘chosen’ regardless of their own happiness, aptitude in battle, etc.). Since, in this reading, the Jewish God comes to occupy the

role of Fate itself, the status of the Jewish “we will do and we will hear” promise bears a structural homology with the relation of the Pagan noble to Fate, as well as a “heterology” to the Christian Salvation narrative(s): both Pagans and Jews accord the ‘deed’ a status that cares not for a “Subject” who wields it – armed with intentions and motives, geared to self-absolve (i.e. ‘conscience’) – and instead either fight despite, or gives themselves up to, that which is beyond its power (for the Pagans this was ‘Fate;’ for the Jews, this was God). The pagan nobles would find something like a ‘subjective will’ irrelevant to their existence (which consists only in present being/acting), while the Jews posit an infinite, abstract and transcendent ‘Will of God’ that they will forever be chosen or marked by to obsess around (or, more precisely, around its Law, its ‘Letter’).

Perhaps, as Nietzsche’s genealogy suggests, the centrality of the ‘conscious/subjective will’ had come onto the historical stage with the Jews, but with one important caveat: for them this ‘will’ was *wholly* transcendent, Divine. ‘God’s Will’ *must*, by the Divine Decree of the Second Commandment, *remain transcendent*, and cannot abide any immediate appearance in the world (like Divine “incarnation”), i.e., any (re-)presentation of itself. In short, the Law, God’s ‘will,’ must not collapse back into *immanence*, must not take part of anything from Nature (unless duly mediated by the Letter of His Law). This means that the Jews’ absolute rejection of the “natural” immanence that identifies Divinity as already “in” the ‘cosmos’ or ‘nature’ (Paganism/Idolatry), also implies resisting the “spiritual” incarnation that makes God immanent to the religious institution (Catholicism/Church), as well as the more “universally spiritual” one that incarnates God in/through some generalized “genus” called ‘Man’ (Protestantism/*Bildung*).³⁹⁰ Hence, unlike the Catholic Church, this ‘Will’ should not be made manifest in/as a single Dogma (wherein the meaning/spirit of Biblical Law/Letter is rendered accessible), and, unlike its Protestant Reformation, it should likewise never be internalized “individually” in each and every ‘person’.³⁹¹

This metaphysical assault on the pathos of distance meets the question/phenomenon of Christian antisemitism in the thought of G.W.F. Hegel. It is in Hegel’s ‘Science’ that what used to be the “absolute negativity” of the Jewish God’s *external, Law-centered* “revelation” becomes the kernel of ‘Man’ by virtue of a ‘spiritual drive’ (towards self-reconciliation with the Absolute). It is in this *immanent, spiritual* sense, that Hegel postulates the basis for both moral-political “right,” and, consequently, maturing into ‘ethical life’ (*Sittlichkeit*). To Hegel, the Jewish God was an absolute abstraction or negativity, a kind of ‘pure Being,’ “which, when taken immediately, is *nothing*” (Enc I §139, p. 87). Just like ‘Being’ in Hegel’s *Science of Logic* is followed by its mediation in/as ‘Essence,’ the

Jews' "empty" concept(ion) of the "all-encompassing" God can only be redeemed in a process that, through (the Son of) Man, immanentizes or "reveals" God in a 'Nature;' an "essence" that, from now on, is "sublatable," and ought to be sublated, by 'Spirit.'

Hegel writes of 'essence' that while it might be, "[...] initially a totality of inward shining [*Scheines* – also illusion; SC]", nevertheless, out of *a presupposed* inner necessity, it "[...] does not remain in this inwardness; instead, as ground, it emerges into existence" (Enc I §131A, pp. 199-200/S.8:p. 261 [my underline]).³⁹² Here I find a perfect structural homology between Hegel's *logic*, and the Christian theological maneuver against the Judaism from which it issues. The incarnation of the Jewish God in 'Man' means that the former's 'will' – the 'Law' that the Jews had obsessed over its *letter* for millennia – *must not remain* as an unknown "pure Being," an inaccessible "in itself," but *must become for itself*. This means that the infinite negation of Jewish transcendence/Divinity can become posited as essence, as ground, through being internalized in, mediated by, 'Man'.³⁹³ To Hegel, this spells the very "logic" of thought itself (or, more precisely, the logic of its *fulfillment*); an all-inclusive "spiritual drive" towards mediation or 'revelation' of what the Jews held *in infinite separation* as the "Most High." This logic can only be probed as to its violence, that is, the ethico-metaphysical *decision* that Hegel's dialectical method presupposes, from the Levinatschean critique of 'ground' and 'being' which I am advancing.³⁹⁴ Hence Lévinas' insistence on the ethical primacy of transcendence and separation with regards to Being, and hence Nietzsche's analysis, in *Homers Wettkampf*, of the dangerous nihilism of intern(aliz)ing what is 'most high.'

Nietzsche does not only provide a genealogy of morals, a method for thinking about morals, but aspires to present a phenomenology of *this* thought-about-morality itself, its responsibilities, its pitfalls and weaknesses, the historical and metaphysical conditions of its (im)possibility. His afore-mentioned 'break-throughs,' indeed, point precisely in this direction: that in order to truly think about such a radical (re-)valuation, the 'true philosopher' must rise above the mere labor of the sciences and the edifice they erect, in a manner not dissimilar to the *Sipo Matador's* rising above its hosting oak; an affirmative ingratitude, if you will.³⁹⁵ This true philosopher has to face an egalitarian system of knowledge where, not unlike the theological condition of 'guilt,' everything, *in principle*, weighs down on thought with an equal claim: there where thought can no longer affirm *its* value as the will to power through which it already *selects* and is, *consequently*, held singularly responsible for this selection. Hence the fatigued rise of the 'expert' over the 'legislator' in European resentment.³⁹⁶

[t]he dangers for a philosopher's development are indeed so manifold today that one may doubt whether this fruit can still ripen at all. The scope and the tower-building [*T(h)urmbau*] of the sciences has grown to be enormous, and with this also the probability that the philosopher grows weary while still learning or allows himself to be detained somewhere to become a "specialist" – so he never attains his proper level, the height for a comprehensive look, for looking around, for looking down. (BGE §205, p. 124/KGW 6.2:136 [my underline])³⁹⁷

Nietzsche here speaks of the responsibility of the philosopher in the age of resentment as the necessity for a singular “rising above;” a responsibility evaded by the philosopher’s reconciliation to becoming “specialized,” another brick in the communal/scientific “*Turm bauen*” project of ‘knowledge.’ This Nietzschean disdain of his-day European philosophers already echoes what had become of the concept of mastery, the ability to affirmatively think a distance of height. A true predicament: the historical/fatal height affirmed by the Greeks, abstracted to the ‘Most High’ in Judaism, is always seduced by an impossible project of solidifying access to this absolute height; except that, in this situation, the formerly productive and height-promoting forces of envy and resentment cannot “come to terms” with this new, impossible height.

Hence Nietzsche seeing his-day European thought as the outcome of a “slave rebellion;” an ethico-metaphysical revolution whereby the very concept of a singular or particular height/mastery is made unthinkable (and, hence, irresponsible). From this tower of knowledge, be it as system or science, there isn’t a “looking down” that – rather than evincing ‘a value’ (or, for that matter, ‘a truth’) – must speak collectively, universally, as *the* value/truth.³⁹⁸ In the Christian *appropriation* of Greek height – achieved through its *denial* of Judaic height – the Greek *askesis* of singular elevation is “embraced,” and made to turn on itself *with the same blind consistency with which the Jews sought to turn away from it*. Acquiescing to ‘knowledge’ as a universal project(ion) usurps what was still affirmed by both Judaism and Greek paganism: the singular and selective elevation that has to take a “personal,” ethico-metaphysical responsibility for this height, acknowledging precisely this *difference* as what Lévinas called ‘glory’ (rather than shame/guilt). This tower, as *resentiment* more generally, *uses* philosophy in order to reach upwards, towards God, like the famous Tower of Babel that was erected, specifically, in order to obliterate the difference in power, the *separation* or *Distanz*, between ‘Nature’ and ‘God.’

Resentiment’s “mediocrity,” its “democratic prejudice” hides a nihilistic ‘moral position’ that eventually turns on itself due to this ethico-metaphysical decision that it perpetrates. Both Nietzsche’s *Zur Genealogie der Moral* and *Jenseits Gut und Böse* vehemently point out the blindness and, hence, the *phenomenological inaccessibility* to a *responsible* genealogy of morals; a genealogy not yet, as Lévinas

says, “duped by morality.” This “immoral” genealogy, as Nietzsche goes on to show, resists assuming any transcendent value so that it could conceive the event of its becoming, its *coming to* ‘be.’ In short, resentment effectively blocks any “proto-moral” difference from ever being conceived-of as such.

What I am trying to show or enact with ‘Levinatzsch’ is that resentment’s ethico-metaphysical assumption is precisely the target of both Nietzsche’s ‘philosophizing with a hammer’ and Lévinas’ ‘ethics as first philosophy:’ they both recall us to the an-archival nature of the emergence of morality, whether by the former’s “battle-testing of forces,” or by the latter’s insistence that the Other puts the ‘I,’ including its “moral values,” in radical question.

The profundity and danger of Levinatzsch ought, hence, to be taken all the way to the very origin of philosophical thought, down to its method or logic; and this has radical implications with regards to how contemporary scholarship perceives itself and its *raison d’être*.³⁹⁹ Nietzsche shows by example how to refuse becoming the philosopher who believes himself somehow detached from the singular or the particular of his insights (instead relying on, say, their “universal” justification/truth). Nietzsche’s insistence that the questions of philosophy should always be approached through the ‘me’ that attends their arrival – which also amounts to putting this ‘person’ *at the same level of risk* as her ‘ideas’ – is said to counter the scientific “will to truth.” Even Academic scholarship in disciplines other than ‘Philosophy’ – as Nietzsche’s discussion of Homer divulges with regards to Philology – is shown as subject to an ethico-metaphysical decision that it remains unaware of and irresponsible for; that the Christian morality of the Academic scholar himself is still relevant, and it ought to be at least acceptable for it to be brought into question.

In one of the last, summarizing sections of the *Genealogy*, Nietzsche treats the problem of ‘truth’ as a derivative one; derivative, precisely, of a need for *justification*. It is precisely this need that resentment glosses, since it implicates it in a violence or a power that it cannot bring itself to ever affirm, or admit, or even see. Truth is either justified in itself or somehow beyond question – a truth that *no longer emits any signs*, but is simply “there,” as ‘Being,’ as God’s “symbolic essence.” It is only the ethico-metaphysical ‘Why?’ of an incurable skeptic like Nietzsche that would question the value of truth, that could question that which has gained so much power, dominates so fully, that it can afford to remain silent when questioned, as if the question were nothing at all. As if, like what Gandhi said of hatred, this question will die out if one simply resolves to ignore it long enough:

[...] Science itself henceforth requires justification [*Rechtfertigung*] [...]. [...] both the earliest and most recent philosophers [...] are all oblivious of how much the will to truth itself first requires justification; here there is a lacuna in every philosophy – how did this come about? Because the

ascetic ideal has hitherto *dominated* all philosophy, because truth was posited as being, as God, as the highest court [oberste Instanz] of appeal – because truth was not permitted to be a problem at all. Is this "permitted" understood? [...] The will to truth requires a critique – let us first define our own task – the value of truth must for once be experimentally *called into question* [Frage zu stellen] (GM III §24, p. 152/KGW 6.2:419)

This problem is also boasted at the beginning of *Beyond Good and Evil*, where Nietzsche identifies the problem of the value of truth. The will to truth, he diagnoses, has been used so as to obviate the origin of morals, owing to the *metaphysical* conviction that projects a moral ideal (self-abnegation) to a beyond, the same beyond in which 'truth' is also posited. It was this 'beyond' that likewise "defended" both morality and truth from being themselves put to question concerning their value: morality and truth are thus also prevented from questioning *each other* once they lose all connection with their own 'will to power,' the original/historical *contingency* that underwrote their appearance;⁴⁰⁰ this means losing the empirico-historical *risk*, the exposure to fate, that attends the struggles of the 'will to power,' that was still unappropriated and active in the Ancient Greek *askesis*, or in Greek tragedy.

Hence, as Nietzsche says, it has taken very long for philosophy to pose *the question about the value of truth* itself, and, conversely, about the 'truth' of value itself. Nietzsche genealogy can achieve this by "suspending metaphysics," suspending this 'beyond'; but also, and here I know I am on thinner ice, to keep *transcendence* itself – in the Lévinasian rather than the Heideggerian sense – from being (*ab*)used in this fashion. Nietzsche is trying to "clear a phenomenological path" towards the possibility of an ethics of 'truth,' an ethics, that is, "beyond essence" by definition. He does it against the retarding influence of the egalitarian, "democratic" metaphysics of resentment, against what he calls the latter's "audacious generalization" (BGE Preface, p. 2).

The "democratic prejudice" abuses transcendence by using its *infinitely higher* "privilege" to cover up the traces of its all-too-experiential beginning, for what it is more convenient to conceive of as a single, eternally self-identical *causa sui* behind experience. The "democratic prejudice" here covers up this original difference with a single generalization that, either as essence, cause/alinity or *telos*, is untouched by any contingency, including the contingencies of social rank and the history of power-relations. The Monotheist 'God,' in short, was used here as an excuse for a single system of generalizations; a modern "tower of Babel" that will both claim, and parody, the Jewish God's power. From a *transcendence* of absolute difference, where the totality of the moral experience is both relativized and split (by morality's primordial pathos of distance), we get an *a priori* moralizing of experience itself – the 'moral world order' of Christian metaphysics. From the *particularity* of priestly

Monotheism, directing its demands *solely toward one*, small ‘chosen people,’ we arrive at the generalizing demands of “justice for all” that seemingly come from nowhere, necessitated by the presumably natural or universal ‘Reason,’ or ‘Truth’.⁴⁰¹

Of this, the following passage from Nietzsche’s late notebooks is the most lucid and concise statement of these *stakes of performing* an “immoral” genealogy of morals. It also goes some way to showing that Nietzsche’s most vehement rejection was neither Monotheism in itself, nor even the Judaic ‘God,’ but *the Jewish ‘God’ of the Christian religion* – a “God on the Cross” tormented by, and expiating, ‘Man’ (in general); it was against this sacrilege that Nietzsche felt the most intimate, *self-distinguishing* “scruple” to resist. Whether or not this scruple itself came from ‘God’ or not, is never directly discussed by Nietzsche, but I do wish to highlight that defending the name of ‘God’ appeared to linger in him as a kind of “call to arms,” arguably the very same “call” attended-to by that thought, that ‘scruple,’ that came to him so uninvited and forceful. It was indeed addressed to him, it *isolated* him from his surroundings, gave him the *distinction* proper to himself. Nietzsche, hence, enjoins Lévinas in defending a ‘divinity’ from its usual philosophical/theological interpretation:

– what isolates us is not that we don’t *find* any God, either in history, or in nature, or behind nature – but that we feel what was revered [verehrt] as God to be not ‘divine’ but a hideous holy grimace, a sheep-like, absurd and pitiful inanity, a principle of slander against man and the world: in short, that we deny God as God. It is the pinnacle of man’s psychological mendacity to think up a being [das Wesen] as a beginning and ‘in-itself,’ according to the very particular yardstick of what he happens to find good, wise, powerful, valuable at that moment – and thereby to think away the *whole causality* [i.e., the will to power; SC] by means of which any goodness, any wisdom, any power at all exists and has value. In short, to posit elements that arose most recently and most conditionally not as having originated at all but as ‘in-themselves’, or even as the cause of all origination in general (LN 11[122], p. 224/KGW 8.2:300 [my underline emphasis])

This ‘psychological mendacity,’ of which Nietzsche speaks, the mendacity of the aforementioned ‘democratic prejudice,’ is, for him, a form of idolatry. This rendition that posits itself in God’s place, or under God’s name, cannot by that achieve any divinity, and true connection with anything divine. This amounts to a misplaced reverence, for Nietzsche, a reverence of *Being* – which, in relation to the divine, is naught but a “pitiful inanity.” ‘Being’ simply does not rise to those heights. When *posited as such*, however, this Being-masquerading-as-God becomes an ascetic and *nihilistic* ideal; hence, “all ‘divinity’ in the Christian style has hitherto proved to be a great danger [...] of perishing through an ideality hostile to life” (ibid, p. 225).⁴⁰²

This “God” that Nietzsche resists is, predominately, a Christian-Philosophical, Hegelian ‘God,’ especially insofar as the latter seemed to issue not only orders to build the theological enterprise that pertains to ‘divine knowledge,’ but supplied the blueprints of this project through(out) history.⁴⁰³ Levinatzsch shows that what had been a “natural” *Distanz* in the Greeks, in contradistinction to an infinitely abstract, “non-natural” *Distanz* in Judaism, begins the slow process of what Nietzsche calls ‘*décadence*’,⁴⁰⁴ i.e., ‘reconciling’ this gap by positing this *Distanz* itself as an immanent ‘ground’ (like the ‘soul’ that subtends ‘Man’s will’ already possesses the guilt of Original Sin from birth). It is from this ground that the self-absolving tower of knowledge can be built as a kind of “Babel-ical” project to ensure that the gap be progressively closed, that the guilt will be paid in full, that the transcendent will be swallowed into immanence. What Hegel disdained as the wholly transcendent, “bad infinity” freedom of the Jewish God – free from all intervention and penetration, all contact/influence, all knowledge – now receives the “yoke” of a spiritual necessity to actualize itself, to progressively incarnate itself in ‘Nature’ so as to eventually reconcile itself fully to itself, knowing/allowing no separations or “gaps;” in short – become a “true infinity.” God “must” not keep His Truth (and/or Justice?) to Himself – He must spread the “good news” throughout the world, throughout, indeed, the universe.

I would like to maintain here that this internalization that Christianity had effected on/from the Jewish (transcendent, reactive) *Distanz* had precisely the *décadent* function of internalizing that which should have remained exterior, Wholly Other, in Judaism: the ‘will of God.’ As Law, this will was always to be deciphered and followed (and deciphered again), but never *known* or *revealed*, never internalized beyond the letter in which its absolute otherness remains untouchable. Internalizing God’s Law means an incarnation of its text as meaning – an imbibing of its “spirit,” as it were – and already fulfilling it, in principle, in *everyone’s* ‘soul’.⁴⁰⁵ This spirit – which, in the words of Saint Paul, gives the life that the letter kills – tarries less and less over the latter’s pathologies (Lévinas’ “crust of Being” or the ‘*il y a*’), which allows it to progressively evangelize itself to different nations and different languages: first through the Catholic Church, but then – the Church itself being too formal/external, too “high” to be “spread” – passing on to ‘individual’ internalization(s). Since ‘guilt’ is every “Man’s” condition in life, true salvation can only come from having most fully internalized the Christian ‘spirit’: in the context of an “internalized-Judaism” this meant a structural and behavioral shift that no longer *distinguishes* itself in obsessively poring over ‘the letter,’ but retains its “kernel,” its meaning, and now *turns towards the rest of the world with the same obsessive energy*.

This transferal of obsession, this “reformation” of Jewish hatred, played a psychological role that Nietzsche felt compelled to spell out. Switching from an obsession with the external/transcendent to an obsession with the internal/immanent required a whole shift in ‘Man,’ the making of a “whole new animal,” the animal “*with the right to make promises*” (GM II §1, p. 57). The Nietzschean analysis as to the ethico-metaphysical role of *memory* mirrors precisely this internalization (of the Judaic *transcendent* function of ‘God’s Will’) whereby “my will” or “the will of the Subject” becomes invested with “a world of strange new things”.⁴⁰⁶ This memory – particularly its decisive moral role – requires a will “strong enough to handle it;” hence the moral demand that follows the Christian ethico-metaphysical gesture towards Judaism.

As I will explain more fully in the next, concluding chapter, this “new animal” marks the beginning of the Christian *Bildung*, an inner “cultivation” of affects *in the name* of the Jewish God. “The Book” is not essential any longer, only its *meaning* is needed: one can be righteous unto God by understanding God’s will and actualizing it in the world (so as to prepare it for the arrival of God’s Kingdom). In terms of individual morality, this required an increasingly aggressive rejection of the Judaic endless poring over Biblical passages and infinite discussions (that can never cohere to a single narrative/meaning); this “message” needed to be converted to something I can take with me. For that to happen, however, I require an internal mechanism that both marks the goal and includes the necessity to achieve it. The first step in achieving this mechanism – precisely the Christian ‘conscience’ – is to breed a new animal, one possessing of,

[...] a real memory of the will: so that between the original "I will" "I shall do this" and the actual discharge of the will, its *act*, a world of strange new things, circumstances, even acts of will may be interposed without breaking this long chain of will. But how many things this presupposes! To ordain the future in advance in this way, man must first have learned to distinguish necessary events from chance ones, to think causally, to see and anticipate distant eventualities as if they belonged to the present, to decide with certainty what is the goal and what the means to it, and in general be able to calculate and compute. Man himself must first of all have become calculable, regular, necessary, even in his own image of himself [here is the Christian radicality/decadence – enabled by the Jewish escape to “effigie;” SC], if he is to be able to stand security for his own future, which is what one who promises does! (GM II §1, p. 58 [my underline])

The Jews had a codex of Divine *Law* – hence, indifferent to “intentions” – that they were to interpret incessantly until the unknowable “future” of the Messiah’s arrival; the pagan exhausted their care and ‘being’ in the *present* moment of activity, which entails that no quarter is given to lingering self- or other-oriented promises (intentions and commitments, respectively). In short, where the Pagan

nobles had *no* ‘conscience’ to speak of (and act upon), the Jews had an utterly *abstract and external* “conscience” in their Torah. The unknowable future of Judaic Messianism precisely spells a passivity towards it; from within the Lévinasian conception of Judaic ethics, the Jew cannot, strictly speaking, bring about the arrival of the Messiah; or, at least, never directly. There is no way to secure this future, which goes some way to explain how and why is it a Messianism that refrains from proselytizing itself in/to the world; a non-evangelical messianism. The Jewish example – unlike the Christian one – was to remain *external*, just like their God, to the world; a communication and interpretation of signs. The Judaic “Bildung,” hence, will have always followed the external trace, the remainder over which ‘I’ can have no power (including the power to capitulate or submit myself), which I must not internalize.

What I discussed above as “doing before hearing” also means that any justification-by-intention – which *presupposes a will that is free to choose* and follow the orders it “knows” – is categorically irrelevant for the kind of ‘Good’ (and the kind of ‘guilt’) of Judaism. Something similar had happened with regards to “utilitarianism:” the external freedom of the Jewish God becomes, with Christianity, internal to ‘Man’ – through the moral meaning of memory (or ‘conscience’) – possessing of that elusive “free will” that can now be, instead of God, blamed with ‘evil.’

The decisive difference here is that when this blame occurs internally, “spiritually,” there is no renegotiating it or reinterpreting it in the manner of the Jews. There is no longer that Jewish suspicion of God, that “loving God’s Law more than God” attitude; an attitude afforded by the “mediation” of the letter *which keeps ‘evil’ as a question*: is ‘evil’ in God? Is it not in God but in Creation? Since ‘Man’ was already divided in Judaism (Jews, Gentiles) the responsibility for ‘evil’ could not be put on this genus in the manner of the Christian usurpation of the Old Covenant (placing the onus on the first Adam/Man and Original Sin as the Sin of Humanity tout court). The latter was already a theodicy, a *moral approach* to the Jewish God; and which Nietzsche, already in his youth, had already suspected and tried to reverse:

[...] the problem of the origin of evil pursued me even as a boy of thirteen: at an age in which you have “half childish trifles, half God in your heart,” I devoted to it my first childish literary trifle, my first philosophical effort—and as for the “solution” of the problem I posed at that time, well, I gave the honor to God, as was only fair, and made him the father of evil. Was that what my “a priori” demanded of me? that new immoral, or at least unmoralistic “a priori” and the alas! so anti-Kantian, enigmatic “categorical imperative” which spoke through it and to which I have since listened more and more closely, and not merely listened? (GM I §3, pp. 16-17)

4.1 Stay with the Hatred: The Passion of the Hostage

Keeping evil as a question, approaching it immorally, is, I maintain, a noble passivity on Nietzsche's part, his allowing the Other to be heard rather than refashioned in 'Man's' image. It is this aforementioned vein of a noble(s) passivity that I will here introduce Lévinas' concept of 'hostage,' not as a species of Christian guilt/debt but precisely as an affirmation of 'will to power'. As already touched on above, affirming thought in the prism of 'will to power' means affirming its constitutive violence – rather than denying or “regretting” its violence, trying to obviate it altogether. Levinatzsch is here to teach how to stay with the hatred; in other words, how to remain suspicious of 'God' – the source of freedom – and resist the “Stockholm syndrome” of becoming *enamored and identified with Him*. In essence, this is how Levinatzsch interprets, and offer to counter, the *décadence* that befell the Judaic height/*Distanz*.

The relation of the thinking 'I' to its dominated Other both provokes and resists the various means by which *the genus 'Man'* tries to cover – account for, pay back, or represent – the separation and distance of the Other. No Reason can expiate this approach, since the historical narrative it necessarily imports to its encounters with Otherness – its “logic of reparations” so to speak – is limited to ontological horizons that cannot conceive past *Dasein's* own death; this “Reason” cannot follow through to the an-archy of the Other, the demand which comes interruptive, “from the other side of history.”

The condition of 'hostage' expresses this temporal predicament of consciousness as also a methodological and ethical one. Both Nietzsche and Lévinas approach this predicament affirmatively, as a height, as *a privilege to be affirmed*; an election which remains uniquely apt to conceive of processes of valuation, at least in this “Monotheist-inf(lect)ed” world which they inhabit. The Nietzschean “scruple” holds him hostage to this elevated distinction no less that the Lévinasian 'me' does; there is a noble passivity which they both affirm, and which allows them to attend the murmurs of the Other that comes from beyond Being. Both refuse to identify with – to annihilate the distance from – this Other; and both conceive of the western subject's freedom as precisely such annihilistic denial.

With the question of this “noble passivity” one arrives at what Lévinas calls a “difficult” conception of 'freedom,' difficult, precisely due to what Nietzsche called “the retarding influence of the democratic prejudice:” where the concept of freedom has been for centuries invested in the economy of debt that resentment placed it under so long ago. Refusing to go hand-in-hand with guilt, the “difficult freedom” of responsibility admits not the latter's humility, but opens up to the heights of 'glory.' Here one is no longer engaged in a passive-aggressive struggle against the Other, whose “superlative”

humility, as Lévinas called it, I try to appropriate to myself thereby expiating my sins (thus also exonerating God from ‘evil’); no, responsibility *rises*, its exponential climb is not a condition to be absolved but a height, a nobility and distinction, to be affirmed. The traces that it follows are the heart of its communication – which is not a communion – with the Other, which is why it loves (God’s) traces “more than God.” The ethical situation of Monotheism necessitates that one holds on to the distinction, to the *distance* – whose complete traversal would surely spell a complete annihilation.⁴⁰⁷

“Difficult freedom” is not an ‘egology.’ Even if one insists that this ethico-metaphysical responsibility *implicates* the ego, this freedom neither begins from nor does it come back to the ego; perhaps that is why it becomes so “difficult” to conceptualize as freedom, since the latter is very much associated with ego and will. This freedom is gratuitous; there are no returns on its investment(s).

Levinatzschean nobility, as persisting in the difficult freedom of a hostage, is also a rising to the challenge of thought’s self-affirmation, its responsibility towards the value it privileges, *with* the violence that this privilege presupposes. It is an approach to morality that *assumes responsibility prior to assuming ‘Man’* – a shared presupposition or ‘ground’ out of which western metaphysics derives its concept of ethical responsibility (and Christianity – its concept of guilt). It wields the difficult freedom of being open to question, to a ‘Why?’ question that singularizes and particularizes a responsible ‘me’ before it “personifies” or “individuates” a guilty ego, cutting through the latter’s identifications and horizons that fall away before this question’s sheer greatness. In a very deep sense, Levinatzschean nobility *affirms* the transcendence of the Other – an an-archy which one cannot (*nor should one*) ever fully “account for” – thus *methodologically* refusing to sink back into a logic of ‘autonomy;’ a logic that will always obviate – internalize or “fill out” – the aforementioned distance.

It was this logic that possessed “the English psychologists,” as indeed it does all thought that refuses to engage with the temporal problematic of thought which Lévinas calls diachrony or an-archy and Nietzsche calls “historical sense” and ‘will to power.’ Hence the limits, or critique/disrespect, directed towards Being by Levinatzsche: the latter refuses – and this is its own “elevation” – to assume that the ‘there’ and the ‘then’ are not exhausted by their presence to *Dasein*; it refuses to assume the ‘there’ and the ‘then’ to be primary or fundamental. Even if without them, without ‘Being,’ there is no *Dasein*, even after the death of *Dasein*, there is still an ethico-metaphysical responsibility that persists in/as a relation that evades the closure of the *ontos*. Only in *assuming* the latter to be ‘fundamental’ does this lead to an ethical regard that can no longer account for its own ontological violence, since it will

always take a “no freedom” to logically entail a “no responsibility,” repeating the Christian mantra of “that we live is our guilt” (and secretly fantasize about the expiation of that guilt, i.e., of death).⁴⁰⁸

The affirmation demanded by Levinatzschean nobility might be an ontological evasion or aversion – it is, indeed, what constitutes the ethico-metaphysical abjection of ‘the coward’ – but it is also, fundamentally, an ethico-metaphysical exposure to the Other. It does not hide behind any presupposed, originary or limitless freedom, and yet also *does not let go of all responsibility once this kind of freedom has been put in question*.⁴⁰⁹ This predicament at the heart of freedom spells a responsibility, which no ‘ego’ can expiate, not even in the infinite “credit-system” of guilt. Pace Jesus Christ, this is a passivity that ‘I’ cannot bring-about or choose; responsibility exceeds my response-ability. This passivity of the hostage both transcends and underwrites my ‘morality’, since the latter is always only focused on what I, as ‘ego’ or ‘will,’ am *free* to take upon myself. Exposure here means that this passivity communicates with the Other, that there, where thought is the “thinnest” and least free, it affirms itself as responsible, as a futurity of a radical transvaluation after which *Things will never ‘Be’ the Same*.

“Subjective freedom,” of the Christian moral individual, appears as always already beset by the anterior command *from up high* that, nevertheless, *under-writes* this very freedom. Such a “complication” of freedom does not function, however, as a generalized assumption, but interrupts as the event of a “call” that, phenomenologically, is addressed to *me* alone; a call from something wholly Other. This pathos or passivity, a fatality or “crust” that comes prior to subjective freedom or conscious thought makes ‘me’ the chosen/forced witness to its immemorial death/pathologization; to the scission-violence of a de-cision ‘I’ was not “there” not make. Nietzsche’s reappraisal of the way that memory is dominated by pride leads not to the attempted destruction or diminishing of the latter (Christian morality), nor in the obviation and complete dismissal of the former (Pagan nobility). Memory, just like ‘history’ and ‘genealogy,’ needs to be affirmed in this, its passivity and susceptibility; there where “the right to make promises” needs to exceed and betray itself.

In ‘will to power’ and ‘ethics as first philosophy’s’ mutual critique – an ethico-metaphysical reconsideration of the *temporality* of phenomena – Levinatzsche advances this, its methodological *tour de force*, geared precisely to resist the ways in which, as Lévinas says, we are “duped by [ego-based] morality.” To consider freedom as the difficult one of a ‘hostage’ is to allow its capacity to incur “guilt” – and, *a fortiori*, also its capacity to progressively redeem itself from guilt – to be troubled, interrupted by that which it had long ago devoured in its “Stockholmian” act(s) of comprehension and love. Hence, I argue, both thinkers indeed threaten a ‘scandal:’ a stubborn stumbling block in the path of a ‘Reason’

that – though born from the Greek Pagans, and borne by Christian theology – is structured after the Christian narrative of Truth/Salvation as fulfillment or overcoming of Judaism.

Lévinas summarizes the stakes of this approach to freedom in terms that are not, like Nietzsche's, overtly "antichristian," and yet, covertly, do lend themselves to a similar critique of the Christian hold on western thought. In his "Jewish writings" one finds the following passage, which will echo with my previous elaborations of the Jewish unreasonable promise of "do and hear." I will cite it in some length to afford a longer reverberation of this echo:

Is the distinction between free and non-free ultimate? The Torah is an order to which the ego adheres, without having had to enter it, an order beyond being and choice. The ego's exit from being occurs before the ego-which-decides. [...] [...] Responsibility for the creature – a being of which the ego was not the author – which establishes the ego. To be a self is to be responsible beyond what one has oneself done. [...].

To say that the person begins in freedom, that freedom is the first causality and that the first cause is nobody, is to close one's eyes to that secret of the ego, to that relation with the past which amounts neither to placing oneself at the beginning to accept this past consciously nor to being merely the result of the past. The personal form of being, its ego-ness, is a destruction of the crust of being. All the suffering of the world weighs upon the point where a separation is occurring, a reversal of the essence of being. A point substitutes itself for the whole. More precisely, this suffering, this impossibility of escaping, brings about the very separation. Would one wish to reverse the terms? Would the world put all the weight of its suffering on the ego because the latter would be free to sympathize or not to sympathize? [read: Christian morality/guilt; SC]⁴¹⁰ Would only the free being be aware of the weight of the world he has thus taken upon himself? [i.e., conducting himself after Christ's example; SC]⁴¹¹

What Levinatztch spies here, in this strange passivity of the noble, is precisely the ethico-metaphysical prototype of responsibility; it opens up a discourse that allows a regard of the other in an anti-theological manner (i.e., anti-Hegelian and other-than-Heideggerian). Here was Nietzsche's proto-moral word that comes *into* Being, that was neither already "there" as what Heidegger called "potentiality for Being," nor was it demanded by some Hegelian "spiritual necessity": it is neither derivative of Heideggerian *Angst*, for the noble does not see her own death in the face of the plebeian (this she would see, rather, in the face of her enemy), not does it follow a logic of "fulfilling a (sublatable) lack" (unless the 'passivity' discussed above is *presupposed* as a lack). Thus, the first moral value, Nietzsche's proto-moral word, seems to have been *created* – both in terms of *causa formalis* and *causa finalis* – *ex nihilo*.⁴¹²

And yet even Nietzsche's noble, as fullness and activity, is not identical with God. This creation is not its active gesture, but the result of an excess in his very Being, and excess she was never free

towards and could no more choose than one can choose the thought that comes to one's mind (it was, after all, an afterthought that brought about the 'bad' value). The noble as singular, as chosen and elevated, hence also reveals itself as hostage, as non-voluntarily elected – out of the *over-flowing* of his own Being/Presence – to *address a unique value* to the plebeian. This proto-moral word was indeed a saying that remains more passive than all passivity; it is the elusive 'passivity' of the noble's pure activity:

[...] Responsibility for the other, in its antecedence to my freedom, its antecedence to the present and to representation, is a passivity more passive than all passivity, an exposure to the other without this exposure being assumed, an exposure without holding back, exposure of exposedness, expression, saying. This exposure is the frankness, sincerity, veracity of saying. [...] [...] Responsibility goes beyond being. In sincerity, in frankness, in the veracity of this saying, in the uncoveredness of suffering, being is altered. But this saying remains, in its activity, a passivity, more passive than all passivity, for it is a sacrifice without reserve, without holding back, and in this non-voluntary – the sacrifice of a hostage designated who has not chosen himself to be hostage, but possibly elected by the Good, in an involuntary election not assumed by the elected one. (OB, p. 15 [my underline])

What Lévinas calls the “epiphany of the face of the Other” has naught to do with a symmetrical awareness/recognition between two “Subjects” or even “*Daseins*,” a comparison that tends towards the indifferent and equal, seeking the nihilistic homeostasis of “evening the scales” between the privileged and the unprivileged. It has, in short, nothing to do with what Nietzsche identifies as the main retarding element in our/western understanding of the origin of morality, the egalitarianism of “democratic prejudice.” The ethical word arrives spontaneously from an excessive passivity, an “after-thought,” a thought responding to something that was never wholly present or true and yet, somehow, could bring-about its attention; compelling it, *from beyond the noble's (inter)esse/being*, to respond. Fundamentally, this experience of being compelled from a radical passivity – one that nevertheless proceeds to *address* the destitute Other *as such* (i.e. 'bad') – is remarkably reminiscent of what Lévinas called *substitution*, where the Other commands me by his very passivity and destitution, a command coming from beyond (my) being and forcing me to a position of responsibility.

The *opening* of the 'Why?' question, allowing it to breach the ontological closure(s) of Being and to make its excessive *demande – for the Other* – is what Lévinas also calls disinterestedness. “Essence,” Lévinas argues, already implies an economy, a consumption and enjoyment. This was already derivable from Heidegger's definition of 'care,' of a conscience that finds its de-finition in the Angst that coils around her death as the limit of her powers and interests: “[E]sse is *interesse*, essence is interest” (OB, p. 4).

Essence manifests itself – just like Nietzsche’s nobles in their relations *towards one other* (i.e. as equals) – in war, which Lévinas conceives as “[...] the deed or drama of essence’s interest” (ibid, ibid). The kind of “peace” that comes with “essence” – with this *conjunction* of Being and interest – is what Lévinas also calls “the extreme synchronism of war” (ibid, ibid). Essence hence imposes a peace that – in a felicitous articulation that sums up very nicely what I deem here as the passive-aggressive gesture of an assumed ‘essence’ – Lévinas *qualifies* as “a rational peace” (ibid, ibid [my underline]). Unlike the gratuitous disinterestedness of the proto-moral word, this peace is merely a temporary suspension of war, in the interest of two (or more) *beings* – precisely a *tolerance*, a hiatus still inscribed within the war-relation. Indeed, Lévinas sees commerce itself as a part of this calculation: here is a *ratio*, a reasonable contract that suspends war to the benefit of both parties, *a peace in both parties’ interest*.⁴¹³

[...] beings remain always assembled, present, in a present that is extended, by memory and history, to the totality determined like matter, a present without fissures or surprises, from which becoming is expelled [a Nietzsche reader might smile here; SC], a present largely made up of re-presentations, due to memory and history. Nothing is gratuitous. (OB, pp. 4-5)

This logic, where “nothing is gratuitous,” is a logic of ‘nobility,’ but of a nobility that has lost all of its *distinction* by losing its other, its mark of distance and height; a nobility reduced to *moral privilege* (i.e., the advantage of the animal with the *right* to make promises over other, less trustworthy, “animals”). Though the Nietzschean noble, to recall, enjoys and consumes the plebeian, utterly exploiting her with no care or guilt, the word whereby she designates the plebeian ‘bad’ – this value conferred on the plebeian – is, itself, gratuitous.

Here one touches the core of the noble-plebeian ethico-linguistic relation: the proto-moral word, *innocent* – an innocence that means this word/value is not driven by guilt, nor by any kind of investment or “fore-thought” – articulates, at the very origin of value and morality, a paradigmatic instance of responsibility for the Other. To say this act of bestowing moral value was driven by guilt or productive of it would be to say that it had an “interest” – even if this interest is allotted to ‘spirit’ (Hegel) –, that this relation and this word were economically *grounded*. However, the Levinatzschean insistence here is precisely on the gratuity and innocence of the noble’s word, on how it is – even *while*, as Nietzsche says, *consuming* the plebeian, even while, as Lévinas says, *usurping* the Other⁴¹⁴ – essentially a word of an “irrational” peace; a disinterested relation to an other to whom I owe nothing, and yet still elicits this value, this responsibility, from me. The word ‘bad’ in the *Genealogy*, then, offers a paradigm for what Lévinas calls signification: “[...] where the *for* of the-one-for-the-other, outside of any correlation and any

finality, is a *for* of total gratuity, breaking with interest: *for* characteristic of the human fraternity outside of any preestablished system.” (OB, pp. 96-97).

To understand ‘Levinatzsch’ at this point means to understand a radically other metaphysical account of the relation of consciousness to the Other that, nonetheless, had already taken it hostage to respond to its an-archy. It is to understand ethics through the Jewish idea of election and chosenness, of nobility and height, rather than the Christian one of humility and weakness, guilt and self-negation. Such is the ‘vanity’ of the Levinatzschan ‘Antichrist.’ It evinces a gratuity that resists being reinscribed by the Hegelian after-the-fact economy of expiation from guilt, a kind of “filling out” of a certain lack or debt that every new revelation accords itself *in time*. Levinatzsch will precisely harp on this small, hardly noticeable, constraint; it promotes a philosophy and method of responsibly approaching what comes or appears “in time.”

Spontaneous, yet temporally knotted and passive; superior, yet deriving from a lapse – the proto-moral word is born as the first form of ethical responsibility that is, moreover, not based in any “recognition” or “memory” of a debt or promise, and, furthermore, not based in any pre-existing demand of ‘equality’ – neither real nor ideal; neither natural, nor legal, nor moral. That is also why, as Nietzsche often reminds us, this line of thinking is most fundamentally obscured, if not subterraneously dominated, by the “democratic prejudice.” The latter would always *need* to assume ‘equality,’ owing to the metaphysics of resentment from which it hails; it was, hence, an ethico-metaphysical need for the irreducible plurality, the “bad infinity” which underwrites (whatever de-finition of) ‘Man’ to undergo the vivisectional *Bildung* towards ‘Man’ as the equalizing standard.

Upon the event of a Levinatzschan witnessing – and this is how I will conclude this dissertation in the next chapter – the birth of the homogenic genus ‘Homo Sapiens’ will be forced to reveal the homogenizing violence that will forever oscillate between either a “Hetero Sapiens” or a “Homo Perfidus.” The hostage must not merge, must not “fall in love” with that which makes its freedom difficult; in the context wherein one’s thought is already invaded and poisoned by resentment, the ethico-metaphysical demand becomes antipathological through and through: this “antichrist” needs *to stay with the hatred* – that most fundamental of anti-Christian affects the Christianity sought to eliminate by turning it against itself; a passive-aggressive ‘tolerance’ behind which is the promise, not to say the fantasy, that it will eventually die “by its own hand.”

SEGUE: Backing-up Our Violence (As Time Goes By)

If one wants to revenge oneself on an opponent as completely as possible one should wait until one has a complete set of truths and justifications in one's hand and can play them out against him with composure: so that exacting revenge and exacting justice coincide. It is the most fearful kind of revenge: for there is no instance above it to which an appeal can be made.

– Friedrich Nietzsche⁴¹⁵

Law and punishment cannot be reconciled, but they can be transcended if fate can be reconciled.

– G. W. F. Hegel⁴¹⁶

But I remained to gaze at the host / and I saw something that I would fear, / without more proof, even to retell, / except that my conscience secures me – / the good companion that frees a man, / if it wears the chainmail of knowing itself pure.

– Dante Alighieri⁴¹⁷

In Doug Liman's 2014 film *Edge of Tomorrow*, Tom Cruise plays as Major William Cage, a military propaganda officer whose job is to rally troops from around the world to combat a highly advanced alien invasion force, called 'Mimics,' that seeks to obliterate Mankind and take control of the Earth and its resources. When a final offensive is planned, Cage is ordered to join the invading troops, and cover this offensive from the front lines. Cage tries everything he can to evade this, insisting that this puts him too close to the fighting (and its dangers), and is aggressively persistent: when begging doesn't work, he offers up other propaganda officers for this (dangerous) role, then finally trying to threaten and extort his commanding officer so as to avoid this danger; and this even though the entire world is convinced – something for which Cage, as the campaign's most famous propaganda officer, is himself partly responsible – that humanity's victory on that day is assured. This (desperate) course of action eventually leads to Cage's commander having him arrested, demoted to the rank of 'private,' and taken to the front lines, not as a reporter, but this time to fight as a common soldier.

Cage wakes up at Heathrow airport – now serving as a 'Forward Operations Base' for the soon-to-be-invading troops – along with orders that depict him as a deserter, who tried to impersonate an officer in order to avoid fighting. Master Sergeant (MSG) Ferrel, while taking "Private Cage" to his squad, explains that *there is no escape* for him from this situation: the only way "out" – be it death or discharge (upon victory) – is *through* fighting. In a truly exemplary monologue, Ferrel articulates both the *substance*, and the *spirit*, of the entire narrative:

Ferrel: Rumor is a terrible thing. By nightfall these men will all reach the same conclusion: that you're a coward and a liar putting your life above theirs. The good news is there's hope for you, private; hope in the form of glorious combat. Battle is the great redeemer, the fiery crucible in which

the only true heroes are forged. The one place where all men truly share the same rank, regardless of what kind of parasitic scum they were going in. [...]

[*Taking Cage to his squad mates, Ferrel notices that they have been gambling.*]

Ferrel: Private Kimmel, what is my view of gambling in the Barracks?

Kimmel: You dislike it Sergeant.

Ferrel: Nance, why do I dislike it?

Nance: Because it entertains the notion that our fate is in hands other than our own.

Ferrel: And what is my definitive position on the concept of fate? Chorus...

Squad [*in tandem*]: Through readiness and discipline we are masters of our fate!

Ferrel (turning back to Cage): You might call that notion ironic, but trust me, you'll come around.

[...]

Cage: Listen to me, I will never be combat read- -

Ferrel [*interrupting Cage*]: I envy you, Cage. Tomorrow morning you will be baptized, born again.

Indeed, Cage goes to battle the next morning – so “non-combat-ready” that he is not even able to release the safety on his weapons – and dies during the assault, as does every man in his squad, and, indeed, all other soldiers sent to that offensive, which turns out to have been a trap set by the Mimics. As fate(?) would have it, Cage dies when killing a rare Mimic, called ‘the Alpha,’ in the process of which Cage’s body becomes infused with the creature’s blood. Cage finds that he immediately wakes up on the day before, starting from the moment he comes-to when first dropped at Heathrow’s Forward Operating Base where everything happens as it did before, unless he finds a way to alter (this) fate. Cage tries to survive the battle that day, naturally dies, but – since he is now ‘Alpha’ by virtue of (literal) blood-relation – is “born again” to relive that day (retaining all memory of transpiring events), a predicament expressed in the movie’s tagline: “Live, die, repeat.” Cage, ‘ironically’ indeed (as MSG Ferrel remarks), will have to repeatedly “come around” – dying and coming back to life again and again – until he finally “comes around” to take control over his own (and humanity’s) fate.

Once again, Cage tries to use even this new and extraordinary power to avoid the fighting. He tries to prove to MSG Ferrel that the next day’s assault will be catastrophic, using all the information he gathered from previous “iterations” of that same day that he’d already lived through. With assistance from humanity’s most celebrated warrior in this struggle, Rita Vrataski, known as ‘the Angel of Verdun’ – while still a propaganda officer, Cage used her example in the battle of Verdun, where Rita killed hundreds of Mimics by herself, to mobilize the world’s troops (not knowing at the time that she owed her advantage to the same condition as his) – Cage slowly realizes what has happened to him: by absorbing the Alpha’s “blood,” his own blood was infused with the Alpha’s (passive) ability to “rewind time” by a day upon death, retaining that day’s memories (hence the Mimics’ nigh-insurmountable

strategic advantage). From then on, Cage has no choice, but – unless he wishes to relive the same grisly fate (above) for all eternity – to arrive at the correct order and manner of actions in order to extricate himself, and humanity, from the fate otherwise allotted to them.

This power over time, combined with a ‘will’ that is repeatedly passed through what MSG Ferrel calls “the fiery crucible (of battle),” leads Cage to precisely the transformation that MSG Ferrel predicts: through ‘readiness,’ achieved by this strategic power over time, and ‘discipline,’ with which Cage is forced to battle humanity’s (all but assured) doom, he becomes “master of (his) fate,” and, indeed, manages to save humanity from extinction by the end of the film. Only then – when *all* of ‘humanity’ can have a future – is Cage allowed to pass through the “edge” and actually reach the “tomorrow” he longed for. In this kind of temporal warfare, one, literally, goes either forward or down; for this “fiery crucible,” it is either progress, or extinction.

This story captures very well the stakes and assumptions, the violence and “justice,” of a *Christian* “conversion machine” – something that is quite bluntly confirmed by the “fiery crucible” and the “rebirth of baptism” terminology spelled out by MSG Ferrel. The unique, and decisive, power that the aliens possess – and ‘Humanity’ usurped through the absolute sacrifice (death) of “one of its own” – bears very strong parallels with the power of ‘history’ itself; a Modern “historiography,” hence, whose *claims* (and the *power* they employ/presuppose) become ever more total/comprehensive the more this (hi)story is assumed, unlike in Ancient times, to be ‘universal,’ to be, “equally” and “impartially,” relevant for *all* of ‘Mankind.’ Considered structurally, Cage’s newly-usurped power over time is apposite to the modern power of the historian:⁴¹⁸ s/he has a *freedom*, with regards to the events s/he is exploring – to pick and choose any ‘evidence’ and connect it to any other evidence, so as to construct a ‘Truthful’ narrative out of them – and, hence, always remains, in some manner, “external” to this chain of events; a “meta-“, all but “Godly⁴¹⁹,” position, that allows her to witness/assess this narrative – the signs/language in which it is articulated, its effects on its audience, its overall coherence – *repeatedly*. Cage, for his part, can also repeatedly visit the same historical occurrence, and change specific things, so as to actualize/realize the “necessary outcome” of humanity’s survival; meaning, in this case, that he plan and execute a narrative that finally fulfils the demands of a “universally justified” necessity (like ‘Truth’ for the historian; in this case, it is “Mankind’s” necessity of survival).

This ‘freedom,’ however, is not a simple one, and, as Nietzsche argued, demands a particular kind of “sense;” one that, *methodologically*, takes the ‘will to power’ – that underwrites (and hence ethically problematizes) *any* causal narration – into account. What the “freedom” discourse above failed to

mention is that both Cage, and the historian, are limited in their capacity. This limitation is precisely where the question(ing) of method comes into play: while in the film's heroic fantasy Cage is limited by something over which he has no control, i.e., 'Fate,' which is assumed to be a kind of "constant" to which he needs to adapt (or die), the historian is limited methodologically, by whatever her method depicts and allows the veridical stamp of 'historical evidence.' While it may be tempting for the historian to pretend that her method is, at least in principle, as constant and unquestionable as 'Fate' is to Cage, what Nietzsche showed in the previous chapter is that this constitutes an 'idealistic,' Christian-metaphysical fantasy that betrays this historian's "bad historical sense." In composing the historical narrative, however "necessary" it might be, an absolutely unique kind of force – that I call here ethico-metaphysical – is being claimed and operated, whereby *a methodological question is opened*, and can no longer be closed-off with the assumption of some unconditioned universal truth that 'evidence' can provide and that can spare the historian from responsibility: not responsibility for "correctly following the method," but responsibility towards her *methodology* itself, towards the justice of the method's very *logos*. From this kind of "putting in question" – i.e., from this kind of Levinatschean *test* – neither Heidegger's historico-ontological horizons/discourses (e.g., the given rules within the 'Da' of a specific discipline), nor Hegel's teleological combinatorics of "reconciliation with Fate," nor Kant's transcendental milieu of synthetic *a priori*s (that are *predicated* upon causality and hence unable to question it), will "absolve" her. She is, repetitively, (re-)called to this responsibility.

This "historical sense," hence, means approaching the temporal knot involved in narrating history (and the power/violence that this narration employs or presupposes) with a methodological responsibility that must pursue the *ethico-metaphysical* question – 'Why (narrate *these events* in *this manner*)?' – over and above making some (logically, commonsensically, or institutionally) irrefutable claim concerning this narrative's 'Truth.' Power over history might prove the potency (and potential) of the 'I,' but it involves something that cannot be documented or assured impartiality in the manner of 'evidence,' since its narrative/causal claims – connecting *archē* to telos – assume what Lévinas calls the an 'an-archy' of the Other: that towards which 'I' have responsibility and that, while assuring the power of my 'I,' also exposes the latter's radical inefficacy in getting hold of and controlling the former. In short, the "resurrectional" ability of the historian – her "freedom" with regards to the events she narrates – in fact involves an "asymmetrical" communication with a very murky abyss of forces; a locus of "prehistoric violence" that underwrites any "final" power-formation – like any causal chain that is recognized or imposed by a 'will' (in this case, the will of the historian/Mankind's savior) – *including*

when this will is said to be driven by a search for ‘Universal Truth’. Of course, it is precisely this last point that is, nowadays, hidden from view – by what Nietzsche calls the victory of *ressentiment*; by what Lévinas calls the ontological “egology” of Western philosophy; by what Fasolt calls the victory of historical consciousness.

The various changes and adjustments that Cage has to both perform and undergo articulate his “forging” process – from the cowardice of a “parasitic scum” to the courageous conviction of a “true hero” – as what Ferrel called a “true hero,” a feat enabled by ‘readiness,’ but achieved through *discipline*: a systematic, repetitive self-sacrifice on Cage’s behalf, who has to die again and again – initially as the “negative image” of a hero (‘coward’), then as an aspiring, imperfect hero – before “fate” is finally reconciled with so as to support Cage’s unquestionably just aim (the survival of humanity). The peak of the film’s absolution is expressed precisely in everything continuing as it was before the fateful assault, whose casualties, *this time*, get to go on living. The film’s final time-manipulation makes sure that the crisis was dealt with *without a trace*: no one can “remember” that fateful day, except our newly-converted hero, and so his actions bring *him* no benefit beyond the one he won for *all* of ‘Mankind.’ This was Cage’s “redemption” in battle, as MSG Ferrel put it: for Cage to internalize, through discipline, the idea that his life, even his values, are completely forfeit to the good of an equalized ‘all’ of ‘humanity:’ that *concept* according to which “all men” are assumed/said to “share the same rank.”

And yet, following a Levinatzschean trajectory, an ethical problem(atic) stands out; a critical scene that illustrates best, to my mind, how the ‘discipline’ – the “self-violence” demanded of Cage by the aforementioned ‘crucible’ – becomes, almost seamlessly, and certainly *logically*, a justification of violence towards others. As Nietzsche had already stated, never is a temple erected without another temple destroyed: Cage adopts, or is adopted into, *ressentiment*’s principle of valuation – disdaining any height/nobility, treating all ‘Mankind’ as equivalent – but this, also, necessarily means that he can no longer see any reason, any Why?, behind anyone else’s life, besides that ‘Why?’ of the mission (i.e., the “necessity of survival”). This logic, as I have argued above, can only maintain its cohesion upon the presupposition – Nietzsche’s “democratic prejudice” – of some fabled power-neutrality or value-equality that the ‘all’ *must* assume; an ethico-metaphysical decision that this “all-perspective,” nevertheless, both makes, and ignores responsibility towards. Indeed, the entire ‘disciplinary’ process for Cage (as for any other “convert”) demands not only that he sacrifice *himself* for the “good” of “all,” but that he begin to

accept, like Dante in the *Inferno*, the pain and violence that *others*, “*like him*,” have to suffer upon the same value-equalizing rack.

This scene plays out very briefly, towards the end of the film. Cage, who has only that day to live (he lost his temporal powers when involuntarily receiving a blood transfusion), joins Rita in leading his squad on one final assault, facing the critical-ultimate challenge of the Mimics’ central hive mind (called, rather appropriately, “the Omega”⁴²⁰). Since the ‘Omega’ is guarded by an ‘Alpha,’ the squad must surgically hit only the former, since, if it kills the latter, the day will “reset” again (only this time assuring Mankind’s defeat, since no human holds the Alpha’s power any longer). In a last briefing on their aircraft, hence, the squad’s private Ford asks, almost indignantly (he seems to have little faith in the mission’s success): “So what am I supposed to do if one of those Alphas is about to kill me?”

Cage’s response to this question, especially against the background of his own initial cowardice, is striking, and all-too-telling. In contrast to the vast array of emotive gesticulations and complex verbal rationalizations that “Cage the coward” had availed himself to in trying to avoid any (bodily) sacrifice on his part, “Cage the true hero” is now far more focused, his face all but expressionless, no longer emitting these signs. He had seen his own desires frustrated so many times, his own values dashed so often against “fate,” that neither has any hold on him any longer; he has no more need for *signification*, not when the *significance* of every act is measured against *the same* ‘fate’ and *the same* ‘goal.’ He knows what needs to be done: indeed, it is his “reconciliation with fate” that made him realize that desire or values don’t, and hence shouldn’t, enter into it; they are simply not “workable” (*wirkliche*). Having become one with the ‘spirit’ of all of ‘humanity’ – as its sole hero and chosen representative – he has no more use for these ‘vanities:’ these are part of his “old self,” the self that, to use Hegelian language, found shelter in the vain struggles of “media representations” rather than their tragic incarnation as *actual* (*wirklich*) struggles; the Crucible in which he was “born again” convinces Cage that these “letters” – words, reasons, even feelings – that his “cowardly self” used to hide behind, are useless, *irrelevant*, leading to “dead ends” (“for the letter kills...”). In order to achieve this redemption, to fulfill his calling and rise to his own baptism of being born again, Cage has to forfeit precisely what Lévinas called, and was discussed above as, *signification*; for responsibility is no longer directed or addressed to the other and for the other, but utterly enclosed upon the survival, the ontological coherence, of the self-Same that is ‘Mankind.’ It is, to paraphrase a Lévinasian expression, a “humanism of the Same”.⁴²¹

Unlike “Cage the panicking coward,” hence, “Cage the resolute hero” *knows* what must be done – a knowledge that comes as a result of being “reconciled with fate” – and is firmly resolved to achieve it

whatever the price. And so, upon hearing Ford's question, Cage exhibits none of his former behaviors: he is unmoved by the question, tries neither to rationally convince Ford, nor inspire him (as his old "self" might have done to attain its vain goals), but – with an indifferent "matter of fact" attitude (and the cold, monotonous voice that goes with it), barely looking in Ford's direction, much less at his face, - answers: "You take a hit for the team." Cut and dry.

This answer holds, in compact form, the *difference* I have been trying to articulate all this time between an answer, and a *response*; a difference I see as corresponding with the one between the harsh freedom of classical humanism, and the difficult, problematic freedom that is the Jew's, the unredeemed coward's, lot: the concern with what Lévinas calls 'the Same' – for which *all* singularities/differences are only *equally-contingent* modifications of a *single*, teleologically-bound 'world-spirit' – produces an 'answer' that is "reconciled" to *Ford's* death in the *same way, with the same justification*, as Cage is reconciled to *his* own death. Ferrel's "fiery Crucible," hence, reveals a Rawlsian understanding of "justice as fairness" (or, what amounts to the same thing here, the *irrelevance* of justice); wherein an "I-Thou" ethico-metaphysical symmetry had already taken for granted – that is, *irresponsibly* decided (i.e., citing some 'Natural' or 'Divine' "unconditioned constant;" in this case, 'Fate') – that Cage and Ford are equivalent to one another, and, furthermore, *that Cage himself is in a position to make that call*. How is one 'I' different from another 'I'?

For a Lévinasian understanding of 'responsibility' – whose singularity cannot be so unproblematically reduced to the universal equivalences of an economic system of accountability (where every Subject is equally guilty etc.) – this assumption, this justification of another person's death, is insufficient, and cannot proclaim any 'necessity' or 'justification' – what Walter Benjamin calls "a violence crowned by fate" – for such a sacrifice of the other (person), which is the quintessence of what he calls "violence towards the Other." Eternally persecuted and tested, Lévinasian responsibility cannot stop at this "all-perspective" of 'species' or 'Mankind,' and is obsessed with the death of the other over and above – recall Levinatzsch's challenge to Heidegger – my potentialities and projects vis-à-vis my own death. As audience, we are driven to accept Cage's newfound equanimity in sacrifice (of both self and other), since Cage himself has, already, *taken so many hits for this "Mankind-team,"* hence justifying the logic of self- (and other-) sacrifice that had gotten him, and us, this close to the "redemption in battle" that MSG *Farell* prophesied.

Of course, one could argue that placing the onus of the narrative on Ford is ludicrous, that Ford is clearly a secondary character and therefore does not merit the critical, all but radical, intervention that I

am making here. This, however, is precisely the point when it comes to narrative: any causal chain that thought imposes upon itself, will always claim a ‘necessity’ – as Levinatzsch ex-claims above – that connects one moment to the other, where “one thing leads to the other,” *as if* carried upon the indifferent and/or passive flow of time. Whether this necessity is transcendental (Kant), historico-ontological (Heidegger), or historico-spiritual (Hegel), it will always assume this *unapologetic* power that thought exerts over time. The violent struggle of forces that occur “beneath the surface” – of ‘consciousness,’ ‘there(-being),’ or ‘world-history’ (respectively) – is hence, unapologetically *decided*. As an ‘I’ that usurps the an-archic Other and arises as a *response* to the Other (Lévinas’ “ethics as first philosophy”), or as a ‘will’ whose coherence and power are always only an effect that is both bolstered and undermined by a subterranean array of ill-defined forces in constant flux (Nietzsche’s “will to power”), this power over time, this *decision concerning ‘history,’* is precisely what the narrative, as a way of signifying time (i.e., a *logos*), presupposes and requires.

If narrative “must” be presumed – due to the metaphysical problematic (of “an-archy” or “pre-history”) that was discussed above as ‘*the Why?*’ – to be the beginning and end, the *whole* of (legitimate) thought, its only means of *communication* keep losing their *signification* in an “idolatry of significance:” the narrative’s only interaction with otherness bears the character of a Newtonian-mechanical collision of given ‘positions’ (a zero-sum game of energy transfer between *given* masses), and/or a Digestion/“Melting-pot” mechanism where *essence* (in French this word also means, rather appropriately, *fuel*) is separated from its accidentals (e.g., “contingent historical circumstances”) like the kernel from the shell, or the fabled “cream,” that “*aufgehobens*” itself, and rises to the top. That is why Ford’s exclamation as to the importance of his own life/mortality – the claim of an unredeemed coward – counts for What Derrida calls “*peu [...] presque rien*”: as the song goes, “a sigh is just a sigh – the fundamental things apply, as time goes by.” These incidental signs – for who, in their “right mind,” would, or even could, research and write a “history of sighs”? – are left to collapse upon themselves as vanities, mere empty “shows” of difference that do not count, that are “irrelevant,” un-sublatable; the *narrative* cannot supply any ‘apology’ for them, for that would be to undo itself. All it can offer is an economic approximation, not to say appropriation, of this “apology that remains” by translating it into guilt: except there it is “history” that is responsible to all the pain and violence; and history, of course, cannot be demanded an apology. The *apo-logos* – that which backs-up from, goes away from the telling, the ‘said,’ of a given historical narrative – becomes “absorbed” in the violent struggles of a presumed ‘fate’ that underlies and underwrites the historical narrative, paying each identity/position with an

apposite opposite identity/position, a symmetry of give and take or, as Nietzsche remarked concerning resentment, of credit and debt.

But, of course, that is precisely what is so problematic about guilt as a substitute to the apologia, or to what Lévinas calls ‘responsibility’ – there is a symmetrical equivalence between all “products of fate” since it will always, by definition, overcome any of its conflicts; one just needs to arrive at the appropriate(ly absolved) ‘Knowledge, the ‘Concept,’ that can reconcile itself (and “us”) to this “fate.” Judged from this, spiritual necessity of reconciliation (the “absolute drive” of spirit), Ford’s complaints, even his life – along with the complaints and life of all of ‘humanity’ (its members “all share the same rank”) – are incidental, forfeit, since it is always “beside the point” to ask fate for an apology: “it is what it is.” Except, of course, the *telling* of this fate, the presuppositions that go into the signification that underlies the *always-linguistic* ‘narrative’ – the ‘saying’ of the ‘said’ – cannot, without employing violence/power, hide under this “fatal” comprehension of thought/reality.

Guilt – as a moral construct that presupposes a ‘will’ (even if this ‘will’ is “*aufgehoben*ed” to become ‘world-history’ or ‘spirit,’ even if dissolved into the ‘Da’ as ‘project’ or ‘projection’) – cannot do justice to it, since it can only conceive of justice in the manner of resentment, that is, as a balancing of potentially-symmetrical/indifferent scales. Guilt, hence, substitutes responsibility/apology in the same manner that “affirmative action” policies of “social justice” substitute a far more troubling and dark *communication with the Other* as, let’s say, “social responsibility.” The first *accounts* for violence, the latter *responds* to it; and it is, as Nietzsche says, only the victory of resentment in occidental thought that makes us believe in such a wilfully passive approach to the excessive demands of justice with regards to any narrative, any history.

In this regard, guilt can only see the physical/fatal impossibility of an “infinite payment;” and, hence, the “guilty” can proclaim “injustice” at any moment (i.e., prescribing the “reasonable limits of justice”), but always in view of the justice of *the next moment* (in Kafka’s Penal Colony this trajectory is spelled out by the dictum “Have faith and wait!”). Recalling Nietzsche’s priest of resentment, ‘guilt’ promises precisely this absolution, as a kind of “*painment*.” he reduces the apologia – what goes away from *logos* so as to “say” a new, *other* logos (like Ford’s petty whining vis-à-vis the resolute/converted ‘true hero’) – making it “workable” by converting it into guilt; an affective system of pain-management where “my pain” counts just as much as “your pain,” where history’s asymmetries are prophesied to be (in principle/*telos*) “balanced-out” in some “final account/judgment.” When Nietzsche says that the priest “reverses the direction of resentment,” he means precisely – well, as precisely as *my*

‘*Levinatzsch*’ allows him – that the *apo-logos* becomes incarnated and standardized as “painment;” it is, literally, where resentment “backs up” its own violence.⁴²² “Absolution” is promised, by this priest’s systematic appropriation of the apologia, *as an affective state where no such “moral pain” is any longer felt* – just look at Cage’s face when he tells Ford to “take one for the team.” Hegel’s tragic logos of spirit is here in full effect; a high-priest of resentment that tells his followers: (your still-*felt*) pain is an indication of (your still-*unpaid*) guilt. Have faith and wait.

Returning to the film, the logic of this *justification of violence* was already operative in *Farell*’s speech, when he tells Cage that rumors of his attempted desertion will lead everyone to the conclusion that he “values his life above theirs,” following the *silent* assumption of the conversion-machine’s logic: *that the value of each soldier’s life is reducible to the mission* from which Cage tried to desert. Ford needs to understand, hence, as Cage did (though Ford is not afforded Cage’s “historico-affective” process), that in order to surmount their fate, ‘all Mankind’ must act/sacrifice indistinguishably from one another; that they must value their lives in complete reconciliation to the mission (*vis-à-vis* ‘fate’). Refusal to do so – and this is the lesson learned, and then “imparted,” by Cage-the-convert – is a vanity of self-centeredness that threatens absolute doom, and cannot be tolerated. Indeed, what Cage learns – and shows – is that *it is fate itself that cannot tolerate such vanity*, since it is fate that, *repeatedly*, “punishes” Cage for his vanities, until he finally performs (the Hegelian) reconciliation with fate (i.e., “coming around”). When Cage says to/through Ford “take one for the team” he is speaking no longer as the *singular* ‘William Cage’ – whose *principle of valuation* for life used to entertain ‘vanities’ other than his mission (e.g., his own personal survival) – but *as fate*.

At this stage of Cage’s “moral training,” his *conviction* has finally reached its apogee, caught-up and merged with his very “being”: he *knows* to focus on “the mission,” on what’s important/relevant, rather than wasting energy and resources trying to save contingent incidentals like *any* “one person’s life,” or the sighs of any one person’s pain.⁴²³ It is this “any” that bespeaks the ethico-metaphysical decision that underwrites this absolution-narrative, the *logic* that now authorizes, not to say sanctifies, *another person’s* pain, violence, and death; the “Crucible logic” wherein ‘I’ and ‘Thou’ are equivalent, where the order of rank is denied ex-hypothesi, and “all share the same rank.” When Ford finally dies, neither Cage, *nor us as the audience*, cares, beyond Ford’s role in achieving the mission (he was manning a machine gun when he died, and needs to be replaced to fend off the Mimics trying to defend the Omega from Cage and Rita’s assault).

MSG Farell's "fiery crucible" proved itself, just as he predicted, *a perfect conversion machine*: it gives us, its "external witnesses," the proof/evidence of a non-believer that has been utterly converted – he cannot even entertain the notion of what I called 'vanity' here (obliterated in himself, *and hence*, also effaced from his relation to others) – offering a seemingly coherent/commonsensical logic that allows us, as "witnesses," to go through a similar conversion, a similar *moral training*, "wasting" neither a second, nor a second thought, for the deceased Ford. Judged against this "horizon of the 'all'" (I urge you to recall the BLM discussion in the previous chapter), no singular consideration – neither a *single* person's, nor any *particular* group's life/pain – "matters;" only the life and the pain of the "all" ('all,' of course, is always a logical/linguistic construct and hence, strictly speaking, possesses no "life" and feels no "pain." To fulfill this mission, each has to disassociate from the coward in her, the "parasitic scum" who would cling to life for illegitimate ('vain,' 'singular,' external, selfish) reasons – a Nietzschean irrationality/immorality of an as-yet *unanswered* 'Why?' – and break free from such irrelevant or immaterial needs/judgments; each coward must also "rise" to the (moral? spiritual?) level from which she can destroy, without flinching, *every* "cage," starting with her own.

The coward's betrayal is so politically abject since it hides within the cloisters of a paradox that every 'policy' that claims justice to itself must always look-away from, or deny; a "negative" part of the historical/speculative dialectic that both opens the path to absolute justification, and yet always leaves an irreducible remainder for whatever project claims to pass through this opening. In succinct form, one could say that the coward's betrayal marks the ethico-metaphysical problematic of *backing up* any claim to an *advance* (e.g., 'project,' 'idea,' 'edifying symbol').

The film *Edge of Tomorrow*, in sum, offers a compact instance of how the 'spirit' of Hegel's philosophy is premised precisely as an appropriation of the coward's betrayal: on the one hand, much like the "Abra(ha)mic coward," Cage is afforded, due to circumstances he could not foresee/control, a distance from his own time/circumstances; but, on the other hand, he is given no choice but to keep returning to the same time, same situation, over and over again, until he "comes around" to do what is "necessary." Nothing new begins here, nothing breaks out to an unknown future, and all in the name of the survival of 'Humanity' (a survival towards which any 'human' is expendable). This example also illustrates my earlier claim as to Heidegger sharing Hegel's secret hatred-combustion-engine, particularly, as Lévinas had noted time and again, with regards to the ethico-metaphysical meaning of their – however "guiltily" and/or "uncomfortably" on Heidegger's part – "spiritual collusion:" Cage's has no choice but to obviate his own cowardly betrayals since the situation he is in makes sure that his

Angst, as Da-sein, is still directed by a concern with his own mortality; a concern that serves to limit the potentialities of his “Being,” his “ontological radar” so to speak, and sacrifice others, when he is truly authentically ready/resolute, without hesitation. What else could *Dasein* “give” beyond the potentialities defined by its own, projected, death? Keeping Ford’s sighs and complaints in mind, such comportment shows its ethical decision that underwrites any ‘fundamental ontology,’ any historical horizon that defines a particular ‘Da’ for a *given* ‘sein:’ the presupposition of my own, de-fining, death – a definition made clearer and clearer the more Cage brushes up against fate – allows *the death of the other* to, literally, “go without saying.”

CHAPTER III: The Coward's Betrayal

Mikhail Grushenko: Have you heard the news? Napoleon has invaded Austria! At last, a chance to taste the glories of battle! [...]

Boris Grushenko: Fellas, I'm a pacifist, I don't believe in war! [...]

Boris' Father: Don't disgrace me in front of my friends!!

Boris: What good is war? We kill a few Frenchmen, they kill a few Russians, next thing you know, it's Easter.

Sonja: Boris, you can't be serious, you're talking about Mother Russia!

Boris: She's not my mother. My mother is standing right here, and she's not gonna let her youngest baby get shrapnel in his gums. [...]

Sonja: Boris, you're a coward!

Boris: Yes, but I'm a militant coward!

– Woody Allen, *Love and Death*⁴²⁴

Between violence and cowardly flight, I can only prefer violence to cowardice. I can no more preach non-violence to a coward than I can tempt a blind man to enjoy healthy scenes. Non-violence is the summit of bravery. [...] I have had no difficulty in demonstrating to men trained in the school of violence the superiority of non-violence. As a coward, which I was for years, I harboured violence. I began to prize non-violence only when I began to shed cowardice.

– Mohandas Gandhi, *All Men are Brothers*⁴²⁵

The third and highest form [...] is when one lays aside one's own subjectivity – not only practices renunciation in external things such as possessions, but offers one's heart or inmost self to God and senses remorse and repentance in this inmost self; then one is conscious of one's own immediate natural state (which subsists in the passions and intentions of particularity), so that one dismisses these things, purifies one's heart, and through this purification of one's heart raises oneself up to the realm of the purely spiritual. [...] . If heart and will are earnestly and thoroughly cultivated for the universal and the true, then there is present what appears as ethical life.

– G. W. F. Hegel, *Lectures on the Philosophy of Religion*⁴²⁶

[...] [Escape] does not consist in freeing ourselves from the degrading types of servitude imposed on us by the blind mechanism of our bodies, for this is not the only possible identification between man and the nature that inspires horror in him. [...] [Such] motifs are but variations on a theme whose depth they are incapable of equaling. They hold this theme within but transpose it. For these motifs do not yet place Being in question, and they obey the need to transcend the limits of finite being. They translate the horror of a certain *definition* of our being but not that of Being as such. The Right they command is [...] [...] not only a matter of getting out, but also of going somewhere. On the contrary, the need for escape is found to be absolutely identical at every juncture to which its adventure leads it [...]; it is as though the path it traveled could not lessen its dissatisfaction.

– Emmanuel Lévinas, *On Escape*⁴²⁷

0. Living in Vain: Cassandra and Antigone *vis-à-vis*

Chorus: What good are the oracles to men? Words, more words, and the hurt comes on us, endless words and a seer's techniques have brought us terror and the truth.

Cassandra: [...] Rape of the Earth – Apollo! Apollo!

Chorus Leader: [...] She cries for the god who wants no part of grief.

Cassandra: Have I hit the mark or not? Am I a fraud, a fortune-teller babbling lies from door to door? Swear how well I know the ancient crimes that live within this house!

Chorus Leader: And if I did? Would an oath bind the wounds and heal us?

– Aeschylus, *Agamemnon*⁴²⁸

It is well-known that Hegel's favorite hero(ine) in Greek tragedy was Sophocles' Antigone, who brazenly defies the sovereignty of King Creon, whose will is the Law of the land/community. In accounting for her actions, Antigone recalls what she calls a "more ancient" and "divine" law than Creon's will, and yet Creon also a god, none other than Zeus, as the divine mandate to his earthly rule. For Hegel, such a direct contradiction represents a key moment in the narrative adventure of spirit on all its aspects, the passage, within a given sphere, between the second moment and the third. As the Hegelian system always follows the same('s) basic pattern – immediate particularity (e.g. subjective certainty)=>mediated universality (e.g. universal objectivity)=>trans-mediated actuality (e.g. absolute knowledge, 'Truth') – this moment is indeed the key to understand Hegel's crucial step of the *Aufhebung*: this is where a difference is both annulled and incorporated, actualized/internalized in a higher stage of the system. In the sphere of "right," hence, *Antigone* denotes the passage from 'morality' as the consciousness of an external demand ("this is what I should do"), and what Hegel calls *Sittlichkeit* which is already the *internalization* of this demand's principle/'spirit.'

Creon's character has its own tragic tension, one which Hegel will see as the "pregnant" or momentous standing of this tragic figure: on the one hand, he is a sole leader, and so, politically, the identity and integrity of his will *needs to reflect* the very identity and integrity of the Law; yet, on the other hand, Creon also, and truly, wishes to legislate according to the greater good of the community that he rules. Therein lies the dilemma in the passage to *Sittlichkeit*: against Antigone's defiance, Creon had no choice but to uphold his previous Law (the "political" need), but in doing so has alienated the people, who are more than political subjects in that (still too narrow) sense: with regards to these circumstances and Antigone's cause, the people display a shift or flexibility that Creon's integral character could not afford if he is to remain the Law's representative, as is demanded by Zeus himself, the "King" of the (Olympian) gods.⁴²⁹

Against Creon's political power, Antigone contrasts the "underground" power of the more Ancient Greek religion, now the domain of the 'Chthonic' gods (χθόνιος – in/under earth). These gods concerned primarily matters of death and the earth, those to whom a farmer prayed for the land's fertility, or for whom a family would bury its members in accordance to ritual (so as to protect both themselves in life, and their dear departed, in the afterlife). Creon, whose chief justification is Zeus, appeals to the 'Uranian' gods - late arrivals into Greek religion, a shift that was mythically depicted by Zeus' deposition of his father, Chronos, in Hesiod's *Theogony*.

What makes this tragedy so crucial for Hegel's dialectic of spirit (and Right) is that it depicts the final contradiction in the Greek religion: the distinction, between the *ouranioi* and the *chthonoi*, becomes a direct opposition of two equally strong (and legitimate) forces: that of the community, and that of the family; the tragic (concept of) 'fate' arises between them like a mountain-ridge shoots up from two massive tectonic plates colliding with one another. The new, 'Olympian' gods become the gods of the surface and the sky, of men and their "aspirations" (from 'spirit'), and the *chthonoi* remain to rule the earth itself as the matter or soil, the 'Nature,' from which the Greeks drew sustenance. Thus, in Hegel's account of "ethical life" (*Sittlichkeit*), the family, as the ground of the citizen, demands a heterogeneous attention/concern to that of the community: the former concerned with the *particular good* of the family-member, the latter favoring, rather, the greater, *more universal* good of the community-citizen. For Hegel this means that 'Man' manages to 'spiritualize' the realm of 'Nature' (i.e. the worship of the Greeks; the "proto-community" of the family), which in the sphere of Right means reaching the stage where 'ethical life' will make itself, for the first time, *known* (as the medium through which Nature and Spirit can finally be reconciled in/through 'Man').

The struggle in Sophocles' *Antigone* is a struggle over *justice*, which comes to a head through the mediation of an external *sign* (a dead traitor's corpse): Creon orders that Polynices – Antigone's brother, and Theban citizen who betrayed and attacked Thebes – be left unburied just outside the city, as a *sign* of the justice owed a citizen's betrayal; Antigone, herself a Theban, wants to bury Polynices after the familial laws decreed by the chthonic gods, thereby creating a tension or surfacing an incongruence in the Greek city's conception of the 'good,' of justice. It is important to pay attention to the fact that Antigone not only ignores the sign, but lays claim to it; otherwise, she would have effected this burial quietly and secretly, leaving the identity of the "criminal" hidden until Creon loses interest. In burying Polynices *and* publically "owning" this act Antigone advances her own claim to the *signification* of justice.

And yet, this claim is not quite “her own;” had it been so it would merely have represented the particular will of a criminal which, to Hegel’s mind, poses no contradiction in punishing the criminal (according to *whatever* justice system is sovereign in that community); here her “will” attests to a universal one (kinship), one that betrays a heterogeneity with Creon’s universality (sovereign law). This conflict is not one between two “particulars” that wield opposing, historically contingent, wills. The signs that each is pursuing express a *substance*, hence dignifying their conflict as a spiritually substantial one; a heterogeneity in (the Concept of) ‘universality’ itself. Creon is not – despite popular accusations – merely a capricious tyrant who cannot abide any infringement on his will, but as the individual representative of a general, communal/civil ethos. Antigone, on her part, rebels in the name of another ethos, that of the ‘family’ sphere:

[...] The movement of the ethical powers against each other and of the individualities calling them into life and action [e.g. Antigone and Creon; SC] have attained their true end only in so far as both sides suffer the same destruction [i.e., the tragic fate of both; SC]. For neither power has any advantage over the other that would make it a more essential moment of the substance. The equal essentiality of both and their indifferent [*gleichgültige* – etymologically, of equal (*gleich*) yield/worth (*gelden*)] existence alongside each other means that they are without a self. In the deed [e.g. Creon’s decrees, Antigone’s defiance; SC] they exist as beings with a self, but with a diverse self; and this contradicts the unity of the self, and constitutes their unrighteousness [*Rechtlosigkeit*] and necessary [*notwendigen*] destruction. (PS §472, p. 285/S.3:349)

Indeed we are looking at a difference within ‘Greek religion;’ one that the latter, *as a whole* (i.e. from the “panoptic perspective” of “One Religion/God, One Love”) seeks ‘reconciliation:’ Creon’s Zeus, on the one hand, is entrusted to law and justice as the good of the *polis* (a kind of ‘love’/care):

I would never keep silent if I saw danger approaching the people – and Zeus, who sees everything, knows this – nor ever make a friend or ally of any man who threatened the straight course or the safety of our ship of state. (Creon to Antigone)⁴³⁰

On the other hand, Antigone has ‘Hades’, beholden to another kind of ‘love,’ in this case as the good of ‘kinship:’

Antigone: It was not a slave who died, but a brother.

Creon: Died attacking this land, while the other defended it.

Antigone: Nevertheless, Hades demands the customary rites.

Creon: But good and bad do not deserve them equally.

Antigone: Who knows how these things are judged below?

Creon: An enemy is never a friend, even when dead.

Antigone: My nature is drawn to love; I cannot hate either. (ibid, 511-523)

What Creon tries for is a certain cheating of death through law; not a direct assault but an evasion of the laws of death (represented by the laws of Hades). His tragedy consists in attempting to separate death from burial – both in Polynices’ case (dead not allowed to be buried) and in Antigone’s case (buried alive) – which is precisely a power exerted over (and through) the dead. Creon also hopes to use Antigone’s own effacement from the earth (her entombment in a cave) to break her and Haemon’s engagement. This power of/over death is, indeed, reserved only for Hades in Greek religion; and it is this power’s abuse by the living that produces the tragic tension in Sophocles’ *Antigone*. Antigone consistently undoes Creon’s illegitimate “power grab” from Hades: for one, she buries Polynices, thus defying Creon’s order to use her rebellious brother’s death as a sign of Creon’s/Thebes’ justice/power; and, secondly, by killing herself and refusing to be buried alive, Antigone assures the “pollution” (μίᾱσμα) of her death would fall on Creon and Thebes; thirdly, by that same act, she was making sure that Creon’s will to stop her marrying his son will also be thwarted, as the two lovers’ suicides (Haemon’s following from Antigone’s) assure that do finally “unite” in Hades’ underworld. As Antigone tells Creon,

[...] I already knew I was going to die—how could it be otherwise, even if not at your command? And if I die before my time—to me it seems a gain. How can a person who lives as I do, amid so many evils, not welcome death? I do not fear that fate: it is the common lot, no special woe. (ibid, 460-465)

Hegel sees this conflict as the coming to a head of two oppositional *ethoi*, the one being the law of the gods (e.g., the family’s responsibility for giving a proper burial to its members), the other being the laws of Man (e.g., Creon’s will to “make an example” of Polynices’ betrayal). Insisting that her act be “noble,” Antigone chastises her sister very bitterly for counseling to keep her defiance secret: “*Ismene*: At least don’t tell anyone what you intend but keep silent—and I will do the same. *Antigone*: No—tell everyone. I insist. You will be more hated for silence than if you shout it from the city walls” (ibid, 84-87). This is how Antigone makes sure to provoke the King, forcing Creon – by the same exigency of the “example” – to react, and to bring the (tragic) conflict to a head. Since Antigone herself becomes the sign of her betrayal – the body of Polynices having already been buried – Creon has only one resort: he locks her up in a cave so as to efface her presence: “[...] she will lose her place on the face of the earth” (ibid, 890).

This fight for representation of the good is the engine that drives what Hegel calls *Sittlichkeit* – or ‘ethical life’ – forward throughout its various stages (*Gestalten*). The essence and truth of *Sittlichkeit*, hence, consists in the reconciliation that would bring the ethical and the actual together, where the Truth attains its wholeness over and against its being merely ‘represented,’ externalized in a position or act. It

is often said that Hegel was a fierce critic of representation, and yet, once the metaphysical meaning of vanity is acknowledged in his System, this is true only in a highly qualified sense: representation, as the expression of a still-immanent substance of the ‘good’ (i.e., ‘Love’), indeed puts the “true” in Hegel’s “true infinity.” The Absolute *needs* representation precisely for the tragedy that it unfolds, whereby the Absolute pits itself against itself and so arrives at the – immediately present (and hence not re-presented) – Whole Truth of its own ‘reconciliation’ (i.e., ‘*absolutes Wissen*’). At that level, however, the “negative” within representation – the ‘vanity’ by which it maintains a distance from the ‘good’ (by *selection*, by refusing the truth/validity of another(‘s) good, for example) – has *had to vanish*, mere fumes of the dialectical engine of spirit. Such ‘vanity’ is, in a way, the negation that accompanies the ‘position’ – the “shell” to its “kernel” – and cannot, by definition, be substantive, or, in other words, having no place in ‘Truth;’ it yields an un-absolvable, irreconcilable ‘knowledge’ that, because of this “selective nature,” cannot be *aufgehoben* or sublated.

The essence of Antigone’s tragedy, then, revolves, for Hegel, on the two positions that – as opposing/partial representations of the same good/true (i.e. that of ‘spirit’) – seek to represent a substantive ‘good’ that is still in contradiction with itself. *As such*, then, these positions are justified and expiated – it is only in their opposition and strife that they reveal their contradictory nature. Vanity will always insist on remaining both related to, basking in the warmth of, the ‘good,’ and yet also insists to remain at a remove from it. This is why it is such a vexing quality to any (Monotheistic) ‘Science:’ the emptiness of what Hegel calls the ‘particular’ never offers its own representation of the good; its ‘vanity’ never immanentizes or “incarnates” itself in a stable position that can underwrite its act, and hence it can also never learn from this act, never give its tragic due and perish with it. A spiritual cowardice, ‘vanity’ shows a consistent aversion towards all immanent, ‘natural’ or ‘worldly’ good; as if it were running away from this ‘good’ instead of running towards it. Hegel’s Science, hence, would find it impossibly vexing and incapable of being reconciled, but can only be slowly ringed in tighter and tighter circles until it is choked to nothingness: Hegel’s hatred for both skeptic and Jew reside here, for both make their claim to that which they refuse to reconcile or compromise: the first with regards to ‘Truth,’ the second with regards to the ‘Good.’

What is important to note here is that it is not the act or the Truth that are insisted upon in Hegel’s Science of the Absolute; it is their investment in a rationale, in a representable position, that will yield them the coveted absolution of/in ‘knowledge.’ The act that can fully comprehend its own ‘Why?’, the act that cites an eternal/absolute law – e.g., Creon’s law of communal government (Zeus) and

Antigone's law of kinship and death (Hades) – is the one that “gives up the specific quality of the ethical life [*Sittlichkeit*], of being the simple certainty of immediate truth, and initiates [a] division” (PS §468, p. 282). The crucial point that antipathology would raise at this point is that this *appropriation* of acts and their meaning – the necessity of their being underwritten by a *finite* ‘Why?’, whose very finitude will be used against it (as the “tragic inevitability” of its ‘fate’) – is, for Hegel, a *logical/formal necessity*; not admitting to a “should” but holding the (im)posture of a “must”: “the very performance [of the act] declares that what is ethical [*sittlich*] must [*müsse*] be actual [*wirklich*]” (PS §470, p. 284/S3:348 [my underline]). For Hegel's dialectic of spirit, then, the act is imperative to bringing each definite position to the court of actuality (also referred to as the court of world history), exposing each to its necessarily tragic, and – as the “must” indicates – its wholly inevitable fate:

[...] the significance of the deed is that what was unmoved [i.e. the “simple certainty” of *Sittlichkeit* prior to this, its first moment of self-alienation; SC] has been set in motion [i.e., acting in the actual world and in opposition to another act/law; SC], and [...] what was locked up in mere possibility has been brought out into the open (ibid §469, p. 283 [my underline]).

It is in their *acts*, then, that Antigone and Creon actualize their contradiction: they both “go *all* the way” with their *partial* positions. Both, according to Hegel, sacrifice themselves on this ethical plane of *Sittlichkeit*, there where it is only the *act* that aims to actualize a law, to install a particular good in the world (one that overrides others) that authenticates *ethical essence* (*sittliche Wesen*) for self-consciousness: “[e]thical self-consciousness now learns from its deed the developed nature of what it actually did, as much when it obeyed divine law [i.e. Antigone, in Hegel's rendition; SC] as when it followed human law [i.e., Creon; SC]” (ibid, ibid [my underline]).

The Antigone-Creon conflict is the first conflict of *Sittlichkeit*; claiming a right that pertains to a whole that is bigger than the single individual that performs the “right” act. Antigone's defiant act towards Creon's law earns her the suffering of being buried alive in a cave, expelled from her community – there Antigone kills herself, finally merging with the chthonic spirit of Hades whose law she avows as her justification; and Creon's act of expulsion – while granting him an uninterrupted political power (like that of the *ouranic* Zeus whom he cites) – also leaves him bereft of all ties of kinship, earning him the apposite suffering of longing for his own death (upon the subsequent suicides of his wife and son). Creon and Antigone's tragic fate lies in the absolute fulfillment of their position/law; each “learning,” as Hegel says, “[...] that its highest [*höchste*] right is a highest wrong, that its victory is rather its own downfall” (PS §474, p. 287/S.3:351 [translation modified]). Antigone, hence, realizes the tragedy of her expulsion from the community whose law she broke: locked in a cave, she

can neither rejoin her people/family, nor start a family of her own (“my curse is to die unwed;” *Antigone*, 867). Creon, in turn, realizes the tragedy of flouting the gods of kinship and death: losing the former (wife, son) and longing, uselessly (because of his tragic role as ruler/servant of the community, he cannot kill himself), for the latter (“May my death come quick;” *ibid*, 1329).

The ethical essence, for Hegel, has its existence and power in a self-consciousness which must act, for it is the act that constitutes the latter’s antithesis and provides for “dialectical material.” As Hegel says, in a terminology that should be read with Nietzsche in mind, “by the deed [...] [self-consciousness] becomes guilt” (PS §468, p. 282). With the act – as a real (*wirkliche*) avowal of a certain ‘good’ over-*and-against* another ‘good’ (e.g. Antigone/Creon) – all previous compunctions freeze to betray a “one-sidedness” with regards to the ethical essence, which is unified in principle (a principle the act seeks to “realize”). This is the logic behind Hegel’s extolling Antigone as the summation of Greek tragedy: her act – in the guilt and the strife that it wins itself with this “performative investment” – was necessary for the progression of the Absolute’s (tragic) narrative. While Oedipus, for example, proceeds to kill his father and murder his mother in ignorance of the meaning of his acts, Antigone and Creon know precisely what they, respectively, affirm and deny. This accounts for their guilt, and this is also the salvation, or projected reconciliation, of their suffering.

As mentioned above, Hegel’s principle of *Sittlichkeit* rests on this one logical axiom: they ‘must’ act, ‘must’ accrue this guilt, and ‘must’ suffer. Ethical purpose, the drive towards the good, merges with the actual/real, in principle, with Antigone’s claim, quoted by Hegel: “[b]ecause we suffer we acknowledge we have erred” (*ibid* §470, p. 284 [my underline]). Suffering, here, attaches itself to guilt with the absolving justice of spirit itself; it is the ethical heart of what Hegel calls, earlier in the *Phenomenology*, the “labor of the negative” (*ibid*, Preface §19, p. 10). Without this labor and pain, without this *investment of guilt*, the dialectic of spirit becomes stuck, cannot move forward. Of course, this “must” not happen, for it breaks the only absolute imperative Hegel ever acknowledges for what he calls Reason: no less a “drive” towards, than a “faith” in, its self-reconciliation.⁴³¹

At this stage, and in this specific context of Greek tragedy, I would offer a counter to Hegel’s Antigone in the figure of the Trojan princess Cassandra, daughter of King Priam and Queen Hecabe of Troy. Cassandra also performs an act of betrayal to the will of a sovereign, and yet her act is one that generates no sympathy from anyone around her. If Antigone’s act could, in Hegel’s reading, *affirmatively* cite Hades and kinship-bond of ‘the family,’ and if Creon’s act (defying the laws of Hades) could, again affirmatively, cite Zeus and the position of ruling a ‘community,’ Cassandra’s act of

betrayal is purely *negative*, and leaves her with no allies whatsoever, having *lost all grounds* for an(y) affirmation.

That is the theme that I will be following here: if Hegel's system *redeems all "betrayals" by prefiguring them as moments of the 'Concept,'* here is a "moment" left hanging, an untimely moment, that is both tragic and yet – as Hegel says about that of the Jews – can offer neither sorrow nor pity, but can only be seen in horror. Cassandra's will be studied here as "the Greek betrayal of the coward," the betrayal of the vain – redeemed by neither knowledge, nor history, nor community.

Cassandra's figure is uniquely suitable here for several reasons: First, her conflict concerns the gods (in this case, Apollo) in what Hegel would call an "immediate" way. No "representative" of the god is needed (like Zeus' Creon's, or Hades' Antigone), for she interacts immediately with Apollo (and his wishes/actions/knowledge). Second, in offering a Truth by super-natural means – being given the gift of prophecy by Apollo himself (and, unlike her brother Helenus who shared this gift, needed no mediation by "omens" to access the Truth of the future) – she embodies an approach to Truth that, by definition, must remain external to Hegel's dialectic.⁴³² Third, her prophesies are all negative; they never point to, much less prescribe, any 'good,' but only warn when some course of action is not good.⁴³³ Thus, Cassandra offers neither a 'position' about what should or should not be done, but seems content only to report an upcoming calamity. Lastly, Cassandra's curse consists in forever occupying this irreconcilable position: that her prophesies will never become "internalized" by their audience despite their absolute truth. They remain unbelieved, even after past ones had been proven true, and so these prophesies always remain beyond the grasp, the *Be-griff*, of knowledge, *necessarily alienated* from and averse to it.

And yet Cassandra keeps sinking into prophetic trance, keeps offering what amounts, basically, to an unpleasant noise; one that *by definition* is, to rephrase the popular saying, *neither* "part of the solution" *nor* "part of the problem." One could say both literally and figuratively that *no good can ever come of Cassandra and her prophesies*.

This necessary alienation is what makes Cassandra a prime example of what I called, after Hegel, 'vanity.' Cassandra's curse, *her* 'tragedy,' necessarily involves her continued existence; her 'vanity' is, in a way, her sacrifice, the price she paid for accepting the elevation of Apollo's "spirit" (prophecy, Truth) but refusing the internalization of his "flesh" (semen, child). In Aeschylus' *Agamemnon*, Cassandra recounts as much to the Chorus – upon foreseeing her own, imminent, death – finally tearing off herself what she refers to as her prophetic garbs (ἑσθής; 1270), the signs of Apollo's benevolence

and her priestly status. She recounts with a bitter irony her transgression, of refusing to let Apollo strip (ἐσθής) these same garbs off of her (when attempting to “collect” on the intercourse that she had promised him); her hanging on to these external signs of Apollo’s ‘spiritual’ favor is the curse of her ‘vanity.’

In Euripides’ *Troades* (‘The Trojan Women’), Cassandra’s mother, Hecuba, confirms both Cassandra’s virginity, and the fact that this virginity *was her charge as Apollo’s priestess*.⁴³⁴ Indeed, hinting at another Cassandra myth (one that attributes her powers of prophecy to a much earlier, more innocent, incident), Aeschylus makes it a point to mention that Cassandra had *already* been Apollo’s priestess – already serving at his temple and prophesying in his name – before spurning Apollo’s advances. She agreed, but finally refused, to pay for her advantage of direct contact over her brother’s need for external signs. Cassandra’s betrayal, hence, is the betrayal of a coward par excellence: she entered into this power by force of a promise that she could not actualize.

Cassandra’s body, then, in the aftermath of her betrayal, can be said to be both Apollo’s and yet not Apollo’s, that is, both penetrated by him and not penetrated by him.⁴³⁵ On the one hand, Cassandra is possessed by the god, speaking the divine words *with no mediation* of ritual or sign-interpretation: unlike her brother Helenus, who also received the gift of prophecy from Apollo (but wasn’t asked for any sexual favors in return), she did not need omens to “see” past and future, and, unlike the Pythia in Delphi for example, she prophesied in a spontaneous trance, not only spoken as responses to inquiries. On the other hand, Cassandra refuses to receive Apollo’s semen, indeed, refuses any *physical* penetration whatsoever, in a way “*saving her own skin*,” her own outer contour, from being breached. Something in Apollo’s will had been refused, his ‘spirit’ accepted and yet not wholly so; she tells the chorus of her unfortunate encounter: “He came like a wrestler, magnificent, took me down and breamed his fire through me” (*Agamemnon*, 1212); the “fire breaming” translates the Greek πνέων χάριν – a “*spiriting*” (πνέων from Gr. *pneuma*) of Apollo’s “grace” or “benevolence” (χάρις).⁴³⁶

In approaching Cassandra’s tragic betrayal of Apollo, it is important to understand here the depth and character of Cassandra’s *devotion* to him, how profoundly she had devoted her *life* to his worship. Having fallen from ‘princess-priestess’ to mere ‘spoils of war’ (raped by Ajax in the sacking of Troy and claimed as a prize by the Mycenaean king Agamemnon), and spurned by countrymen and foreigners alike, Cassandra, being driven close to madness, and in complete despair, still refused give up her (not all but “empty”) relation to Apollo. Cassandra’s devotion, indeed, is a doubly negative one: a refusal to lay with the god, compounded by a refusal to give up on her role as Apollo’s priestess – she keeps

uttering prophecies and wearing her priestess' garbs long after she had lost his favor and exiled from his temple. Cassandra only ever resents Apollo when she finally "sees" her impending, imminent murder by Clytemnestra.

For my purposes here, it is of particular importance to pay attention to the terms of this, eventual, resentment and denunciation of Apollo in Aeschylus' play, for they echo Cassandra's "negative devotion" to Apollo. Approaching her doom, Cassandra denounces Apollo, finally, by casting off of her body the *external signs* of her priesthood; upon seeing her approaching death, but *only then*, Cassandra truly lets go of *all* her Apollonian attachments, which means, in this play, finally tearing off of her precisely *that which her devotion bid her to keep on* (her robes, her chastity), and to keep on *despite everything*: despite Apollo's will, despite Apollo's curse, despite her surrounding community's rejection of her as a madwoman, a beggar, a liar. Throughout almost her whole life, even in her refusal to his sexual advances, Cassandra had only ever been Apollo's loyal priestess, and kept herself a virgin prophetess *for him*; even – and this was the root of her tragedy – *against him*.

This clinging to externalities on the basis of a negation, is why Cassandra is a prime figure of Hegelian 'vanity:' she carried her garbs like she carried her curse – never once thinking to kill herself, leave Apollo's temple, or cease prophesying – as that which *defines* her, despite the fact that *no 'good' dwells within this definition*. This is also why I see Cassandra's as *a coward's betrayal*: she agrees to Apollo's will of penetrating her, but, having basked in his spirit and shared in his knowledge, realizes she loves him too much, is *too devoted to her role as his priestess*, to allow him and herself this (mis)deed. Cassandra's suffering is not requited by her fate: she suffers, arguably more than Antigone, but cannot acknowledge or know she has erred; her faith had always been all too impeccable.

That is why – as a true coward – the only time Cassandra feels truly offended by Apollo is when she is about to meet her death; to, in other words, to cease being Apollo's prophetess, or witness. In short, *Cassandra's life only matters to her insofar as she is the pure witness to Apollo* – disconnected both from world (being unbelieved) and god (maintaining her chastity) in her tragic refusal. Even after being cursed by the god himself, she will carry on speaking her useless, and in all senses *hateful*, testimony. Like a coward, Cassandra *vainly* disdains her death: literally "half the woman" than Antigone is, Cassandra came to *live* her 'No,' refusing to kill herself, and is literally carried *screaming* to her death. Her final scene is, hence – especially compared to Antigone's – is much more hysteric than cathartic:

Why mock yourself with these trappings, the rod, the god's wreath, his yoke around my throat?
Before I die I'll tread you –

[*Ripping off her regalia, stamping it into the ground.*]

Down, out, die die die! Now you're down. I've paid you back. Look for another victim – I am free at last – make her rich in all your curse and doom.

[*Staggering backwards as if wrestling with a spirit tearing at her robes.*]

See, Apollo himself, his fiery hands – I feel him again, he's stripping off my robes, the Seer's robes! And after he looked down and saw me mocked, even in these, his glories, mortified by friends I loved, and they hated me, they were so blind to their own demise – I went from door to door, I was wild with the god, I heard them call me 'Beggar! Wretch! Starve for bread in hell!' And I endured it all, and now he will extort me as his due. A seer for the Seer. He brings me here to die like this, not to serve at my father's altar. (*Agamemnon*, 1279-1297 [my underline])

Cassandra, hence, does not go quietly. Her facing her death has none of the dignified reconciliation of Antigone's self-sacrifice; no god's favor will await her at the other end: "She will kill me! [referring to Clytemnestra; SC] Ai the torture!" (*ibid*, 1274). To paraphrase Jean Anouilh famous rendition of the *Antigone*, Cassandra is there *only to say 'No,' but not to die.*⁴³⁷ She does not even hold on to her Apollonian devotion through to death; but, vainly, casts these, already vain – because "substanceless" – garments aside.

At the very end of her "hysterical" scene in *Agamemnon*, just before her death, Cassandra does seem to experience some kind of reconciliation to her fate. She comforts herself with the fact – foreseen by her as well – that both her and her people's offenders will eventually be avenged: Clytemnestra, who kills both Cassandra and Agamemnon, and her lover Aegisthus, who helped plot Agamemnon's murder and kills both of Cassandra's children, are themselves to be subsequently killed (by Orestes). Cassandra then tries to tell herself, "[t]hen why so pitiful, why so many tears? I have seen my city faring as she fared, and those who took her, judged by the gods, faring as they fare. I must be brave. It is my turn to die" (*ibid*, 1309-1313).

Aeschylus, nevertheless, refuses to let Cassandra "scene" end there and then, and has her newly-found equanimity questioned by the Chorus. When asked, hence, about how she can be so composed towards her own death, Cassandra betrays motives far removed from Antigone's noble acceptance: first, Cassandra points out that, having seen the future, she knows that there is "no escape [...] not now" (*ibid*, 1322); then, when praised for her "gallantry," she says, *bitterly* "only the wretched go with praise like that" (*ibid*, 1326); then, upon finally opening the door to where she is to meet her end she recoils at the (prophesied) "smell" of murder (*ibid*, 1333); and, even then, after, yet again, saying "I must go in now" (*ibid*, 1335), Cassandra cannot resist *but* offering *her own* funerary lamentation, a dirge *for her own*

death: “a few words more, a kind of dirge, it is my own” (ibid, 1345-1346). Refusing to accept her fate, vainly expressing her disdain through to the ordeal itself, Cassandra keeps emitting signs – “words, more words” – keeps talking and prophesying, complaining and lamenting, to the last.

This, Cassandra’s “life-loving” nature, is the contrast I would offer to Hegel’s favorite heroine and her reconciliation with her own fate. Cassandra’s tragedy consists in the fact that she *lives so as to speak* – ineffectual, “unworkable” or unreal (*unwirklich*) – words; she does not act, like Antigone, and her words, unlike Creon’s, are not law, do not count. She speaks (through) a connection to *a god with whom she refused to merge*, to a world that she loves and warns but that hates and rejects her as mad. Her tragedy does not, like Antigone’s, have any bearing on the dialectic of spirit, for her ‘guilt’ is unquantifiable, *unwirkliche* – as immaterial as her negation/refusal – and has no recourse to its expiation or reconciliation: neither historically, for Clytemnestra’s murder of Agamemnon is based more on the latter’s sacrifice the former’s daughter, Iphigina, than his taking Cassandra as his prize concubine, nor personally/psychologically, for Cassandra neither “learns” from, nor regrets her betrayal, but goes on living and prophesying until the bitter end (when it is too late, vain, to “shed her vanity” as she does).

Cassandra, hence, is not an agent of Hegel’s *Sittlichkeit* at any level, for the latter requires at least an Idea, an affirmed ‘good’ that authorizes the act that “*wirklich*-izes” it (PR §142, p. 105). Refusing to “actualize” her ‘Idea’ (“internalizing” Apollo), she is left with no ‘community’ to support her whatsoever: both the Apollo temple priests and priestesses, and her surrounding people alike (Trojans and Mycenaeans) consider her as false and/or as mad (“beggar,” “wretch” etc.). No matter how much Cassandra suffers, she cannot bring herself to the ‘guilt’ that would be the medium, the material, through which all *Sittlichkeit* progresses. Cassandra claims no positive right, but remains steadfast – despite all calamities that befall her (though she still complains of them) – in living without learning, wafted by Fate in her absolute refusal to forego her unrequited devotion. Since she affirms no positive *idea*, offers no representative *act*, she cannot receive any insight into its limitations from the “actual” (*wirkliche*) world. Indeed, the Chorus leader in *Agamemnon* states her tragic predicament, her absolutely “negative freedom;” a comment that might very well be the key to Cassandra’s tragedy, as it immediately breaks silence she held, until then, throughout the play: “Of your own free will try on the yoke of Fate” (*Agamemnon*, 1071). Only after this had been said does Cassandra, suddenly, burst into her proper medium – that of issuing forth true, yet “actually” empty, words. It is Cassandra’s devoted refusal to freely assume this yoke that gives rise to all those empty signs and gestures.

Cassandra, hence, is a kind of Ancient Greek worshipper – from within the Greek religion (of humanity and beauty) – of a “bad infinity.” In terms of Hegel’s philosophies of Spirit and Right,⁴³⁸ this means that Cassandra cannot even lay a claim to something as basic as a “personality,” since her ‘freedom’ is never actualized, since her being a de facto hostage of Apollo’s ‘spirit’. The tragedy of this abandon is not, as Hegel would say, a “Greek tragedy,” since, on the one hand, it merges with fate rather than externalize it as foreign, and, on the other, still feels the pain, still *irreconciled* to the suffering, that this fate holds (“Fate’s so hard [...]”; *ibid.*, 1136). An impossible, non-dialectizable, position – a true mortification, but not of the flesh – of the *spirit* and the will. In Cassandra, Fate is never mediated by an idea – an affirmation of some ‘good,’ ‘right,’ or ‘law’ (e.g. Antigone and Creon) – but tosses Cassandra around without ever penetrating her will; a will that, as mentioned earlier, is “stuck” in its negation. Hence, Cassandra’s tragedy – like, as we will see, the tragedy of the Jew – is to be stuck in spirit’s throat, never descending so as to be digested by the “actual,” and yet continuing to produce noise, signs of suffering with which none can identify, feel the “pity” for.⁴³⁹

Let me elaborate a little here, in anticipation of Abraham and other vain traitors lying in wait ahead. According to Hegel, “[a] person must translate his freedom into an external sphere in order to exist as an idea,” a “sphere distinct from the person” (PR §41, p. 40). This “translation” opens the *particularity* of the ‘will’ to the digestive processes of the “actual,” the *medium* where-by/in the kernel of absolute truth (the will’s freedom as self-willing) is separated from the chaff of contingent vanities (the will’s enslavement to ‘externalities’). In a way, Cassandra never offers a position in opposition, but “actualizes” perhaps only the friction of opposition; the only kind of *difference* that Hegel’s Science, or the *Begriff* of Absolute Knowledge, abolishes. Her “kinship” relations remain forfeit for her (still Apollo’s priestess in her mind), and come to naught: exiled from her own family, Cassandra’s children were raped out of her by Agamemnon, and did not hold sway over her when they (and their father) end up dead. Furthermore and their death does not spark any vengeance in the mythical narrative, since Clytemnestra is only avenged for having killed her own husband, and Aegisthus – for plotting the murder of his own brother. Thus, aside from her own death, Cassandra cares little, and so suffers/learns little, from her experiences, and cannot bring herself to – what for Christian Hegel was – the *necessary* “guilt” towards her predicament.

Cassandra is, perhaps, only the resistance of the ‘person,’ the vain externality of the person’s (historical, spiritual) contingency, not a “whole” or “actual” person; not one for whom any “rights” can be affirmed. Cassandra, as a Greek woman, may not satisfy Hegel’s criterion of her will to “becomes[s]

objective [...] in property” (ibid §46, p. 42); but she could still possess it formally, as did Antigone with her self-actualizing act, since “to have power over a thing *ab extra* [i.e. from the outside; SC] constitutes possession” (ibid §45, p. 42).⁴⁴⁰ Cassandra remains outside all occurrences, indeed “*ab extra*” but having no impact from that (non-)position; she can only ever witness the circumstances (past, present and future), complain about them and warn of them, but, in her radical separation, refuses all power over them. This paradox is expressed well by the Chorus, in a formulation that might recall Emmanuel Lévinas’ notion of the ‘I’ as the ethical “hostage” of the Other: “Slave that she is, a god lives on inside her” (*Agamemnon*, 1081). Cassandra’s “negative will” means she is always only *possessed*; both witness and object – though a reluctant, complaining, *signifying* one – to Apollo’s greatness and violence: “Apollo Apollo, my destroyer – where, where have you led me now?” (ibid, 1085). She does not even possess her own body – for it is, in a way, still Apollo’s (as expressed by the Chorus) – which is how and why she has value only as a sexual object or a sign, a trophy, something external and/or ineffectual (her children dead, her words unheeded) in the narrative.

This, Cassandra’s attitude – alienated from history (be it as Law or Kinship) – is made explicit when the Chorus tries, unsuccessfully, to come to terms with Cassandra’s pain: “like the nightingale that broods on sorrow, mourns her son, her son, her life inspired with grief for him, she lilts and shrills, dark bird that lives for night”, to which Cassandra replies, utterly *cold to the strife of the mother*, and *still lamenting her own death* “[t]he nightingale – O for a song, a fate like hers! The gods gave her a life of ease, swathed her in wings, no tears, no wailing. The knife waits for me” (ibid, 1144-1150). Cassandra maintains her *vanity* – one that scorns the bonds of kinship as they scorn any active intention/feeling – to the bitter end: the nightingale – after the Greek myth that depicts it as a woman, Procne, mourning the death of her son – is envied by Cassandra for having a beautiful ‘exterior,’ of feathers and song, while she utterly ignores the ‘interior’ of longing and sorrow that Procne’s state of being expresses. Indeed, true to her absolutely alienated pain (a pain the chorus fails to come to terms with), she exclaims “the pain that floods my voice is mine alone” (ibid, 1140 [my underline]).

Cassandra simply *remains* – having given herself, literally, to no one (Apollo, Agamemnon), and to nothing (Law, Kinship). Cassandra’s tragedy is the tragedy of the witness *as such*, the singularity or contingency of testimony that escapes ‘knowledge,’ persisting in existence *for no substantial reason* whatsoever – forever removed, ab-stracted, from her surroundings. She refuses throughout her life to abandon the “external” – that is, until she sees her own death – like the priestess garbs that she vainly held on to served only to contour what were true, yet unactualizable, mad words. Historical knowledge –

and all knowledge is historical knowledge – always abolishes its contingencies, and always at a price it resists, a price it must not know. Cassandra’s vanity – and the frustration that it causes to “actual” figures – consists in her insistence to go on, living and prophesying, uselessly uttering words, *signifying* in the midst of a community’s that, *a priori* shuns her (due to Apollo’s curse); a vanity symbolically rendered as her still hanging on to the clothes that mark her allegiance to Apollo even as Apollo himself is trying to remove them.

The fact that Cassandra’s *words* or *significations* will always be seen as empty or mad is given us in the form of what some classics scholars have called her “bacchic” appearance (in Euripides’ *Troades*), and in the very beginning of her *Agamemnon* scene, when the Chorus leader mentions that Cassandra’s mournful cries to Apollo – the god of the Sun and the Arts, the god of Light and Health – are *out of place*: “she cries to the god who wants no part in grief” (ibid, 1077). It is, hence, in life and in death, both being utterly useless or “immaterial,” that Cassandra is subjected to undeniable suffering while – at least insofar as Hegel’s philosophy of right is concerned – *not in a position to complain*. Perhaps this was the secret to Apollo’s curse: that by the same vanity with which Cassandra had refused his sexual penetration, she was now to be refused any inter-penetration with the world, with history. In a truly vain insistence, a true *tragedy of the vain*, Cassandra has no grounds for support anywhere, neither in the Ouranian Olympus (Apollo), nor the ‘actual’ world (to which she remains external), nor in the Chthonic underworld (flouting all familial kinship).

The main difference that I propose to focus on here, between Cassandra and Antigone, is that, unlike Antigone, Cassandra literally refuses to sacrifice herself for what she believes in, forever insisting on maintaining a relation that she refuses to substantiate, yet commits herself wholly as its, living and signifying, witness. While Antigone goes, quite literally, to the bitter end – sacrificing herself (and, indirectly, also *her sister*) in the name of her active belief in a god that “has her back,” as it were – Cassandra’s god did not enjoy such active self-giving from his follower, only an active refusal. Cassandra’s “cowardly” nature forbids her saying something like Antigone’s “If I die before my time, I say it is a gain. Who lives in sorrows many as are mine how shall he not be glad to gain his death?” (*Antigone*, 461-462). Even with all her suffering – a disgraced princess of a fallen Troy and a denounced priestess of Apollo, raped by Ajax and taken as spoils of war by Agamemnon – Cassandra appears too “life loving”.⁴⁴¹

Unlike Antigone, Cassandra’s “fanaticism” has no recognizable/acceptable *ethos*; hers is merely the (talkative) survival of someone detached from both god and man. Cassandra betrays Apollo, but has

no positive ethos, no good to cite in affirmation of her betrayal (as Antigone did in support of hers); no *other* god will come to her aid for having *its* will preferred to Apollo's, and, indeed, no other man will ever win her favor. Her refusal, her vanity, is absolute. Hence Apollo's telling curse – that none of his gifts to her will ever have any *substance*, while still being divine and true. Rendered completely useless, insubstantial in this manner, Cassandra slowly but surely goes mad; mad with 'vanity.'

In short, Cassandra's refusal to "go all the way" with Apollo, put her in the (non-)position of the eternally useless complainer; a (non-)position that is *particularly accentuated* by her forever issuing unbelieved warnings that come true. Her 'truth,' put in Hegelian terms, is forever reminded of the absolute distance by which it is separated from 'knowledge.' This truth – whether as a felt connection with Apollo or as a prophecy/signification of an impending disaster – cannot be acted-upon positively, but only reacted-to negatively; first as avoidance/denial, then as regret. This truth cannot provide the tools by which Cassandra can change her – or her community's – fate; it remains immediate, absolute, disconnected. Cassandra's vanity does not offer a catharsis or reconciliation, but serves as a voice-box to contour what are, literally, *fatal* closures, pathologies of community decisions that she forever remains detached from. Her "tragedy" is, hence, very close to what the young Hegel sees in the "Jewish tragedy:" it can invoke "neither fear nor pity, but horror alone."

1. "No Greek tragedy:" The Alien-nation of the Particular

[...] The tragic destruction of figures whose ethical life is on the highest plane can interest and elevate us and reconcile us to its occurrence only in so far as they come on the scene in opposition to one another together with equally justified but different ethical powers which have come into collision through misfortune, because the result is that then these figures acquire guilt through their opposition to an ethical law. Out of this situation there arises the right and wrong of both parties and therefore the true ethical Idea, which, purified and in triumph over this one-sidedness, is thereby reconciled in *us*. Accordingly, it is not the highest in us which perishes; we are elevated not by the destruction of the best but by the triumph of the true. This it is which constitutes the true, purely ethical interest of ancient tragedy.

– G. W. F. Hegel⁴⁴²

Hegel's *The Spirit of Christianity and its Fate* is perhaps the closest friend of this antipathology. It was written in Frankfurt, in 1798, at a time when 28 year-old Hegel his disillusionment with Immanuel Kant. Until then, he had held the latter in such high regard that, in an earlier text (*The Life of Jesus*, written in Bern in 1795), Hegel uses Jesus to ventriloquize Kant's moral theory, preaching the Categorical Imperative to his disciples. In the text to be discussed here, commonly referred to as "the 'Spirit' essay," a strong argument can be made to suggest that this break with Kant bore all the signs of

the famous Hegelian *Aufhebung*; or, as Hegel used to say, that he was being loyal to the Kantian Spirit while denying its Letter.⁴⁴³

By the time he had written the ‘Spirit’ essay, Hegel realized that the “self-legislation” of Reason cannot be consistently delimited – whether to the “understanding,” the “empirical,” or the “Subjective” (i.e., the “bad infinity” of ‘letter’ and ‘law’) – without already presupposing a speculative procedure (the “true infinite” of ‘spirit’ and ‘faith’). In other words, Hegel came to see that the letter (of the law) of Kantian morality was driven by a ‘spirit’ that can just as well internalize (and sublate) the limit that Kant had placed upon Reason (*Vernunft*) in the name of the ‘Understanding’ (*Verstand*).⁴⁴⁴ In this essay, the *Phenomenology of Spirit*’s notion of ‘vanity’ – the ‘for itself’s’ obstinate refusal to self-negate (i.e. self-sacrifice) – betrays itself as *both* an ethical, *and* a “logical-metaphysical” *abjection*. This abjection is made systematic in Hegel’s more mature thought – underlining the antipathological importance of this, “youthful” hatred – since in this essay this hatred is still *communicated-with*. This communication can then serve as a unique “radar signature” for Hegel’s System’s discarded and dispersed “inessentials,” what it could not reconcile (in)to itself, and that the unhalting progress of *Geist*, in principle, peels away and leaves behind, forever.⁴⁴⁵

My claim here has consistently been that this shared spirit also betrays a deeply shared hatred that both Kant’s and Hegel’s philosophies – whether as metaphysics, history or morality/*Sittlichkeit* – not only maintained but systematized;⁴⁴⁶ like a Black Hole – since it is never professed as *directly* relevant – this hatred needed an antipathology that could make it conspicuous by its signature effects upon other, “orbiting” ideas, as well as silent assumptions. On this last issue of silent assumption one could say, to follow the astronomical *simile*, that, at the time of the ‘Spirit’ essay this “Black Hole” of hatred was still giving off the light of an earlier, ‘Supernova’ state; before it became an invisible, “dark riddle”,⁴⁴⁷ the negative center of Hegel’s Science. That this hatred was not only Hegel’s “youthful hatred,” but *Europe’s* as well (i.e., Christian antisemitism), further ensconces this importance of such a rare communiqué. It is in this crucial moment that I intervene, then Hegel’s spiritual engine will run its course through history and thought, but not without its Christian framework “showing,” and hence also not without trace elements of “dead letters” scattered in its wake.⁴⁴⁸ This early text of Hegel’s “becoming,” that he never published himself, are, hence, his enduring *gift* to my antipathology.

It is not just Hegel’s antisemitism that is being used as a philosophical tool here, but also what his spiritual/Christian revision of philosophy had done to the Ancient Greek heritage that German Idealism had held in such high esteem. Hegel’s appropriation of Greek tragedy comes to the fore in the essay

through the distinction that Hegel makes between the natural, reconcilable tragedy of his ‘Absolute’ – whose kernel and beauty was first made incarnate in Ancient Greek art, religion and philosophy – and the horrid and abominable “tragedy of the Jews.” What Nietzsche identified, in the previous chapter, as the susceptibility of Greek paganism to Christian resentment, including how the latter had appropriated the “affective education” of the former, also becomes manifest in this Hegelian appropriation.

What I refer to here as ‘the coward’ will prove *the most appropriate witness* to expose the ethico-metaphysical assumptions – i.e. the invisible violence – that Hegel’s System absolves with an AK (‘Absolute Knowledge’). Appropriating the dynamics of (Greek) tragedy, Hegel’s ‘Spirit’ essay makes a crucial distinction: On the one hand there is the Greeks’ ‘tragic hero’ – the one who launches himself fearless into the world, sacrificing his own particularity in an impossible duel with actuality (*Wirklichkeit*) – whose tragic narrative is used to educate and refine various affects in its Greek audience, as Aristotle had it, through fear and pity.⁴⁴⁹ This hero sets forth out of a specific value – wrongly elevated to the level of an Absolute – and suffers the fate that befalls such a partial/immature grasp of it. The resulting tragedy is then used to educate its Greek audience through working through this conflict, though, for Hegel, this still only always leaves them at the first stage of *Sittlichkeit* (but also its very soil and origin): the Greeks understood the tragic necessity of self-sacrifice in the face of the impossible odds of Absolute Fate, but could not yet direct their affective training, more rationally, towards knowledge as the royal road to absolute fulfillment, to a final reconciliation of ‘fate.’ Greek tragedy makes the conflict with ‘fate’ the starkest, but – until Socrates and Christ come along – cannot seem to be able to go beyond it, or, as Hegel says, to “reconcile” it with/as system, as knowledge.

The Jew, ‘the coward’ – making its appearance here as the spiritually abject figure of a *senseless* ‘metaphysical refusal’ – will come to embody precisely what Abraham embodied for the young Hegel: a refusal of everything, or, to be more precise, a refusal of love and reality, of everything that *is*. An *escape from Being* – as Lévinas calls it in the epigraph to this chapter – that responds to an appeal from an un-sublatable “Most High.” It is only witness that can – from within resentment – still utter complaints, can still offer a *signification* of the violence of all “*Distanz*” and all values, being hostage of an Absolute Other whose infinite *Distanz* looks awry at any absolution claimed in their name. For Hegel, it is Abraham that will come to signify the very “spirit” – although this is a Hegelian oxymoron – of the for-itself; not this or that letter or obstacle but a veritable “spirit of obstacle.”

This is where Abra(ha)m reveals himself as the ultimate, “Ur-Coward” of spirit. His faith had assured itself in advance against all “fate” by claiming that it was – unlike with Greek deities – under the

utter charge of their Single, transcendent God. This God had issued a Law, over which the Jews would endlessly debate, a letter, which the Jews will blindly follow, and a causality which had nothing to do with the world or with Nature but was entirely Divine (and, hence, transcendent and out of reach). This faith, then, assured a grasp of any “fate,” since the latter was merely the manifest judgment of a God that was either pleased with the Jews (reward and happiness), or displeased with them (punishment). Instead of setting out against a worldly, “actual” fate and – making the necessary sacrifices – learning to reconcile themselves to it and somewhat adapt and harmonize with it, the “spirit of Judaism” interjected a static “letter,” a Law that will forever insist that it is *the only means of mediation* with the Divine. This was a Divine that had no manifestation in Nature, had forbidden all such manifestations to His believers (i.e., no Idols or Images), and hence would infinitely resist any reconciliation with Nature. This *tear* between the Divine and Nature – whose *absolution* is precisely the essence of the “*Der Geist des Judentums*” – spelled a cowardly escape: the Jews had won an absolute power over all Natural occurrences, even over all relations with other peoples (due to their particular chosenness in His eyes), but at the price of becoming eternally enslaved to this alien God; this *irremediable* forfeiture of freedom effectively escapes the “human condition,” the one that is exposed to ‘fate,’ altogether.

Abra(ha)m’s epiphany within his former pagan society – the voice of a Monotheist God that he hears making an appeal to him – does not lead him to the more “natural” tragedy of trying to manifest this new faith in his own community, bringing it to a contradiction, and most likely sacrificing his life on its altar; no, the first words that the Jewish God addresses to his first follower are to: “Go from your country and your kindred and your father’s house to the land that I will show you” (Genesis 12:1). Hence the horrific effect of the Jewish tragedy, an indigent misery that – to Hegel’s self-reconciling ‘spirit’ – can only appear as abject and horrible (*Abscheu*). It was a principle of *singularity* that underlay the Jewish spirit, except that it was not the singularity that results from generations of fatal encounters and achievements (i.e. the singularity of an *actualized* ‘Concept’), but only that of the vain particularities, those that an actual immersion in Nature would have exposed, in time, as accidental or illusory, and at any rate *perishable*. In Socrates, by contrast, through whom an appropriately *rational* principle of individuality arrives to announce its contradiction to the – still “too natural” – context of the Greeks, Socrates remains in his community to both preach for this new principle, and eventually remains consistent in agreeing to die for it. While Socrates’ “*daimon*” bids him to remain with the Athenians, address them individually in the name of Reason, Abra(ha)m’s God bids him to leave, to escape with his life and the inaccessible Ideal that now usurps this life at (what Hegel sees as) its core. Abra(ha)m’s is a

worship of the particular, of the shell of every individuation that had not yet been shed to reveal its Truthful “kernel” – only the latter can go on to sprout in the ‘actual’ and find its proper place in the actualized Concept, leaving the kernel behind to its fate.

This is how the law-punishment relation, the enduring problem of violence that any imposition of direction/order entails, can be “transcended” according to Hegel through a *reconciliation with “fate.”* Such reconciliation means fate’s *disappearance as such* – for it then becomes actualized as ‘necessity;’ a ‘Science of Right’ can accept it like Natural Science accepts a “natural law,” like one learns to live with gravity without giving the name of “fate” to a “what comes up must come down” law. This is, in short, how “fate” is to be taken spiritually. The coward resists precisely the *courage* that is needed in the full, self-sacrificial identification with (any) ‘position,’ hence inaugurating a wholly useless, “unnatural” tragedy that can neither reconcile nor elevate an “us” that can gather around a “true;” his will be a “figure” that refuses its own destruction.

Throughout this dissertation I have been tracing the *power* that Hegel’s system *had* to employ in this quest for reconciliation of differences, specifically the ethico-metaphysical logic or reasoning, here called ‘the *Why?*’, that attended this *necessity*; to attend the fate of its “skeptical enemy” that Hegel wanted to kill by strangulation.⁴⁵⁰ This pathology of opposition which Hegel calls “fate,” then, already proceeds from a constraint, a necessity, a force that cut the wings off its skeptical departure and grounded it as ‘position’ and ‘counter-position’ (an appropriation of skepticism that left out the skeptic (and her pen!) through whom/which it became).

This concept of “fate” becomes an axis of contention in the ‘Spirit’ essay, for it serves as a spiritual version of the oppositional (i.e. “negative”) *resistance* of every ‘position’ – Hegel’s “drama” of the Absolute, with its *courage* to self-sacrifice, with its recurring resurrections that always seem to lead somewhere necessary, somewhere higher, fuller, more True. What here, in this conclusion, I want to show is how Hegel’s animosity towards Judaism is attended by, as Nietzsche had already shown (and was the first to notice), an *appropriation* of Greek paganism, one that *directed* the meaning of ‘Greek tragedy’ to suit Western/Christian resentment’s approach to values and to questions of justification with regards to violence and cruelty. In the above example, I used a different Greek tragic character to show an “admixture” that Hegel would not find as Greekly tragic as his favorite Antigone; which means a Greek tragic figure that does not in any way prefigure the manner in which spirit sees every resistance

as already a position, every tragic death as already fate (both fodder for the next *aufhebung*, the next self-overcoming of *Geist*).

Like I showed in the case of the skeptic, *herself* perhaps an indelible mark of resistance to knowledge, Hegel's 'Science' conceives of any interruption as either an ensconced (op)position – totalized in/as definition of theme (with regards to the *already existing System*) – or just an irrelevant, "autobiographical" and contingent "white noise." With Levinatzsch, a thought of resistance to, or interruption of knowledge, is no longer automatically assumed to follow Hegel's metaphysics of totality (especially the "tragic" self-sacrifice demanded by its "self-reconciliation" stages). Instead, I wield a Nietzschean sense that thought follows a "personal" or singular trajectory of responsibility, irreducible to a position in 'knowledge' that marks – for Hegel, Kant and Heidegger – the utmost necessity of 'Philosophy;' there where 'Truth' is forced to recall the thinker, and her own "holding to be true" – her own (thought's) claim to power.

Levinatzsch will insist on resistances that are unthematizable, irreducible to being merely the fodder for a (counter-)position – various "f(r)ictions" that never quite make it through the teleological status of Truth or Reality, could never cohere enough to contribute a rung to Hegel's ladder, and yet keep murmuring something (or other) in a barely audible manner – the "almost nothing" of the discarded shell, the *il y a* of Being left behind as a necessary "tragedy" of the Absolute, just like any resistance that had finally bled enough to register its "fate" in recognition. Neither Nietzsche's free spirit, which spells its betrayals as singular-personal dispersions and abandonments, nor Lévinas' repetitive, never satisfied or directed "escapes" that "know" only the otherwise than Being, will reconcile themselves to their fates; their repetitive breaches will keep calling the latter to question, indefinitely.

"Fate" now becomes – in the eyes of my witness – the trace of the violence towards difference, the scission that 'positioned' a given Truth (this position, as any position, is assigned its own pathology, its own resistance to reconciliation, as its own "fate"). The 'spiritual' operation here is to annul, not the movement by which "fates" are created, but these "fates" themselves. This is the meaning of Hegel's reconciliation *as seen antipathologically*: the process, the violence, that had been done to Difference – separating its contingency/vanity off and leaving only its (still impure) essence – always goes on as before; but the traces of this violence, the positions, the "fates" themselves, vanish: this is what Hegel calls "reconciliation" with fate. Hence, if there is – not a violence, but – a *problem* of violence in the relation between law and punishment, "fate" is how this problem must be positioned, represented; the first step in effacing this problem, while leaving the violence to run its course.

It is against this *narrative* of History's progressive development of/as *Geist* – where the negative moment of resistance (“fate”) is eschatologically promised to eventually *shrink itself* to nothing (or at least nothing *relevant*, nothing that *makes a difference*) – that Levinatzsch will never cease to protest; probably – but proudly, “militantly” – *in vain*. It is where, despite this assumed “historical” justification – whose shadow looks suspiciously eschatological – no relief of petty and empty concerns ever becomes absolved; it is where every rung in the Hegelian ladder screams and curses as it is trampled underfoot by this or that incarnation of “world spirit,” whether riding on horseback or nailed to a Cross.

1.1 Impossible *Sittlichkeit*, or Breaking the Unwritten Law

[...] there may at once be raised the alleged difficulty of how it is possible, in an infinite variety of opinions, to distinguish and discover what is universally recognized and valid. This perplexity may at first sight be taken for a right and genuine concern for the thing [*Sache*], but in fact those who boast of this perplexity are in the position of not being able to see the wood for the trees; the only perplexity and difficulty they are in is one of their own making. Indeed, this perplexity and difficulty of theirs is proof rather that they want something other than what is universally recognized and valid, something other than the substance of right and the ethical. If they had been serious about the latter, instead of busying themselves with the *vanity* [*Eitelkeit*] and *particularity* of opinions and things, they would have clung to what is substantially right, namely to the commands of ethical life [*Gebote der Sittlichkeit*] and the state, and would have regulated their lives in accordance with these.

When I will what is rational [*Vernünftige*], then I am acting not as a particular individual but in accordance with the concepts of ethical life [*Begriffen der Sittlichkeit*] in general. In an ethical action, what I vindicate is not myself but the thing. But in doing a perverse action, it is my particularity [*Partikularität*] that I bring on to the centre of the stage. The rational is the high road where everyone travels, where no one is conspicuous [*auszeichnet*].

– G. W. F. Hegel⁴⁵¹

The Spirit of Christianity and its Fate begins “with Abraham”.⁴⁵² Though still raising and interpreting previous Biblical characters to whom the figure of Abraham is posterior, Abraham did represent, for young Hegel, something paradigmatic, not to say a priori, when it comes the “the spirit of Judaism” and, what he called its ‘fate.’⁴⁵³ This was, of course, before Hegel left it to ‘*Weltgeist*’ to deal with this fate and its horrifying, unnatural tragedy; where he still took the Jewish affront “personally.”

The Abrahamic story that Hegel is about to unfold, however, starts sooner, with Noah and the flood, wherein a ‘Nature,’ “[f]ormerly friendly or tranquil” suddenly “requited the faith [*Glauben*] the human race had in her with the most destructive, invincible, irresistible hostility” (‘Spirit,’ p. 182). It was in this catastrophe – articulated in terms of the betrayal of a *presupposed faith* – that the Jewish God, to use

Lévinas' phrase, "*vient à l'idée*".⁴⁵⁴ In Hegel's reading of the Biblical story of Noah and the Flood (Genesis 6), 'Nature,' *having become* absolutely hostile in this manner, teased out of this "man of faith (in Nature)" an *absolute hostility* that led to an absolutely hostile "faith."

Noah was tempted to cope with Nature's betrayal of his faith by mastering it. Having become painfully aware that such direct mastery was not possible (for 'man' as such), Noah invents a "purely-thought," transcendent/absolute Being, through which (a sense of?) security against Natural disasters such as this could be regained (pp. 182-183). The same could be seen, *mutatis mutandis*, in the Biblical story of Nimrod, who proposed to wager this absolute power on 'man,' and concretized this idea in the famous tower of Babel – meant just as much to reach this new 'God' as it was to escape and "tower over" the natural world (p. 184). Hegel summarizes both figures thus:

[...] Against the hostile power [of nature] Noah saved himself by subjecting both it and himself to something more powerful; Nimrod, by taming it himself. Both made a peace of necessity with the foe and thus perpetuated the hostility. ('Spirit,' p. 184)

The new 'absolute being' that comes on the scene subordinates peace to hostility; through this new transcendent being a fake peace; a non-conciliatory, *non-reconciled* peace is installed between Man and Nature. A kind of "peace with ulterior motives," it was merely a means with which to master – that is, to overcome and obviate – need, *susceptibility* itself, and would hence always "perpetuate the hostility" and maintain this *resentment*, this "unfinished business" it has with Nature. It was not a real peace, but a "dead," abstract one; in any case, not one to be taken at face value.

Though not at the same historical period, Hegel compares these reaction to the Biblical flood with another (later) one, the one pertaining to the Ancient Greeks, whose 'faith' Hegel consistently calls the "religion of beauty".⁴⁵⁵ Hegel continues his summary of Noah and Nimrod by comparing them to Deucalion and Pyrrha. The latter were a couple that, according to the Greek myth, had also survived an all-destructive flood by an angry Zeus, except in the Greek version they had not foresworn their faith because of it; rather, they consulted the goddess Themis, who instructed them to repopulate the Earth by taking the bones of the mother (Gaia as Mother Earth, whose "bones" were rocks) over their shoulder. No alien authority was posited, and the relation to Nature – as well as the devotion to their original faith – was preserved:

[...] Neither [Noah nor Nimrod] was reconciled [*versöhnte*] with [Nature], unlike a more beautiful pair, Deucalion and Pyrrha, after the flood in their time, invited men once again to friendship with the world, to nature, made them forget their need and their hostility in joy and pleasure, made a peace of love, were the progenitors of more beautiful peoples [...]. (ibid, pp. 184-185)

I would like to tarry with this distinction between the beautiful spirit of the Greeks, and what Hegel would soon call the horrible spirit of Judaism; for this distinction is itself central to Hegel's treatments of ethical goals and conflicts, and its "reconciliation" is precisely what underlies the 'Why?' of every human action for Hegel. In his 1827 *Lectures on the Philosophy of Religion*, Hegel considers the Greek and the Jewish religions to be at a similar 'spiritual' stage, where "the natural is only instrumental; [...] manifesting, and revealing the spirit" (LPR, p. 329). Unlike the natural religions of magic, where the natural was itself imbued with every spiritual characteristic and worshipped as omnipotent, here one finds the birth pangs of the 'spirit,' that begins to raise itself from/above Nature. The Divine "Subject" begins to free itself from its natural bonds and attain a distinction from and a power over nature, hence also marking the beginning of (human) freedom and rationality: it is where "free subjectivity has attained lordship over the finite generally." (ibid, ibid)

The Greek pagans' was "a religion of humanity" (LPR, p. 330), in which Nature/Finitude begins its spiritual transfiguration in human, sensuous form; 'humanity' begins to elevate itself over nature in this "transfiguration," beginning to see itself in/as "spiritual" or "divine" (ibid, ibid). Here it is as if Nature is being pulled-up and elevated by a higher 'Spirit,' yet this elevation occurs at the cost of the latter's self-compromise: the beauty of Greek idols and art, and their spiritualization of humanity necessitated that 'Spirit' be indeed implicated by/with these external forms, be they the natural materials used for the graphic and plastic arts, or the various myths (and tragedies) wherein gods still behaved very much like human beings, and were multiple and of limited powers. This self-compromise was indeed a mark of the Greek state of 'reconciliation' (ibid, ibid) of spirit and nature, but still an imperfect one, dependent on these finite (both natural-idolatry and conceptual-polytheistic) externalities.

This reconciliation is also what, for the first time, yields the "ethical life" (*Sittlichkeit*; ibid, pp. 331-332); the first spiritual community or communal "being" which lies is at the foundation of Hegel's entire philosophy of right and his approach to social relationships/ethics. This follows directly from the spiritualization of nature that shows a mutual imbrication in Greek religion. Hence, also, what had been so illustrative and critical for Hegel in the tragedy of Antigone, why it necessarily attested to the birth of *Sittlichkeit* as a spiritual emergence of 'Man:' when the 'chthonic' gods (of 'Nature') were finally recognized as such, but limited by this recognition to give way to the higher, more spiritual/rational 'ouranian' gods (ibid, pp. 332-333).⁴⁵⁶

For Hegel, the impetus that operates through and is revealed in the *tragedy* of Antigone, was this initial inner-fragmentation – marking the beginning of *Sittlichkeit* (as its initial "substance;" ibid, p. 332)

– of what Hegel calls *pathe*. The latter is, to recall, the very substance that is molded and “manipulated” by Greek tragedy, what constitutes its edifying, educating capacity, what Aristotle calls its “cathartic” potential. As themselves affective fragments (though not yet individuated, still in external forms, i.e. gods), the Greek *pathe* show themselves as the upwardly-mobile ones of *Sittlichkeit*’s spiritual-cum-communal elevation. Still in fragmented, non-unified form, they found expression in the multiplicity and externality of Greek polytheism, but were already recognized as the “matter” by which reason can express a kind of, initial, *freedom*: the ability to “shape” or appropriate (a) ‘Nature.’ The “will” which is merely subjective and natural, gains a distance from itself, a distance that both suggests to this will (falsely, formally) that it is “free,” and opens the path through which it can acquire (true, substantial) “freedom.”

The Greeks did could not yet reconcile these “affective fragments,” could not *direct* them properly (that is, consistently and cohesively), they remain playing out various relations amongst themselves without ever cohering into a comprehensible Whole; it is only what Hegel calls ‘Objective’ *Sittlichkeit*.⁴⁵⁷ For *Sittlichkeit* to become ‘True’ and ‘Actual’ – to attain Absolution – it still has to pass through a moment of ‘Subjectivity,’ where ‘morality’ takes root in a ‘person,’ and *Sittlichkeit* “knows itself as inwardly accountable-having premeditation, intention, ethical purpose” (LPR, p. 332). Such an internalization (and *individuation*) holds “faith” to be entirely subsumed in/as “feeling,” keeping the latter’s Truth (as a whole) but, for this reason, having no way to appropriate this Truth, to actualize it in knowledge. This stage expresses itself in what Hegel calls “religion of feeling,” something he often ridicules or disdains but only insofar as they take the Christian “seed” – which Hegel is willing to admit is the “heart” – to encompass the meaning of the entire plant. This seed is absolutely necessary, as is the stage of individuation and internalization of God’s commands so as to oneself become affectively trained, as the seed needs “cultivation”.⁴⁵⁸

The last moment, that of Absolution, requires both a *Single God* and a *Single Subject* that – *through* the aforementioned process of growth and cultivation (what Hegel sometimes calls ‘*Bildung*’) – the *Spirit* allow a higher/fuller reconciliation of what in the Greeks were merely scattered “*pathe*.” The new believer, who has faith in this aforementioned trinity,⁴⁵⁹ can then know these affects and use them to effect an absolute or complete conversion of his ‘person,’ an equal part of a community that had finally reconciled God and Man. That would be the culmination of what Hegel called, above, free subjectivity: the Greek spirit of reconciliation needed a Christ to reconcile its affective fragments in a

fully subjective moment, before this subject would once again return to the Deity (which is Himself) in a final, deepest, spiritual reconciliation, the apotheosis of “free subjectivity,” an absolute *Sittlichkeit*.

[...] God comes to be, one may say, for sensibility, for subjectivity and in the subjectivity of spirit, in the innermost being of subjective spirit. Here reconciliation, the sublation of that separation, is made actual; here God as spirit is present in his community, and the community is liberated from that antithesis and has the consciousness or certainty of its freedom in God. (LPR, p. 415)⁴⁶⁰

The Greek ‘reconciliation’ – still *a state rather than a dynamic principle* – could only, at this stage, support an impulse to, say, “self-extract,” but could not yet *unify* a specific direction for this extraction/elevation. Hence “freedom” itself – the active principle of Right/*Sittlichkeit* – grows out of this Greek soil of reconciliation.⁴⁶¹ Hegel’s philosophy of right, his understanding of *Sittlichkeit*, will trace various ethical conflicts as stages that come out of this tension between the demands of freedom on the one hand, and its reconciliation to the demands of ‘actuality,’ on the other.⁴⁶² The Greeks offered that privileged “moment” of the political and religious dialectic wherein both were beginning to express themselves, or to be recognized, in this tension between the freedom of thought and its natural/worldly implication(s). But, as Hegel is careful to remind his students, it was the beginning of a process whereby reconciliation takes over more and more negativities (until finally sublating them all in Protestant Christianity): “[...] however much this [Greek] fragmentation obtains, in which the natural powers appear as by themselves, as autonomous, the unity of the spiritual and the natural likewise emerges more and more, and this is the essential thing” (LPR, p. 332)

The Jews could boast of neither that “essence,” nor that unity, nor, for that matter, any *such* freedom/autonomy. In the Jewish manifestation of this stage of spiritual elevation, “the spiritually and physically natural element, is not taken up and transfigured in free subjectivity [...]” so that it might be “purified of externality and sensibility” (LPR, p. 330). The Jewish “religion of sublimity,” as Hegel calls it in these lectures, maintains the “absolute hostility” to the ‘natural’ that the young Hegel attributed to “the spirit of Judaism.” This “religion” cannot even abide ‘Nature’ in the necessary externality of a sign (which would be considered idolatry and in violation of God’s Second Commandment to the Jews). The sign would be consigned to the infinite evasion of a letter, a Law that is given, but whose meaning and cohesion – it’s “spirit” – forever must remain beyond the pale; no worldly understanding, no *natural representation*, of its *source* is allowed. That is how Hegel can say that the Greeks’ was a religion of love (reconciliation) and beauty (gods as/in humanoid signs), whilst the Jews’ was one of domination (hostility) and sublimity (formal God).

The issue here pertains precisely to the problem of ethics, of the place of the ethical in Hegel's universalizing grasp of Right – as well as Western philosophy's more generally (insofar as it claims its own coherence) –, especially in what is referred to, not insignificantly, as “Human Rights.” Hegel's account of Judaism and Greek paganism betrays an irremediable break when it comes, precisely, to the concept of *Sittlichkeit* and the central, constitutive role it plays in the ‘Science’ of human relations (spanning disciplines from history and economics, through moral philosophy, to politics). Despite both Judaism and Greek religions belonging to the same “stage” in the Hegelian developmental narrative, there is yet reconciliation and beauty to the Greek “religion of humanity.” In Judaism, however, there is no such compromise; its “sublimity” is, by definition, the most “inhuman.”

What found its burgeoning seedlings in the Greek tension – in the “transfiguration to free subjectivity” of their reconciliation with Nature (the aforementioned “soil” of *Sittlichkeit*) – gives way to an infinite, and impossible Distance or height that, by definition, can have no “redeeming” qualities: as a truly “bad infinite,” it resists any and all attempts at its grasp, and all “actualizations” of it are to remain, metaphysically, strictly separated from the world, and, second, politically, strictly singular to the ‘spirit of the Jews.’ Their ‘God’ has infinitely taken over “free subjectivity,” a subjectivity that has nothing to do with ‘Man’ that does not treat of the latter in a picky, “unloving” manner: showing its preference only to a single people, and positioning an all-powerful Law to forever remain alienated to world and Nature – “sublime” without hope of sublimation. The people that live under this “Idea,” then, have no *Sittlichkeit* of their own, since they cannot appropriate any part of the actual to themselves and be transformed by it. The transcendence of their God maintains them in this state of “suspended reconciliation” until the arrival of their Messiah, which, as they stubbornly insist in the face of Christianity, is yet to arrive.⁴⁶³

That is why, though he does not yet use the concept of *Sittlichkeit*, Hegel nevertheless depicts Abraham's God/Spirit in terms of this separation from nature and from other nations: “[t]he first act [*erste Akt*] which made Abraham the progenitor of a nation is a disavowance [*Trennung*] which snaps the bonds of communal life and love [*Liebe*]. The entirety of the relationships in which he had hitherto lived with men and nature, these beautiful relationships of his youth [...] he spurned” (‘Spirit,’ p. 185/S.1:277 [my underline]). Abraham's God was to be a “perfect Object on High”, a “[...] product of his thought raised to be the unity which he regarded as infinite and hostile” (ibid, p. 186). As Hegel sums up, for this “Jewish spirit” “[n]othing in nature was to have any part of God” (ibid, p. 187).⁴⁶⁴

This kind of escape, a tear (*Trennung*) through which one renounces everything so as to gain the very little of one's own "particularity," had become, in Judaism, *a holy principle*. It not a single act or a tendency, but a worship that, so long as it is maintained (i.e., *so long as there are Jews*) can never alter, can never learn anything from its fate, but remains, horrifically, endlessly subjected to its blows. Their alien Object rules them by the power of law that can never – at least not in history – be overcome or reconciled. This deification of law indeed exposes the Jews to an unnatural kind of "fate" that will always appear as either a reward or a punishment that they had no active role in. Hence, their cowardly nature – which is better described as an ethico-metaphysical predicament – and, hence, their horrific fate. Upon their "liberation" from Egypt, Hegel says, "[f]or the Jews a great thing was *done*, but *they* do not inaugurate it with heroic deeds of their own; [...] [...] they themselves have only the malice a coward [*Feigen*] feels when his enemy is brought low by someone else's act" ('Spirit,' p. 190). Even if they fight, whatever outcome is attributed to their alien, law-mediated God of punishments and rewards, rather than seen as their own achievement.

We are now closer to understand the Jewish tragedy. The Jews can never learn and adapt vis-à-vis the actual, what works and doesn't work in the real, historical world, for whatever occurs to them is not of their own doing. Greek tragedy presents its heroes in a struggle against fate; it is the altar upon which they sacrifice themselves so as to allow their story (i.e. tragedy) to edify its listeners to the contradiction that these beautiful people had still not reconciled. Thus, the Greek pagans, with their "compromised spirituality," might be losers in the eyes of fate, but winners in the eyes of spirit; while for the Jews the situation is reversed: they are utter slaves to fate – rather than warriors that fight against it – because they absolutely deny its power, referring everything to God's punishments or rewards. And this logic of punishment, as Hegel confirms more generally, "[...] presupposes an alien being who is lord of this reality [i.e. who inflicts the pain of punishment; SC], and fear of punishment is fear of him. In fate, on the other hand, the hostile power is the power of life made hostile; hence fear of fate is not the fear of an alien being." Hence, the tragic struggle against "fate" brings 'Man' back to himself: "[i]n fate [...] the man recognizes his own life, and his supplication to it is not supplication to a lord but a reversion and an approach to himself" ('Spirit,' p. 231).

Since the Jew is never directly in touch with his Deity (only through Law, never through representation or 'Nature'), his "fate" is alien to him as well; he does not recognize therein "his own life," for his life is already forfeit: his "will" and "personality" are already irrelevant, "hostages" of an

alien God. ‘Recognition,’ hence – as a return of a ‘person’ to himself through his appropriations/property (and the fate that he encounters in/through them) – is not denied so much as it becomes “stuck.” *If* there is a master-slave dialectic that raises the slave up to mastery – precisely the priest of resentment’s function – then the Jews made sure to abort their *Aufhebung*, *every time*: they ‘will’ only *to remain*, at the cost of abandoning all hopes of an autonomous freedom, and never sacrifice the “security” that their “enslavement” to this infinitely powerful and alien Lord gives them. Even Kant’s Enlightenment will have to finally reject them (as Gershom Scholem indeed testified) – for this nation of metaphysical cowards cannot bring itself to the audacity of (Western liberal) thought.⁴⁶⁵ Theirs is the abortive process, the grisly “fate” of an *eternal* “re-recognition of lordship” instead of its *Aufhebung*; their spiritual engine is stuck on an “Idle” gear:⁴⁶⁶

In contrast with the Jewish reversion to obedience, reconciliation in love is a liberation; in contrast with the re-recognition [*Wiederanerkennung*] of lordship, it is the cancellation [*Aufhebung*] of lordship in the restoration of the living bond, of that spirit of love and mutual faith which, considered in relation to lordship, is the highest freedom. (‘Spirit,’ p. 214/S.1:357)

The Jewish spirit might have won a kind of “security” with its metaphysical gambit, but it had lost everything that matters: “[Abraham’s] Ideal subjugated everything to him [...] and put him in security against the rest”; but, Hegel is quick to add “Love alone was beyond his power” (ibid, p. 187). Abraham’s spirit, then, might have elevated itself in an infinite manner over and above nature, but it did so without the possibility of return; without the possibility of reconciling his “spirit” in accordance with fate, and finally reconciling the latter. He refuses to acknowledge that the world in which he lives is *his*, just as he refuses to see himself in God (owing to the Jewish God’s infinite separation):

[...] With his herds Abraham wandered hither and thither over a boundless territory without bringing parts of it any nearer to him by cultivating and improving them. Had he done so, he would have become attached to them and might have adopted them as parts of *his* world. [...] [...] The groves which often gave him coolness and shade he soon left again; in them he had theophanies, appearances of his perfect Object on High, but he did not tarry in them with the love which would have made them worthy of the Divinity and participant in Him. He was a stranger on earth, a stranger to the soil [*Boden*] and to men [*Menschen*] alike. (‘Spirit,’ p. 186/S.1:278 [my underlines])

This means that, for Hegel, the Jews are missing – and made *a point of missing* – the “general foundations” of *Sittlichkeit* itself. As late as 1827 Hegel saw these to be the basis of his political theory, but only here do these foundations expose their Christian “upbringing” so starkly and pointedly. This is also precisely where Nietzsche always told us to look: in the context supplied here, you can read the assumption (underlined in the following quote) that functions so as to deny (or suspend) any ethical

consideration of the Jews, for whom Nature, according to *Hegel's own definition*, does not “come forward”; the Jewish experience is excluded from this constitutive *fact of Sittlichkeit*.⁴⁶⁷

[...] the essential spiritual powers the universal powers of ethical life – especially political life, life in the state, and also justice, valor, family, oaths, agriculture, science, and the like. Bound up with the fact that the ethical fragments into these, its particular determinations, is the fact that the creaturely domain [e.g., ‘Nature,’ SC] also comes forward against these spiritual powers. The character of immediacy that has this fragmentation as its consequence involves the characteristic that natural powers [such as] heaven and earth, mountains and streams day and night, emerge over against [the spiritual]. These are the general foundations. (LPR, p. 332)

This context gives me a good occasion to present a concrete example of the “hatred of hatred” whose structure my antipathology has been articulating throughout this work. The fact, then, that Hegel associates the Jewish level of *Sittlichkeit* as that of the “family,” or that, in his *Philosophy of Right*, he advises to grant them civil rights, shows precisely to what extent his Christian thought could not sublimate them, could not place them in any consistent manner, but – perhaps embarrassed at this incongruity – it preferred to leave this “riddle” in the *dark* (of resentment). As both Yirmiyahu Yovel and Shlomo Avineri had commented, there is a “gulf” (Yovel), a “complete divorce” between his comments on the spirituality of their *Sittlichkeit* (or the “absolute negativity” thereof), and these rights.⁴⁶⁸ As I will show below with Dante’s *Inferno*, this erasure or “gap,” this *interruption in the very basis of ‘Right’* (and hence, also, in the very essence of ‘Man’ or ‘Human’), is precisely that which silently passes over the constitutive role of antisemitism in the Western metaphysical coherence that had been given it ever since metaphysics had been put on the “royal road to Science.” Such “Human Rights” can only be given the Jews nominally or “universally,” that is, as Gerson Scholem had suggested, only insofar as they are *not* ‘Jews.’ It is quite possible that the very logic that calls to give the Jews human rights harbors the violence of a *Bildung* that cannot abide the Jews as such, and secretly dreams (or unconsciously plots) their demise.⁴⁶⁹

For example, I suggest to read the following comment in Hegel’s *Philosophy of Right* – seemingly benign and tolerant – in precisely such an antipathological manner:

It is part of education [Bildung], of thinking as the consciousness of the individual in the form of universality [Allgemeinheit; a form presupposed as justified; SC], that the I comes to be apprehended as a universal person in which all [Alle] are identical [identisch]. A human being counts as a human being in virtue of his humanity, not because he is a Jew, Catholic, Protestant, German, Italian, etc. This consciousness, for which thought is what is valid, is of infinite importance. (PR §209/S.7:360-361)

That which is of “infinite importance,” but cannot account for its own Law, its own force as such (since the latter is always attributed to Reason and Spirit), leaves open the door for an unchecked and

irresponsible violence. As in the case of BLM, the above passage attests to what I called in the previous chapter the (irresponsible) ethico-metaphysical violence of the “all.” Furthermore, as I show below, the Jewish (non-)position of “metaphysical refusal” – with regards to Nature and the rest of the world – indeed does not allow the Jew even the status of ‘Person,’ since, according to this same text’s definition, “[p]ersonality [*Persönlichkeit*] is that which acts [...] to claim [the] external world as its own” (PR §39/S.7:98)).

That even Hegel would recommend such rights for the Jews is the precise locus where antipathology spies a dangerous *gloss*, one that would repeatedly erupt in organized Christian mobs’ violence towards the Jews, and later come to its culmination in the systematic *Endlösung* to this “dark riddle.” As I have been insisting upon, the ethico-metaphysical question/decision that underlies any Truth, any Method (and, a fortiori), any policy is still owed responsibility; and with this in mind Hegel’s liberal or tolerant prescriptions towards his-day Jews betray the inconvenient impetus of the same “Jewish hatred” that was said to have been sublated.⁴⁷⁰ This impetus, this ‘Why?’ will show itself, indeed, as precisely hostile and self-serving, what young Hegel calls a “peace of necessity that perpetuates the hostility” (‘Spirit,’ p. 184). Except that now the “necessity” is a *Christian* necessity, i.e., *the necessity of ‘reconciliation,’* and the hostility is no longer that between a separate nation and the Nature it abhorred, but a Science, indeed an entire ‘Humanity,’ and the Jews that they abhor.

Hence the Jews – and the ethico-metaphysical violence they incur – become privileged markers whenever a State (which, according to Hegel, culminates the logic of *Sittlichkeit*) has to deal with “non active” or “passive” members. Hegel, hence, gives the examples of Anabaptists or Quakers and the necessity of a strong State to tolerate them even if they refuse their active duties towards the state, of which Hegel’s example is “one of the most important of these duties, the defence of the state against its enemies” (PR §270, p. 247) which these passive members refuse. The Jewish problem in Prussia of Hegel’s day, then, is brought forth as Hegel’s choice example of such tolerance, and shows the ‘Why?’ that Hegel placed behind it (as well as a certain naïveté as to the fate of such tolerance, as it was to express itself in this same “State” after a Century of “toleration”). How long can the State be expected to be “strong enough” to tolerate such parasites and cowards – those who refuse their “tragic,” participating yet self-sacrificial, role in its (higher) service – that are a horror to *Sittlichkeit*, to its very “soul”?⁴⁷¹ That is the problematic that, perhaps to this day, underlies all such “toleration” from ‘liberal states’ (‘*liberaler*,’ PR §270, p. 246/S.7:420); the Jews being, as mentioned earlier, the best *marker* of this irreconcilable problem:

[...] Thus formally it may have been right to refuse a grant of even civil rights to the Jews on the ground that they should be regarded as belonging not merely to a particular religious group but to a foreign people [*fremden Volke*]. But the fierce outcry raised against the Jews, from that point of view and others, ignores the fact that they are, first and foremost [*zuallererst*], human beings; and humanity, so far from being a mere superficial, abstract quality [...], is on the contrary itself the basis of the fact that civil rights arouse in their possessors the feeling of oneself [*Selbstgefühl*] as counting in civil society as a person [*Personen*] with rights. This feeling of selfhood, infinite and free from all restrictions, is in turn the root from which the desired [*verlangte*] similarity in disposition and ways of thinking comes into being. To exclude the Jews from civil rights, on the other hand, would rather be to confirm the isolation with which they have been reproached—a result for which the state that excludes them would rightly be blameable and reproachable, because by such exclusion, it would have misunderstood its own basic principle, its nature as an objective and powerful institution [...]. (PR §270, p. 247/S.7:421 [translation modified])

So, while the formal course would have denied the Jews civil rights, it should be resisted, according to Hegel, for precisely the same reasons that the Jews have no share in *Sittlichkeit*: it remains empty, external, and refuses to participate in the mutual reconciliation with its surroundings (what Hegel sometimes calls more generally “fate”). The assumption that they are “first and foremost human beings” is indeed itself a problematic statement in Hegel’s definition of Human subjectivity, which becomes clearer and starker when he uses “person” in their regard. This granting of right, hence, already bespeaks a *Bildung* which represents a passive expectation of the right-given Jew: a “feeling of selfhood” leading to a “desired similarity in disposition and ways of thinking” (something which the Jews have been able to resist/refuse for millennia). The German word for “desired” is telling, for *verlangen* derives from the *langen*, which precisely indicated a projection or extension, a “giving” that remains *tied to its source* and, hence, already suggests a debt, and can always be “rolled back”.⁴⁷²

Hegel repeats this *raison d’être* in the very next line, except that the “gap” between his policy and his logic is much more pronounced. It is not only that this “reproachful isolation” has been his own reproach towards Judaism in his “youth,” but that in this very paragraph he himself gives the Jews as the prime example of such isolation (hence the logical continuity with the Anabaptists and Quakers, etc.). A closer look at the wording shows that the reproach itself – and the Antisemitism that it is intimately tied with – is left there, untouched; Hegel is simply recommending not lending it any credence on his part, on the part of his civil station and the State. As he continues to argue, such confirmation would sin against the state’s very principle, would go against its nature; it is the logic of the principle that commands this policy. Even if the isolation is not confirmed, it still operates in the background as judgment and accusation, as a debt to be paid, as an expectation that calculates backwards its own

betrayal. This might appear to be a magnanimous or “kind” policy recommendation on the part of Hegel, but its ‘Why?’, its *principle*, shows it as the same antisemitism of his youth, except now, by “virtue” of this very principle (its vanity?), it is glossed-over and put aside; and, hence, *no longer communicated with*. If in the ‘Spirit’ essay Hegel was a friend to antipathology, by the time of the *Philosophy of Right* he is not.⁴⁷³

1.2 “Zu Grunde gehen”: The Vain Witness⁴⁷⁴

לעמוד כמו נוד ולדעת, מכאן אין עוד מנוסה. ולנוס.
יורם קניוק, סוסעץ

[To stand like a windbag and know: from here, there’s no longer an escape. And to escape.

– Yoram Kaniuk, *Rockinghorse*]

As we read in Hegel’s account of the Greek myth of Deucalion and Pyrrha, there is a kind of “divine forgiveness” in the ‘religion of humanity,’ one that the Judaic “sublime” would persistently refuse. The Greek spirit was still reconciled with Nature, a “love” which it would keep even – as Antigone shows quite clearly – at *the tragic price of contradiction*. Since this contradiction is based in love (of Nature and of Man⁴⁷⁵) the Greeks could still attain a worth – indeed a *beauty* – for Hegel’s spiritual quest. The Jews, however, seemed to be all-too-aware of this logical predicament, and responded to it by means of a metaphysical escape: their “Object” was so ‘High,’ so unreachable and “uncompromisable,” that it could *never* reconcile with *anything* else. That is why Abraham’s disavowance was so “unheroic,” so hateful and ugly, so cowardly; for if, “Cadmus, Danaus, etc. [the pagan founders of Thebes and Argos; SC], had forsaken their fatherland too, [...] they forsook it in battle; they went in quest of a soil where they would be free and they sought it that they might love” then, “Abraham wanted not to love, wanted to be free by not loving” (‘Spirit,’ p. 185 [my underline]). It is not the act itself that matters to Hegel here, but the principle behind it, the ‘Why?’ that attends it:⁴⁷⁶ while Cadmus and Danaus left their *Sittlichkeit* in the name of natural freedom, out of love, while Abraham left in the name of an unnameable, gaining the unnatural, abject freedom of securing his body/survival and did so out of hatred; not a hatred of this or that person or idea, but a hatred of love itself, a hatred raised to the level of a metaphysical principle.

In Hegel’s eyes, the “more beautiful peoples” of the Greeks would forever depict the timid embrace of a first, child-like attempt to reconcile ‘Nature’ and ‘Spirit.’ It is this affirmation of ‘Nature’ that gives them, for Hegel, the epitome of the tragic position, wherein Spirit forever shows that Greek love of Nature should be universalized (and thus absolutized) through a more comprehensive and

rational love of Spirit (revealed in Christianity). The privilege of this position, then, its “beauty” – its promise and relevance, its *contribution to the movement* of Spirit – relies on the tenuous grasp that the Greeks have of Spirit, a kind of “their hearts are in the right place.” In this, Hegelian, context, the Jewish spirit will forever be exiled; its “contribution,” like the Jewish heart,⁴⁷⁷ is negative and hollow, and must be dropped by Spirit in horror and abjection. It had “sold its soul” to ‘fate,’ and forfeited all freedom, all true, internalized reconciliation with their own wills and affects; their freedom could evade the tragic “sting” of the heart that they had evacuated, but at a heavy – yet *spiritually justified* – price:

The subsequent circumstances of the Jewish people up to the mean, abject [*schäbigten* – shoddy; shabby; vile], wretched circumstances in which they still are today, have all of them been simply consequences and elaborations of their original fate [*Schicksal*]. By this fate – an infinite power [*Macht*] which they set over against themselves and could never conquer – they have been maltreated and will continually be maltreated until they appease it by the spirit of beauty and annul it by reconciliation. (ibid, pp. 199-200/S.1:277)

Of course, if we stay with Hegel’s logic a bit longer here, it is also part of the Jewish spirit’s “consequences” that they have, indeed, *made it to Hegel’s day*; their ‘spirit of self-maintenance’ allowed them to survive for that was its main, if not only, *ethico-metaphysical* concern. The Ancient Greeks – exposed to a fate with which they had not yet reconciled – did not. The ‘spirit’ that gave the former their abjection, also seemed to give them, as Hegel indeed shows, their *survival*; unlike any other people, their principle did not involve anything loving and reconciling with nature, they were driven by no “worldly happiness” or even dominion and political power. Hence, remaining alive not out of love or desire or pleasure, but out of command, these “hostages of the spirit’s externality,” if you will, remain alive for an unknown purpose; at best, as a negative marker for the arrival of the Kingdom of God (think ‘canary in a coal-mine’). The tenacious externality that cannot compromise itself with an ‘inner’ in any way, that both remains, and remains outside, had an ethico-metaphysical charge that, for Hegel, had always remained a “dark riddle.” I argue here that this charge is the charge of the ethico-metaphysical witness, one who lives for an alien principle, who can lose sleep over what other systems merely swallow or appropriate without second thought; the sworn witness of metaphysical vanities, who must forever signify on their behalf.

The “subsequent circumstances” of the Jewish spirit is that they, well, in more than one sense, refuse to go to (the) ground; or, in the spirit or re-recognition, that they repeatedly go to (the) ground without “*wirklich-ly*” getting there. The poignant question that animates the antisemitic nerve here is an age-old question of Christianity, and arguably the oh-so-stubborn core of its antisemitism: ‘*Why don’t*

they just convert/die?'. As I have been arguing throughout this work, it is this question – one that can arise *only within the ambit(ion) of this metaphysics of 'love' and 'reconciliation'* – that both animates the 'Bildung' of *Geist*, and serves to justify its violence. If only the Jews were not too stubborn to "learn already," and perish as Jews (i.e. convert or die).⁴⁷⁸

As is indeed revealed by history – whose difference from, and repetition of, *fate* is precisely the locus of this polemic – Judaism must be excreted so long as it maintains its 'spirit;' that 'faith' which makes the Jew give up on everything natural, beautiful, and human – everything that, as Kant would say, makes life *worth* living – just so that she can save her own skin.⁴⁷⁹ This "middle-child" of both History and Spirit, then, this *abomination* unto 'Nature,' occupies the only non-place in the Hegelian dialectic: that of the empty resistance, of the contentless, "indeterminate" negation that only haunts the contours of each position, but never actualizes itself in one; like Cassandra, never "going all the way".⁴⁸⁰ It is indeed, finally, History itself, as 'World History' (*Weltgeschichte*) – which Hegel, much later, in his 1821 *Grundlinien der Philosophie des Rechts*, will call "the world's court of judgment" – that will be appointed as the final witness and testimony, the "proof-in-the-pudding" of the Jewish spirit.⁴⁸¹

Thus we finally come to Hegel's own account of "Jewish tragedy" as it was already implied in the spirit of Abraham. At the end of the 'Spirit of Judaism' section, Hegel writes this, now famous, passage. Almost commiserating with them – yet already knowing he is bound to fail – Hegel writes of the antipathy and disgust (*Abscheu*) that the fate of the Jews, with the aforementioned misery of their circumstances in Hegel's day, arouses (in him? in every human being? in God? Hegel does not respond to this line of questioning). There is no beauty here, no innocence that throws itself – loving, free and confused – into the fray, struggling for actualizing its will and learning and adapting from this struggle.⁴⁸² To such beautiful heroes, a "slip" was inevitable, because they had not yet reconciled fate in their hearts (and philosophies), had not yet become *fully* rational and actual. The Christianity that grows out of this soil will have done so to the fullest; the Judaism that was spewed forth out of it, out of Nature altogether, had clung to the *appearance* of having done it. Hence, the Jews may suffer, may be persecuted and denied civil rights (when the "occasion"/weakness arises), may be put to work in labor camps or exterminated in death camps – but *their suffering is not an "agon;"* it is vain, empty, pregnant only with *nothing*. The truly useless suffering of an absolutely irredeemable (because irreconcilable) fate; with no one to blame but themselves:

The great tragedy of the Jewish people is no Greek tragedy; it can rouse neither terror nor pity, for both of these arise only out of the fate which follows from the inevitable slip of a beautiful character; it can arouse horror [*Abscheu* – also disgust] alone. The fate of the Jewish people is the fate

of Macbeth who stepped out of nature itself, clung to alien Beings, and so in their service had to trample and slay everything holy in human nature, had at last to be forsaken by his gods (since these were objects and he was their slave) and be dashed to pieces on his faith alone. ('Spirit,' pp. 204-205)

Hegel's "bunk-buddy" at the Tübingen *Stift* (late 1780's, just before Hegel's move to Bern), gives a further illumination as to German Idealism's fascination with, and appropriation of, the Ancient Greeks. In his Tenth Letter for the 1795 *Philosophical Letters on Dogmatism and Criticism*, Friedrich W. J. Schelling explores the "contradictions of Greek tragedy," as it relates to Greek Reason (i.e., Greek philosophy).⁴⁸³ The crux of the contradiction, he writes (very similarly to Hegel) "lay in the contest between human freedom and the power of the objective world in which the mortal must succumb necessarily if that power is absolutely superior, if it is fate".⁴⁸⁴ That the tragic hero *both struggles and is punished for this struggle* (against 'fate') constitutes, as Schelling puts it, "the *honor* due to freedom" (ibid, p. 193). Echoing the later motif in Richard Wagner's opera *Siegfried*, Schelling's tragic hero proves his/her freedom "by the very loss of that freedom, and [going] down with a declaration of free will. The Greek hero's refusal to succumb to the powers of fate – the source of his punishment – is also the most redeeming quality of the Greek character, where it shows its utmost 'humanity' (in the modern German Idealist's eyes). It is hence that, as Schelling writes (again reminding one of young Hegel), "[n]o people have been more faithful than the Greeks to the essence of humanity" (Ibid, Ibid).

The Greeks, as the most "natural" of peoples according to Schelling, kept representing the necessity and impossibility of going beyond nature as (their) tragic fate. To the Greek 'beautiful character,' power over fate was never a legitimate option, which is why even Zeus could not change or influence the *Moirai*, the goddesses that spin the weave of fate; and even Zeus was included in that fate, subjected to it. Fate was the 'Other' of Greek divinity, and the fate of the tragic hero was always to go blindly against it – for the Greeks had only a beautiful character, not yet a fully developed rationality – and always lose, what Hegel calls "the inevitable slip of a beautiful character." Such boldness was afforded the Greeks precisely for the idols' simple, natural 'mediations' (with divinity), in human form and *with the human susceptibility to fate*:

[...] In representing the object to himself, in giving it form and consistency, [man] masters it. He has nothing to fear, for he himself has set limits to it. But as soon as he does away with those limits, as soon as the object is no longer representable [i.e. like the Jewish God, for example, which for Hegel would be *the* non-representable 'object'; SC] [...] he finds himself lost. The terrors of the objective world befall him. He has done away with its bounds; how shall he now subdue it? (ibid, p. 193)

It is these “limits of nature” – whose insurpassability keeps being *repeated in Greek tragedy* – that protects the Greeks as both beautiful and natural. However, the passage to the non-representable object, what Schelling also calls the “*super-natural*” object (ibid, ibid), also makes the transgressor of both art and nature (e.g. Abraham) the most “lost,” the most “*terrified*.” This “terror of the objective world” is the lot of the coward, for, in leaving the bounds of finitude (Nature) and yet allowing no representation of the infinite (Spirit), faith turned to the Other of Greek Divinity. If representation of the divine is a mediation between Spirit and Nature, beginning a long struggle to reconcile with (internalize and see a Reason behind) ‘fate,’ then the refusal of representing any part of Spirit is akin to abandoning the struggle altogether, and worse, joining the other side. Hence Schelling adds, in a footnote to this very indication of terror, that “[t]he more sweetly a people dreams of the supersensuous world, the more despicable, the more unnatural it is itself” (ibid, ibid). The terrors that befall the “unnatural Greek” are again recuperated at the end of Schelling letter, where it is made even clearer that here he has Jews in mind: “[...] the unjust trembles by himself in fear of a justice which he did not find in himself and had to assign to another world, to the hands of an avenging Judge” (ibid, p. 196). This “fear and trembling” that awaits the Greek heretic, the one who left the bound of nature and art by *submitting to* – as opposed to heroically fighting against – a transcendent, unrepresentable object to lord over him, is indeed now stuck in a kind of “Greek tragedy out of joint.”

Greek “beauty of character” is revealed here, in the Greek’s affirmation of their own nature, their own “humanity,” leaving the alien, unconditioned fate to do what it will: “[t]he invisible power is too sublime to be bribed by adulation; their [Greek] heroes are too noble to be saved by cowardice. There is nothing left but to fight and fall” (ibid, p. 193). As the transcendent, unrepresentable power (i.e. ‘fate’) is “unmoved” by adulation, the only contingency left, the only possible breach beyond tragic fate, is the cowardice, not to say ugliness, of submitting to fate completely. The coward, the “despicable” and “unjust,” whose tragedy is no longer Greek (meaning no longer *natural*) gives herself over to the hands of an avenging judge, a turncoat in the struggle to appropriate fate; her divine support is no longer the immanence of nature, but a transcendent, unrepresentable object that issues judgments and vengeful wrath. The coward, as Schelling says, “succumbs” to the lure of ending this struggle by unnatural means: the Greek hero knew it was a losing battle, but also knew that “there is nothing left but to fight and fall.” This fall, in Hegel’s account, is precisely aligned with the self-sacrifice of difference in the Absolute, where a difference is represented in two contrary positions where both sacrifice their finitude, their “petty differences” as it were, and reconcile in a higher Whole. As a position with Hegelian ‘spirit,’

there is indeed nothing left but fight and fall. “Greek tragedy honored human freedom, letting its hero fight against the superior fate. In order not to go beyond the limits of art, the tragedy had to let him succumb” (ibid, p. 193).

The horror of – metaphysically, religiously – stepping outside nature is indeed for both Schelling and Hegel an affront to human freedom, a kind of escape from the project of the human itself; and what’s more – a selfish one. Greek tragic heroes, at least, have the decency to die; the Jew would be, perhaps, similar to what in the *Phenomenology* Hegel calls the ‘unhappy consciousness,’ but this one insists on its “alienable rights,” and is indeed, both literally and metaphorically, unhappy *to no end*.⁴⁸⁵

2. A Walk Through (the Valley of the Shadow of) ‘H’⁴⁸⁶

[...] The individual person, separated from God, living in sin, in the battle of immediacy and in the poverty of finitude, has the infinite vocation of coming into reconciliation with himself and God. But since in the redemptive history of Christ the negativity of immediate individuality has appeared as the essential feature of the spirit, the individual person is able to rise to freedom and to peace in God as a result solely of the conversion of the natural element and finite personality

[...] Here, in the face of the absolute grandeur of the ultimate end and aim of all things, everything individual and particular in human interests and aims vanishes, and yet there stands there, completely epically, everything otherwise most fleeting and transient in the living world, fathomed objectively in its inmost being, judged in its worth or worthlessness by the supreme Concept, i.e. by God.

– G. W. F. Hegel⁴⁸⁷

In the previous chapter I looked at Nietzsche’s philological work on *Homers Wettkampf*, to show something that Christian/‘modern’ philologists could, or would, not see: that for the Greeks, cruelty and envy were indispensable to value affirmation (and hence, as I show, to value creation or transformation), and indeed constituted the other face of Eris, her helpful, God-given face (a *gift* from Zeus). The disappearance of that meaning from the view of modern philology was telling – as is consistent with Nietzsche’s analyses of resentment – of a deep denial or suppression, where something necessary (Nietzsche calls it ‘will to power’) has been so fundamentally denied that it had become practically invisible; invisible, but not inactive. The ‘will’ that modernity sought to train and civilize or “humanize,” following millennia of training in Christian resentment – a time in which it had learned to efface/overturn even the most radical of hatreds, envies, and cruelties (i.e., the Jewish one) – was still, very much, implicated in these theaters of cruelty and enmity, but could no longer affirm it; this fact had been reverted back to a newly created “subject,” an altogether base construct – with all the egalitarianism of a base – through guilt, which turned the former glorious spectacles of Greek cruelty

into internal torments of Christian guilt. The force, indeed the violence and lust for power, remained; but they could no longer be affirmed, much less offered any kind of responsibility. For this task, I tried to show, an antipathology was needed.

Dante's *Inferno* is another friend to this antipathology, and, I believe, to Nietzsche's *Genealogy* as well. In the course of an already-redeemed, not to say blessed, narrative/exploration, Dante unleashes an account no less edifying than it is horrific; packing it with a variety of persons/sinners, not ashamed to assign eternal damnations based on personal resentments and political disputes, and, most importantly, giving all (t)his hate and abjection a system; an eternal, Christian system, and dubbing it, as the inscription on the gates of Hell goes, 'love.' Dante's narrative, which is no less a narrative of his own conversion in the spirit of Saint Paul (Acts 22) and Saint Augustine (*Confessions*) – who were so treasured by the most important theologian at the time, Saint Thomas Aquinas – is, indeed, filled to the brim with spectacles of (almost) unimaginable cruelty, subtle and ceaseless sufferings the likes of which no Greek could have ever conceived (they never thought or knew to turn their envy or cruelty inward, as Nietzsche says, that is, until Christianity taught/seduced them to).

Hence, it is less the, rather glaring, fact that here the principle of revenge is unabashedly employed in a guise of "Divine Justice" that interests me here,⁴⁸⁸ but rather the moral transformation process, the affective-training mechanism that Nietzsche allots to the priest of resentment, and which Dante betrays to us *as an edification/conversion to his religion of love*. Here, in Dante's Late Medieval narrative, and with what Hunter Thompson called "the right kind of eyes," one can spy a perfect snapshot of a kind of "metaphysical Guantanamo," a secret and divinely/sovereignly sanctioned torture chamber that had been, *even then* (early 14th Century AD), theologically buried and inaccessible.⁴⁸⁹ The "secret things" found there (as Vergil,⁴⁹⁰ Dante's guide, calls them), are betrayed, and this eternal torture-prison's inner, cloistered scenes are made ob-scene, by Dante himself, but for the best of purposes and intentions – he is not a "whistleblower," his 'Why?' is a 'Why?' of Christian Love and Truth (not that of an anti-Christian/Skeptic).

No, Dante is to be merely a vessel, a witness whose testimony will both *show* conversion *and tell* of it to other, potential converts.⁴⁹¹ Of course, as I alluded just now, this is only a betrayal of the torture-proceedings when this, inherently theodicial, operation *is itself witnessed by another sort of witness*; one that is not, or not necessarily, oriented towards conversion, and, preferably, a Levinatschean – that is, an antipathological – one. After all, Dante comes into the Divine Structure and leaves it in full glory, having bested its challenges of faith and edified other believers to do the same; but the Levinatschean

witness' methodology is all askew – s/he sees with different eyes. These eyes will find what those modern philologists (like Nietzsche's day philosophers and psychologists) could not: that cruelty and torture are instrumental for the theodicy of Christian 'love,' and, furthermore, expose the magnitudes of this self-torture mechanism, and its resulting ethical numbness; or its *constitutive* blindness to, what I call here, following Lévinas, responsibility. This structure of suppression will here be explored precisely in its approach/appropriation of language, and there, as I will show, Nietzsche philology and Lévinas' idea of signification will echo Nietzsche's genealogy in a Levinatzschean crescendo.

Dante's and Vergil's journey is also one of discovery, wherein the System is not yet known to the author/pilgrim (both being Dante), and where the horror and fear of its inhabitants, the souls condemned to eternal suffering, must also, necessarily, derive from their very foreignness to him, effecting a kind of vertiginal '*unheimliche*' for our Good Christian. The echoes between Hell's eternal sanction by the power of divine justice – inscribed on the very gate of Hell ("*Giustizia*," "*la divina podestate*") –, and the suffering and horror endured by Dante's 'soul' (as he traverses all nine realms) lead both author and pilgrim (and reader?) to understand this as a truly Christian epic: a triumphant narrative that, while still "too Catholic" to be a Hegelian System/Science – i.e., following a too-formal and explicit, indeed, *too* '*external*' structure of Divine Truth to be deemed *absolutes Wissen* – are still imbued with the same '*spirit*' (that justifies, or rather absolves, the "fate" or "history" of its own narrative progression).⁴⁹² This last point comprises, of course, the very *consistency* of the entire *Commedia*: the journey through it, *the very narrative*, becomes Dante's own self-formation – whereby divine *Giustizia* is both com-prehended (Dante's traversing *all* three realms) and internalized (Dante being *affectively* altered); or in short, as I will show, *reconciled*.

This reconciliation is arrived-at through Dante's own *appropriation* of the Medieval 'Epic' genre: for it was far from conventional that such an epic should, for one, be written in a "common" language (Italian), rather than the Latin of the Scriptures (in this sense, Dante prefigures Luther, whose translation of the Vulgate to spoken German was the ideological counterpart to his theological "protest");⁴⁹³ second, it was also highly uncommon, in this context, for an author to identify himself as the protagonist of his own epic.⁴⁹⁴ Both these elements already suggest that here Dante is already making what Hegel would see as a "Protestant" move, by way of a radical individuation/internalization of Catholicism's "external"/Dogmatic narrative: the language is an everyday language accessible to common men (and hence, also, unlike scholastic texts and works of art, addressed to them), and, as Dante scholar John Freccero explains, that by providing this, *individual example*, Dante meant for his narrative to be an

instruction (*dottrina*), “[...] an example and teaching which could not have been obtained from any other truthful testimony [*vero testimonio*]”.⁴⁹⁵ Through this example, hence, each and every believer can receive instruction and direction, to become themselves the incarnation of the word of God, their very Being/Life as the Flesh of God’s Word, the working/actualization (*Wirklichkeit*) of Christ’s ‘spirit;’ as Hegel, in the above epigraphs, confirms:

“[...] since in the redemptive history of Christ the negativity of immediate individuality has appeared as the essential feature of the spirit [i.e. the Jewish God’s “spirit” incarnated itself in (a) Man as “immediate individuality;” SC], the individual person is able to rise to freedom and to peace in God as a result solely of the conversion of the natural element and finite personality [i.e., the conversion of ‘vanities’ – the “particular in human interests and aims” that “vanishes” (in the second epigraph above) – that distills the “worth” out of the immaterial “negativities” of spirit; SC].” (ibid, ibid [my underline])

Dante’s *Inferno*, to focus on the text at hand, divides Hell into 3 sections, corresponding to medieval scholasticism’s divisions of Sins, all of which refer back to one’s individual will;⁴⁹⁶ they proceed, in this part of Dante’s *Commedia*, from bad to worse.⁴⁹⁷ The first major division, marked by the second threshold of Hell (the entrance to the “City of Dis”) and explained to Dante by his travel guide, Vergil,⁴⁹⁸ is between sins of “incontinence,” that occur owing to the will’s frailty or inability, a *passive* affront of God’s Law (*incontinencia*), and sins of malice, that occur when ‘reason’ itself is corrupted, and one wills *actively* against God’s Law (*malizia*) (*Inferno* XI.82).⁴⁹⁹ Within the City, another division takes place, this time between the sins of ‘violence’ (*forza*), which employ the use of brute force, and sins of ‘fraud’ (*frode*), which testify to a more severe corruption of – that which is, as Vergil intimates, “proper to man” and qualifies Man’s will – ‘reason’ (*Inferno* XI.22-31).

The journey through Hell offers a strange correspondence between, on the one hand, the cruelty of its punishments, and, on the other, their impacts on Dante: though the punishments become increasingly more severe and sophisticated, with tortures made more poignant and intense with each descending Circle, Dante’s reactions are most fearful and (self-/God-)doubting with regards to the punishments and sinners of the higher circles, and he becomes more and more at ease with them as the narrative progresses. The pity that derives directly from the Christian *caritas* here reveals itself to have been, all along, precisely what Nietzsche said it was: the tool for the justification of suffering *tout court*, a perfect theodical mechanism whereby all pain is re-directed back at the one who feels it as his/her own sin/guilt: “that we suffer we acknowledge we have erred.” Dante’s own, “inner” conversion, hence, must pass through an edification process by which he can come to withstand *another’s* suffering; which precisely amounts to acknowledging God’s eternal and unquestionable justice. The aforementioned

symmetry reflects the equivalence or equality – before God – of all souls, of ‘Mankind’ in general: it is the ethico-metaphysical assumption that allows Dante – in the form of dialectical “sublation” (*Aufhebung*) – to make the leap from himself to Otherness, *and back again*.

2.1 A War of Journey and Pity

[...] And like one who unwilld what he just now willed and with new thoughts changed his intent, so that he draws back entirely from beginning: so did I become on that dark slope, for, thinking, I gave up the undertaking that I had been so quick to begin. “If I have well understood your word,” replied [Vergil], “your soul is wounded by cowardice [*viltà*], which many times so encumbers a man that he turns back from honorable endeavor [...]” (*Inferno* II.37-46)

Dante’s *Commedia* begins with the problem, indeed the urgency, of orientation. Midway into his path, Dante find his way lost, with a dark wood (*selva oscura*; I.2) that suddenly obscures the right direction, the straight/right way (‘*la dritta via*’; I.3).⁵⁰⁰ That this disorientation should happen in the middle (‘*Nel mezzo*’; I.1) of the journey is all the more telling of the structure of a crisis and a choice – like the scales of justice that stretch evenly from each side, awaiting a decision. In the second Canto Dante will say this explicitly, and call it a “war [*guerra*] both of [...] journey [*cammino*] and of [...] pity [*pietate*]” (II.4-5) strengthening the connection between the physical (“journey”) and the spiritual (“pity”) journeys/challenges (depicted as a “war”).⁵⁰¹ The wording is important here, since Dante writes that he found himself (*mi ritrovai*; I.2), and this theme of being lost and being self-oriented or self-centered will haunt Dante, and the reader, throughout the *Inferno*.⁵⁰² The experience was so intense, the crisis so severe, that even recounting it, long after the trial has ended (and the challenge won), the thought of it still fills Dante with fear (*paura*; I.6). Dante continues to recount his experience there, in what he now calls the “valley” (‘*valle*’; I.14) that had engulfed him, he tells us, at the point (*punto*; I.11) of inattention and torpor, the point where he abandoned his “true way” (‘*verace via*’; I.12).

What Dante is describing here is in fact a reflection. It is this “turning towards” the darkness that identifies it as a valley (I.14), a gaze Dante throws backwards as one who nearly drowned, “comes forth out of the deep into the shore,” and turns (‘*volge*’) to look at them (I.22-24).⁵⁰³ It is, in fact, only through this reflection that the initial theological elements of the poem – which accounts for Dante’s late attribution of the *selva oscura* as a valley begin *appearing* in the poem (of course, the famous “valley of the shadow of death” from the Book of Psalms, is a verse that professes *faith* in God as a *lack of fear* (Psalms 23/22:4)).⁵⁰⁴ This reflection always follows a *moment* where Dante’s emphatic fear (‘*paura*’) is lessened (“where the valley ended” (I.13-14); “come forth out of the deep onto the shore” (I.22-23)),

which already suggests what is to become the *decisive* theme of his infernal journey. It is the *point* (*‘punto;’* I.11), indeed, where the compunction, the fear and doubt (*‘compunto;’* I.15), arises; where an escape is *called-for* (if not sought).⁵⁰⁵ It is important to note the terms here, for they are crucial to understand Dante’s spiritual investment in his journey: throughout the *Inferno*, all words that connect to stopping or standing still – like *“punto”* (point; I.11), *“fermo”* (halted; I.30), *“cattivo”* (captive/coward; III.37), etc. – denote either an evil or a challenge that must be overcome.

Dante receives his first consolation from the rays of the sun, seen faintly at the top of a hill, “the rays of the planet that leads us straight [*dritto*] on every path” (I.17-18), but to no avail. Once he sets back on his journey, Dante encounters a leopard (*una lonza*; I.32) that seemed, *not to attack him directly*, but to threaten him so that he is prevented (*‘mpediva;* I.35) from going where he wanted. Then the sun rises, and Dante is relieved, but, once again, is threatened: this time it’s a lion (*un leone*; I.45), and immediately after a she-wolf (*una lupa*; I.49), whose sigh filled Dante with “so much heaviness” (*gravezza*; I.52) and “fear” (*paura*; 53) that he “lost hope” (*perdei la speranza*; I. 54) of being extricated from his predicament. Dante, it seems, cannot master this challenge alone, with only the help of *Nature* (the sun), since the latter also introduced such foul beasts whose fear Dante cannot overcome. It is there and then that he meets Vergil – the Roman poet who composed the *Aeneid* and dwells in Limbo (born and died before Christ, he cannot reach Christian Salvation) – who tells Dante that he must “hold to another path” if he wishes “to escape [*scampare*] from this savage place” (I.91-93). This last beast, he says, “lets no one pass by her way, but so much impedes [*‘mpedisce*] him that she kills him” (I.94-96). Vergil is the one whose wisdom (II.36) is necessary – but, as we will see, limited – to help Dante through this crisis; where Nature has failed to help, come the voice of (Pagan) Reason to the rescue.

The Italian word for cowardice – *viltà/viltade*⁵⁰⁶ – appears here for the first time, and will repeat itself only four more times; always in the most telling of (non-)places and, indeed, in a progressive manner: 1. Twice here, in Canto II, where Dante, prior to his descent into Hell, is diagnosed with it by Vergil (II.45; see epigraph), then chided for it (II.122); 2. Twice in the Canto III, where Dante Vergil clarifies the inscription on the Gates of Hell (III.15), and then, himself (the first time he uses this admonition) in depicting the soul of Pope Celestine V (III.60); 3. Once in the very beginning of the Canto IX (IX.1) – the transition into the city of Dis and “lower Hell” – where Dante *diagnoses himself* with it.

Vergil recounts to Dante that he had been sent from Limbo – the place of those who are, recall the imagery of the stop/arrest characteristic of Hell, “suspended” (*sospesi*; II.52) – by a “lady [...] so blessed

and beautiful that I begged her to command me” (II.53-54). This lady, who reveals her name as Beatrice (II.70) and whose domicile is in Heaven (II.66), comes to Hell in order to charge Vergil with consoling her (II.69) and helping Dante escape (*suo campare*; II.68) the darkness with whatever means at his disposal. She was herself suggested this course of action, as she relates to Vergil, by the Virgin Mary, the “noble lady in Heaven” Herself (*Donna [...] nel ciel*; II.94), and then by Saint Lucia, “the enemy of all cruelty” (*mimica di ciascun crudele*; II.100).

I make it a point to cite these mentions of “escape” in order to give more substance to the argument that runs through this dissertation, concerning a certain muted difference in witnessing that resentment helped submerge, not to say efface. As a witness who is not a “martyr” – i.e., as a *speaking* witness – Dante is already in a predicament *vis-à-vis* the “Be perfect as your Heavenly Father is perfect” axiom I discussed above. Indeed, he *must* “escape,” must survive so as to tell his story. Except, of course, that it is not only his story: his escape is divinely sanctioned, and his telling, insofar as it is meant to edify and convert others to the “*dritta via*” of Christianity, morally legitimate. The witness who survives and tells – that is, the witness who avails herself to the use of (vain) “letters” – must be so sanctioned in order to be redeemed in the eyes of (the Christian) God. The “letter,” after all – and we will see this in full force when Medusa comes on the scene – “kills.” Hence, even the Gospels themselves – insofar as they are not written by Jesus Himself – needed to be to be sufficiently distinguished (and absolved) from their Jewish, “letter-oriented” origins, since they also have recourse to such externalities as, say, “textual representation.”

Below I will show that this will mean a true revolution in the conception of the sign and of signification, by way of the *figura*, an approach to the “letter” that redefines the testimonial sign, tailoring the sign to God’s will, symbolized by Jesus Christ’s Da-sein (being-there). And so, these “letters” of Dante’s narrative, since they are external and already speak of his (bodily) survival as an escape, must have “the escape part” of them redeemed by God; which is precisely why “escape” is both permitted and commanded by God’s Saints (Mary, Lucia, Beatrice), but also why it must first be purged, in every sense of the word, from all fear. The narrative told must be told by a truthful witness; and, hence, must be told out of “love.” And “love,” at least in its Christian understanding, precludes cowardice, precludes fear. The divinely sanctioned witness *must not be a coward*.

When Vergil learns of Beatrice’s High standing he, indeed, cannot help but wonder, precisely, “why you do not shrink [*guardi*] from coming here” (II.82-83) and Beatrice, in turn, agrees to explain “why I do not fear [*temo*] to come inside here” (II.85-87). In the most explicit of terms, Beatrice explains that it

is because of her high standing – she is “made by God” (*fatta di Dio*; II.91) – neither Vergil’s misery and punishments, nor that nor his fellow Hell dwellers’, concerns her: “your misery does not touch me [*la vostra miseria non mi tange*], the flame of this burning does not assail me” (II.92-93). Beatrice’s Divine sanction not only assures that none of the horrific punishments in Hell can harm her, but also, and here is the crux of the matter, the misery of its dwellers, likewise, do not move her. Hence, when Dante prepares for his journey with Vergil, “to undergo the war of both the journey and of pity [*la guerra si del cammino si de la pietate*]”, it is precisely this kind of affective training that he intends; it is not only a war of physical strife, but of being able – not to tolerate, but to accept (and perhaps rejoice at) the suffering of those God deemed worthy of it. This telos of Beatrice, this Divine example that she provides at the outset of Dante’s pilgrimage/conversion, is how what Nietzsche calls the religion of pity trains its believers’ affects, how it justifies its cruelty to self and other (and, as I/Dante will show below, to other *through self*).⁵⁰⁷

After having recounted all these “credentials” for Dante’s passage/journey, Vergil once again returns to *viltà*, and admonishes Dante in encouragement: “what is it? why, why do you stand still [*restai*]? why do you nurse such cowardice in your heart? why do you not have boldness [*ardire*] and freedom [*franchezza*], seeing that three such blessed ladies have a care for you in the court of Heaven [...]?” (II.121-125). Indeed, Why? It is only, hence, *when Dante could no longer think of an answer to that question*, that he will be saved; that he can “escape” with Divine permission.

2.2 “Any other fate”

[...] He who runs away to save his life from the enemy, and leaves all his comrades in the lurch, is a coward; but if he defends himself and his fellows to the death, that is no suicide, but is held to be noble and gallant; since, in and for itself, life is in no way to be highly prized, and I should seek to preserve my life only insofar as I am worthy to live. A distinction has to be made between a suicide and one who has lost his life to fate.

The man of inner worth is not afraid of death, and would sooner die than be an object of contempt and live among felons in servitude. But the worthless man prefers servitude, almost as if it were already the proper thing for him. There are duties, therefore, to which life is much inferior, and in order to fulfill them we must evince no cowardice in regard to our life. The cowardice of man dishonours humanity, and it is very cowardly to set too much store by physical life. The man who on every trifling occasion is exceedingly fearful of his life, strikes everyone as very ridiculous. We must await our death with resolution. There is little worth in that which there is great worth in treating with disdain.

– Immanuel Kant⁵⁰⁸

[...] on account of their lack of freedom [The Jews] did not believe in immortality [...]; for although one might, if one wished, point to a few traces of it, these passages always remain very general in character and do not exert the least influence on religious and moral points of view. The immortality of the soul is not yet recognized; hence there is no higher purpose than the service of Jehovah, and the purpose of humanity with reference to itself is to preserve life for oneself and one's family as long as possible. [...] The main purpose of life was consequently the preservation of it

– G. W. F. Hegel⁵⁰⁹

Canto III of the *Inferno* brings Dante and Vergil to the gates of Hell. This liminal space, called the “vestibule” – between the *de jure* boundary of Hell and its *de facto*, actual beginning (the 1st Circle, or ‘Limbo’) – provides the very *skin* of Dante’s *Inferno*. Indeed, as perhaps the “saving one’s own skin” idiom already suggests, this “skin” of Hell is cowardice itself: here we find, as Vergil explains, the “cowardly chorus of angels” who, in the great mythological battle between God and His Usurper (Lucifer), refused to take sides for or against God. This refusal, indeed, “twisted” their fate in much the same way Hegel maintains that Abraham twisted his – for they have left the very ‘nature’ of Divine Justice itself, and hence exiled to this non-place, Hell’s boundary, the muted and compressed matter of its de-finition. It holds a secret, this border. It has a thickness to it; meaning, of course, that it has a weakness.

The ‘Coward’ is there from the very beginning, even though Dante doesn’t know it immediately. Here Vergil, responding to Dante’s question, explains the inscription on the gates of Hell – whose lines open Canto III – in a single imperative: “[h]ere one must abandon every suspicion, every cowardice [*viltà*] must die [*morta*] here” (*Inferno* III.13-15). The divine natures of the inscription, as well as that of the gate itself, are unmistakable. Indeed, the gate begins, almost proud, by a thrice-repeated “through me” (*per me*) assertion: “Through me the way into the grieving city, through me the way into eternal sorrow, through me the way among the lost people” (ibid III.1-3). This thrice repeated “*per me*” relates this ghastly pride with an equally ghastly trinity: grief (‘*dolente*’), sorrow (‘*dolore*’), and loss (‘*perduta*’); and it is no accident that this systematic theology of *caritas* would commit such self-absorption to eternal perdition in a numerically symmetrical manner to God’s Holy Trinity. As limit, the gate’s imperative, or Law, must bear the dual forces of the redeemable and the irredeemable, between God’s domain and the Devil’s. It is, indeed, the “last of the eternal;” it is the *hard* edge of Justice (‘*Giustizia*’).

The inscription on the gate concludes that “every hope” (*ogne speranza*; ibid III.9), must be abandoned (‘*lasciate*’) there. And yet, there is a kind of misalignment between the gate’s words and Vergil’s explanation of them, perhaps a certain excess. Vergil indeed repeats the gate’s term of ‘*lasciate*’

(abandon; leave behind) with regards to suspicion (*sospetto*), *but adds another verb with respect to cowardice*: suspicion, as Vergil explains, must be “left,” just like the gate’s imperative concerning hope; yet *cowardice* must *die*. That cowardice receives its own – and more forceful – verb suggests, to my interpretation, a kind of connection of suspicion and hope that is already there in the logic: entering upon the locale of Divine punishment, there where Salvation is guaranteed to be withheld for eternity, both suspicion and hope introduce a kind of otherness to the narrative precisely where the narrative becomes stiff, hardened, and cannot accept it. It is in this sense that, as Dante complains, the meaning is hard “dura” for him. The gate, on its part, addresses souls condemned to Hell, and tells them that here no Salvation would ever arrive, and that they therefore should abandon all *hope* of a better lot. Dante’s situation, however, is different: having arrived as a pilgrim on a quest (driven by love and sanctioned by a lady of Heaven – “*donna del cielo*”⁵¹⁰), being a mere witness to the structure of Divine Justice, Dante’s charge would be to leave, not hope (for he does, rightfully, possess it), but suspicion.

I believe the logic unmistakably turns on the concept of doubt, except here it is not a merely “philosophical” or “abstract” doubt; since we are entering into the thick of *ressentiment*, doubt is here, precisely, being *affectively transposed*. Both for Dante and the condemned souls, hence, the *doubting of Divine Justice* is at stake. The latter’s doubt, for one, would consist in having hope, as if God’s Justice were not eternal, and would “expire” one day; or as if God’s Wisdom is not Absolute, and He would descend from Paradise one day admitting to having made an error in judgment, and redeem an already condemned soul. The former’s doubt would consist in having suspicion, as if the torments that Dante is to witness are somehow unjust, making him suspect the Reason, the Why, of the pain that he is about to witness. In short: the suffering, should not expect redemption; those that witness the suffering, should not suspect injustice.

If Dante needs to overcome his own cowardice in order to traverse his journey through Hell, and if cowardice must die is the third element that completes the two things “left” at the gates of Hell, perhaps hope and suspicion are the air that cowards breathe? Could it mean that, perhaps, these positive and negative expectations/affects are the “lifeblood” of the coward and, hence, the very substance of her betrayal? If hope and suspicion are taken to be a certain projection of the unknown (which, for Angels, would precisely be the difference between them and God), the coward, somehow addicted to this combination, addicted to this difference, is made deaf to the divine Word (we will return to this knot in the following section). Is the coward a kind of a metaphysical *skeptic*?

After having explained the inscription, Vergil encourages Dante by holding his hands with a “cheerful glance” – a gesture from which Dante gains potency (*pouse*; III.19) – Vergil proceeds to, as Dante recounts, introduce to him the “secret things” (*segrete cose*; III.21) that are buried in Hell, and are to be revealed only to Dante, as the one witness who will later emerge to recount them. Immediately thereupon, however, Dante is struck by a “weeping” and “loud wailing” – for which he as yet cannot see/recognize a source – that bring Dante to tears. Dante describes his own state of mind with a word that appears nowhere else in the *Inferno*, a word I have spoken of above in Hegel’s witnessing of the Jewish fate: he asks Vergil, as he says, with *horror* (*orror*; III.31), what this invisible wailing is. Vergil explains that these are the wailings of “the miserable souls who lived without infamy and without praise” (III.34-36), and are intermixed with those of “that cowardly chorus of angels who were not rebel yet were not faithful to God, but were for themselves [*per sé*]” (III.37-39). For, in the Christian myth of the Fall of Lucifer and the creation of ‘Evil,’ Lucifer challenged the sovereignty of God, and, together with other rebellious angels, refused God’s Love and sought to usurp Him. Subsequently, God had banished Lucifer and the rebellious angels to Hell, where they became Devil and Demons (respectively), while the angels that fought alongside Him stayed in Heaven. The angels of which Vergil speaks, then, simply refused to choose: in a way they have averted themselves from God’s Love, just like the rebels, but, unlike them, would not turn directly against it. They remained neither for God/Good nor for Lucifer/Evil, but, as Vergil says, “*per sé*,” for themselves.

This ‘cowardly chorus of angels’ (*cattivo coro de li angeli*)⁵¹¹ suffers relentless stings of wasps, shedding blood mixed with tears. This broken circuit between the Divine Will and Divine Action indeed seems to suffer more than its due, especially bringing into account what Dante will witness as the rather mild conditions in Limbo, where the only torment is *the formal one* of Hell’s definition – the absence of eternal salvation, of hope, but no other torment besides. These “captive” Angels are made to mark the entry to Hell by their special status: like the Gate to Hell itself, they are also eternal, and, like the Gate, they are also self-centered: the “*per me*” trinity of the Gate mirrors their own, “*per sé*” existence.⁵¹² If there is Divine Resentment, it is to be found here, for the excess of the ‘Neutrals’s’ betrayal relies on a disappointed Divine expectation rather than an actual inscribable and depictable “sin.” Vergil explains this neatly, and quickly: “they have no hope of death, and their blind life is so base that they are envious of every other fate [*altra sorte*]” (III.46-47 [my underline]).⁵¹³

The inconsequential ‘self’ that these metaphysical refusers, wrongly, esteemed and wished “to save” – the *doubt* of which they were unable to disabuse themselves – makes these “immortal neutrals”

into *the very substance of the divide* between salvation and damnation (the living, as well as the souls of the *Purgatorio* and the *Paradiso*, still have – varying degrees of – access to God’s Grace); which is already suggested in the *per sé-per me* forms mentioned above.⁵¹⁴ Their ‘self’ – treacherously preferred over God’s divine love/plan – constitutes their abject (‘*bassa*’) nature, for without the Love of God, without its Truth, even Angels are but a vile, perhaps even the most vile, substance. If there is – what Freud called – a ‘navel’ to the dream of this Christian myth, here is where we face it. It is the very abjection of the Divine; that which cannot be reconciled into *any* ‘fate.’ Theirs is not so much a rejection of God, or the attempt to usurp Him, but – as their “poetic justice” (known in Dante scholarship as the ‘*contrapasso*’ motif) reveals – *a desire for otherness within the Divine Narrative* (Lucifer & Co. had still *affirmed* this narrative, seeking only its reversal).

Missing both the beautiful goodness of Heaven, and the evil conviction of Hell, these cowards are neither the heroes-to-God, who came to God’s aid, nor the heroes-to-Lucifer, who chose the Satanic cause. The “tragedy” of the ‘Neutrals,’ indeed, is *un-heroic in its very essence*; confusing the entire machinery of fate giving priority to its inconsequential “shell,” something which, of course, halts the machinery in its tracks by a kind of (what is known in philosophical logic as) “Centipede Dilemma” (wherein the centipede starts thinking about the problem of ‘how to walk with so many legs?’ – thus causing a confusion which, in turn, impedes its ability to walk at all). What these cowards attest to is a crucial, highly detrimental gap in the machinery of (conversion to) Divine Justice – a gap, indeed, in the imputed perfection of Divine Being – and are hence charged with the tricky mission of plugging this, inescapable and problematic gap. As I will show further below with Kafka’s *Penal Colony*, this gap – so detrimental to the absolute justification of any ‘spiritual’ education/conversion – precisely speaks for the non-place (and the non-history) of the difference between the ends of the action and its means. In Hegel’s system, of course, this is precisely what (negatively) drives ‘spirit,’ as it successively knows itself as both the alpha and the omega and hence, likewise, obviating this gap, registering it as a mere ‘*Differenz*’ in a higher System that comprehends it; appropriating this gap, hence, is precisely what absolves the Hegelian spiritual machine.⁵¹⁵

This hunger for “any *other* fate” thus constitutes a disruption within the Divine Narrative that leads from Guilt to Salvation – with all of the ramifications this has on the possibility of the latter as a final apotheosis, a “*relève*” from guilt⁵¹⁶ – an interruption in the totality of its divine plan; a stick in the wheels of the Divine dialectic. That is why, as Vergil explains, “[t]he Heavens reject them so as not to be less beautiful, nor does deep Hell receive them, for the wicked would have some glory from them” (III.40-

42).⁵¹⁷ Considered in its metaphysico-theological structure, then, Dante's *Commedia* makes the passage to the beginning of Hell – beset by, and separated from, the hope (and *useful* suffering) of the *Purgatorio*, as well as the eternal Grace and full loving communion with the Lord that is *Paradiso*'s lot – is in fact an eternal departure: a literal “half-way house” that will forever register a self(‘s) abandonment to a radically unknown/unsanctioned ‘fate.’ That is why these angels are the losers of the entire Divine Apparatus: they are never seen by Dante, never named or spoken to, and are only very briefly addressed, with a pronounced disdain from Dante's guide. Losers that are not even “failures” – for these would still have either the encounter/register of God's witness (Dante), or the hope of being purged of sin in the *Purgatorio*, and proceed to have a blissful afterlife in the *Paradiso*. Theirs is, hence, the *ultimate* “loser” status in (this) Christian theology – they even failed to fail.

Those who Dante does get to see and refer to – even if not directly name or speak to – are the other sources to the wailing voices he heard, a “long [...] train of people” (III.55-56). Dante does single one of these souls out – still neither named nor addressed – as “him who in his cowardice [*viltà*] made the great refusal” (III.60). This pseudo-mention is interesting not only because this is the first time Dante himself uses *viltà* (“cowardice”), but also, and mainly for my purposes here, the role that this historical figure had in the world above. Commentators are all but unanimous that the soul in question – something that would have been much clearer, despite the omission of the name, to Dante's Medieval audience – was the soul of Pope Celestine V: in 1294 Pope Celestine V abdicated his papacy, leading to the rise of Pope Boniface VIII, who actively sought to concentrate both political and spiritual powers in the hands of the Papacy, something Dante was opposed to, preferring – as he elaborates in the (then banned) book *Monarchy* – a dual leadership, a kind of “division of labor” whereby political power does not interfere with the spiritual one, and vice versa. What is interesting to note here is the economy of naming: just like the neutral angels, pope Celestine – who negatively caused the rise of this “papal tyrant” (i.e. by refusal and not by active deed) – will not be named by Dante, but the tyrant himself will, as Dante will see him later to be an inhabitant in the 8th Circle of the *Inferno* (XIX.53).

It would seem, then, that the Divine Narrative cannot properly place the cowards, whether metaphysical entities (angels), or historical ones. They have no voice other than to express their pain, they are never spoken to by our divinely-sanctioned witness, are never named, and indeed bear an existence that is utterly effaced; even Vergil wants nothing to do with them, for, as he says “the world permits no fame [I.e., no *mention*, not even *infamy*; SC] of them to exist” (III.49). Their very lives are denied existence, even when, like Pope Celestine, they had real (and disastrous) effects, as Dante writes of

“[t]hese wretches, who never were alive” (III.64). The one thing we do know for sure is that they suffer and that *no one will ever know the details of their woe* (i.e. their story); Dante, who goes from circle to circle pestering its souls for their tales – sometimes even to their obvious aggravation (as I will show below) – knows better than to ask. In this, it seems, the *horror* that came so “naturally” to him – and is *never rebuked* by Vergil (as he does Dante’s fear (*paura*) or cowardice (*viltà*)) – point to the coward as what Derrida calls the decentered center of the entire (in this case, Divine) Structure. Such horror cannot be edifying. Such cowards – it is better to forget. They never “really” lived, they occupy no *position* and, hence, no substance; and so, the details of their suffering, their stories, are *vanities per sé*.

2.3 Dis-abuse: The Unmarked Grave of the Coward

From all this it is easy to understand why faith has such great power, and why no good works, nor even all good works put together, can compare with it, since no work can cleave to the word of God or be in the soul. Faith alone and the word reign in it; and such as is the word, such is the soul made by it, just as iron exposed to fire glows like fire, on account of its union with the fire. It is clear then that to a Christian man his faith suffices for everything, and that he has no need of works for justification. But if he has no need of works, neither has he need of the law; and if he has no need of the law, he is certainly free from the law, and the saying is true, "The law is not made for a righteous man" (1 Tim. i. 9). This is that Christian liberty, our faith, the effect of which is, not that we should be careless or lead a bad life, but that no one should need the law or works for justification and salvation.

– Martin Luther⁵¹⁸

[...] It is a sort of dishonor to love [...] when love, something living, a spirit, is called by name. To name it is to reflect on it, and its name or the utterance of its name is not spirit, but something opposed to that.

– G. W. F. Hegel⁵¹⁹

The last time “cowardice” appears in the *Inferno*, occurs at the very beginning of Canto IX. To understand its occurrence, however, we need to go back to Canto VIII and see what exactly happened there, that makes Dante open Canto IX with “[t]he color that cowardice [*viltà*] brought to my face [...]” (IX.1). In Canto VIII, Dante and Vergil are crossing the river of Styx, and cross the 5th circle, weakness in containing an excessive wrath (“those whom anger vanquished;” VII.116), that also marks the edge of the Sins of “incontinence” (passive affront to God’s will). Thereupon they arrive at the walls of the City of Dis (another name for Lucifer); where, as mentioned, “lower Hell” begins, punishing the wills of souls that had been *actively* malicious towards God (sins of ‘violence’ and ‘fraud’).

At the end of canto VIII Virgil is forced to leave a confused and doubtful Dante at the gates of the city of Dis, to try and gain access for them both by speaking “secretly” (VIII.87) to a vast horde of

demons that guard the city from trespassers, and, initially, to no avail. Virgil, the sweet father (*‘dolce padre’* VIII.110), the voice of Reason, leaves feeling abandoned (VIII.109). Once again, and despite Vergil’s reassurances (VIII.104-108), Dante experiences *doubt* (VIII.110), and elaborates, “for “yes” and “no” quarrel in my head” (VIII.110-111).

This feeling of helplessness only becomes worse when Dante sees the devils breaking off from Vergil, going back to the city and closing the gate (VIII.114-115), and Vergil himself walking back towards him, slowly, his eyes downcast, talking to himself in disbelief (VIII.117-122).⁵²⁰ Vergil tells Dante that this demonic “posturing” (*tracotanza*; VIII.124) is not new. Once before, he recalls, they used to do this, “at a less secret gate [...] above it you saw the dead writing” (VIII.124-127), which is an explicit reference to the first gate of Hell. Vergil even has a vision at that point that, making their way towards them, is “a one that by him the city will be open to us” (VIII.130).

This is where Canto VIII ends, followed by the fifth, and final, instance of “cowardice” in the *Inferno* – which is also the first time that Dante recognizes it within himself – opening Canto IX. While Vergil is talking of the upcoming destination, trying to calm Dante down by recounting how he’s been through these gates before, Dante is attracted, or rather *dis*-tracted, by a great glowing tower, and then immediately – “in an instant [*punto*]” (IX.37) – they are both interrupted by the approach of Hellish Furies, “girt with bright green water snakes; little asps and horned serpents [...] for hair” (IX.34-41). Vergil seems unphased: “look [...] this is Megaera on the left; [...] on the right there is Alcetto; Tisiphone is in the middle”, but, abruptly, he falls silent. Here Dante once again feels what is translated as “fear”, though the Italian word used is precisely the same word Vergil warned Dante about *at the first gate*, the first threshold of hell: suspicion, a loss of confidence (*sospetto*; IX.51).⁵²¹

As the Furies come closer, Vergil and Dante hear them call out to *Medusa*, the mythical gorgon: “let Medusa come, so we will turn him to cement [*smalto*]” (IX.52). Vergil understands the gravity of the situation, and explains Medusa’s threat of petrification: “Turn around and keep your eyes closed; for, if the Gorgon appears and you should see her, there would never be any going back up” (IX.55-57). Vergil not only turns Dante completely away from the gorgon, not only making sure Dante use his hands to cover his eyes, but also puts *his own hands* on top of Dante’s; assuring, to my reading, not only another *physical* barrier to the potentially deadly line-of-sight, but also holding Dante’s hands firmly in place, assuring Dante’s survival from any weakness – be it physical or *spiritual* – that would expose him to this irreversible fate.

Then something mysterious happens, which Dante himself advises the reader to notice, though he cannot speak to it directly: “O you who have sound intellects, gaze on the teaching that is hidden behind the veil of the strange verses” (IX.61-63). Indeed, here Dante can only recount what he feels and hears: “the crashing of a fearful sound at which both the banks were shaking” (IX.66). Still turned away from Medusa, Dante is told by Vergil that he can open his eyes, indeed should, to witness the cause of this great uproar: “direct your beam of sight out over that ancient foam” (IX.73-74). Dante opens his eyes and sees the horde that previously had caused Vergil so much distress, fleeing “like frogs before the enemy snake” (IX.76), from “one who was walking across the Styx with dry feet” (IX.80). Dante sees that the very “greasy air” of the swamp was also making way to this figure’s face, and that both the devils and the air were no more than a nuisance to him, which he occasionally waved off with his left hand (IX.82-84). It is from this indifference to the Hellish context, and from this power over it, that Dante realizes, without needing to be told by Vergil, that this mysterious figure was “sent from Heaven” (IX.85). He opened the closed gate of Dis using a small wand, and then turned to chastise the demons for their aforementioned “posturing.” “O driven forth from Heaven [...] how is this posturing [*tracotanza*] nursed in you? Why’d you kick back against a will whose ends can never be cut short [...]?” (IX.91-95). After this, the Heavenly representative turns back, and Vergil and Dante continue “without any battle” (IX.106) into the city.

But what happened to Medusa? Dante does not narrate this to us, a disappearance for which he warned us readers of the coming of strange verses. Medusa’s name is never mentioned again in the *Inferno*; we simply do not know what happened to her. However, is this not essentially the case when dealing with a monster whose very sight petrifies? After all, Dante’s entire narrative rests on the fact that he survives to tell of his journey; indeed Dante’s conversion/salvation and the reader’s edification are at stake. Here is where a Levinatzschean witness, or reader, is necessary; the one who must stick to the details, the “letter,” of the strange verses. For the problem with Medusa, as its original Greek (pagan) myth tells us, is not as clear-cut as it seems. After all, tales of her did survive. Were the Greeks simply ommissive or careless in telling a story that is, by definition, impossible to tell?

Not quite. In the Greek myth of the Gorgon Medusa a hero *does* manage to slay Medusa, and live to tell about it, despite her petrifying powers: the hero Perseus does this by capturing her reflection on a shield given him by the goddess of wisdom, Athena, and then approaching her in reverse in order to, finally, cut off her head with a sickle (given him by Hermes). In Dante’s story, too, he and Vergil turn away, but no going back towards Medusa, no sign of her severed head, and – and here is the key – *no*

reflection, no sight. Perseus, obviously exposed and imperiled by the situation (hence all the precaution, preparation, reflection), is one hero in one context; a singular instance where Medusa could be slain, and the cruelty towards her reflected upon and witnessed. The religion of Love, however, for which all men were born equally guilty and equally capable of being saved (unless they Jews not to), this context is too specific, and this individual is too elevated in value for “all” to achieve.

Hence the *abstraction* of “divine assistance” in Dante’s story – replacing all the machinations Perseus used for this *specific* task (gifts from *different* deities) – corresponds to the disappearance of the violent scene from Dante’s theodical narrative, the “sublimation” of pagan cruelty in the Christian conversion (or “Bildung”): here is an overcoming that, *in principle*, “everyone” can hope for, have *faith* in, an *internalized* “affective heroism” – all one needs is to shed suspicion and cowardice, to attain what Luther, above, calls “Christian liberty.” One could assume that Medusa had escaped upon seeing the Heavenly representative, but one can also assume that the latter had somehow forcefully banished or killed her. This is an ambiguity that, I maintain, directly results from the lack of reflection in Dante’s Christian appropriation of this pagan myth; this is something that both Dante, and the reader, must not know. It is to be taken on faith.

To recall, when Hegel speaks of the unique import of his own philosophy as a speculative dialectic, he habitually differentiates it from what he calls the philosophy of the understanding, which he also calls one of “reflection.” Indeed, Hegel understood very well that in maintaining any kind of causal claim – this had already been suggested by Hume’s critique – a speculative element is necessary. There is a “gap” to be traversed, hence, from the perceiving of facts or events – from the “presence” of Being – to its causal narration: the actual cause is always to be speculated, for all perception gives access to is a series of states. Each perceived fact or state is linked to another one by virtue of a speculation that can never be, itself, perceived; the cause, the ‘Why?’, remain opaque to the understanding. Kant, to recall, knew this very well, but his solution – which Hegel very much disdained – called for a “Critique” that would regulate speculative (“pure”) reason, and cut it down to the size of the understanding. And yet, Kant’s own transcendental categories contain and hinge upon the notion of causality, presupposing it as a necessary, and therefore justified, basis of all understanding.

And yet, as Hegel was the first to understand, his speculative philosophy – in wholeheartedly traversing this “gap” – was already a continuation of the Kantian ‘spirit’ that sought to “just stop short” of this gap (hence “Thing in itself”). Both shared this ‘spirit’ in that both had tried to eliminate the radical consequences – to Truth, to Science, to Reason – if this question was not, either avoided (Kant),

or annulled (Hegel); both assumed a comprehension of this limit.⁵²² This is why Hegel is, here, the perfect counterpart to Dante: in their (Christian) understanding of the “telling,” of the problem of narrative and narrating, both affirmed that this traversal is a matter of faith, and both accorded the former the highest vocation of the Divine. Medusa, in Dante’s telling, stands for the petrification that “the letter” – what Hegel’s philosophy of spirit calls ‘vanity’ (recall Krug’s pen) – must be traversed, its external “shell” left aside so as to consume, or ‘*actualize*,’ its substance, its ‘inner truth.’ This was a move that no (philosophy of) “reflection” could ever achieve; as such, it would get “stuck,” “petrified” at the face of this Medusa, and not be able to continue, to traverse this gap, and complete a truthful narration of its witness.⁵²³

This philosophical problematic is not just the logical one, concerning the relation of, say, perception to representation, or Truth to language, but also a problem of *history* as, itself, a causal narration by a surviving witness. This is where antipathology would latch on to precisely this mysterious disappearance of Medusa in Dante’s account, what Nietzsche called “*catching the spirit in the act*.” This “counter-cunning” deployed against (Hegelian) ‘Reason’ also betrays the way in which Western philosophy/thought – thoroughly “sick” with *ressentiment* – appropriated the values, and cruelty, of the pagan Greeks. The former, as the Perseus myth also serves to show, were not deterred from showing, reflecting, indeed celebrating their *cruelty*. To them, Medusa’s severed head would not have been a counterargument to Perseus’ legitimacy – but precisely the reverse. For a Christian rendition, as the religion of love, the problem of this violence – in other words, the question of power – had to be submerged under the *highest* narrative of justification (a merely high-*er* narrative would only reiterate the question). The cruelty had to be maintained, appropriated, put to work – for otherwise the gap would not have been traversed – but this had to happen in secret, away from sight, taken on faith.

Nietzsche, of course, took great issue with this denial, for it came to efface everything that served to affirm this violence, and hence, also to “own” it and the *Distanz* that it traced, to assume responsibility for this *difference*. His critique of “historical sense,” which he deploys precisely vis-à-vis the genealogists/psychologists of morality, sought to *communicate* with this, submerged, cruelty, in an age where the telling kept purporting a “power-neutral” ‘Truth’ for its justification. I say communicate with, and not define or expose, for this cruelty could no longer – owing to the “victory” of *ressentiment* (to which Nietzsche knew he was also subject) – be *directly* seen or affirmed. His notion of will to power was a way of making an already “sick” thought address the radical question of the ‘Why?’ which any narration of events, any ontological account of presence or Being, must assume; a ‘Why?’ whose

denial as a question was slowly undercutting the very becoming of values, of reality/Being itself (something Nietzsche calls decadence or nihilism).

This assumption could not be relegated to be a matter of indifference, despite the question of its power becoming necessarily obscure and indirect: will to power, hence, hails back to a “pre-historical” decision, not “consciously” made, and therefore not consciously exhaustible (pace Kant). Below what seemed to be so stable and dependable – viz. will; consciousness; evidence – was an unstable array of forces that had only temporarily been subdued by a stronger force, and were always “percolating” under these so-called stable surfaces so as to give them a radical new meaning.

What Hegel tried to do was to impose a direction, a telos of reconciliation, on all these “underground forces;” as if all would, by some spiritual-logical necessity (which happened to be reflected in the idea of Christian reconciliation/Truth), cohere in the end, and form a System which he calls *absolutes Wissen*, or Absolute Knowledge. Under this assumption, these as-yet-unregulated forces will be forced – by time and fate – into ‘positions’ that would, slowly *but surely*, exhaust all their ‘vain’ differences, and give way to the “kernel” of Truth that resides, immanent, in each one, and eventually find a place within that System. This is also why Hegel goes after *skepticism*, as a fundamental target of his System of Truth’s engine of philosophical appropriation (but it is also why, as Lévinas had noted, and as Nietzsche would nod in agreement, *the singular skeptic* keeps coming back). This System, as Science, would be legitimate and relevant for *all* times and for *all* thoughts, effectively effacing the singularities who thought these thoughts – much like Hegel can efface Krug’s pen, but also like his speculative dialectic can “sublate” (i.e. annul and preserve the truth of) all previous philosophies in his spiritual Narrative.

Nietzsche, on the other hand, took it a lot more personal. To him, affirming the decision that his ‘will’ or consciousness were the mere result of, implied an incessant “test drive” that would not, or not necessarily, cohere with any other; a potential departure whose horizon, or telos – whose ‘Why?’ – was still, and radically, unknown. Truth was a holding to be true, and this hold had to be affirmed in a way that no project, no future coherence or promise or reconciliation could, or rather *should*, provide. Having “historical sense,” in this sense, would mean to allow that whatever ‘history’ I write, whatever causality I impute, whatever Truth I hold, is underwritten by a decision, a violence/cruelty of will to power, that *I* did not make, but that happened to *me*, which spells my singular responsibility for it. This responsibility does not become any less singular and demanding the more it is logically consistent, or the more other that follow the same method – which means that presuppose a similar ontology – reach “the same

conclusions.” All such “scientific witnesses” remain, not guilty – for that is a *state* that serves to standardize value (and hence evade the problem of power that *generates* value), but – repeatedly accused, hounded by a “test drive” that risks everything, every project or shared conviction.

What I see in Dante, then, is almost a direct admission of what happened to cruelty, to the question of power, in the Christianized narration of the religion of love and reconciliation. This resentment’s sickness, the nihilism that it brings in its wake, is the ethico-metaphysical price of the death of *viltà*. Indeed in the scene depicted above, and like Hegel’s speculative dialectic explicitly pre-/de-scribes, the “letter,” the vain, simply “falls off,” and the road opens – by itself, or by Divine intervention (but, at any rate, demanding no responsibility from *me*) to proceed. And yet it is never clear just *how*, and *why*, this has happened: once the violence is buried, the value, the direction and telos, has to be assumed, and hence necessarily invisible. The ‘Why?’ can here only be said to be the very *existence* of the narrative – and, to Hegel, is ability to reconcile itself with *all other* narratives – which presupposes that Dante had traversed the entire ordeal and survived to tell of it to others, this time with a Divine stamp of approval.

If Dante had wanted to, say, check on Medusa – see what happened to her and her attendant Furies, obsess over the Law, the justice, of their sudden, unexplained disappearance – he would never have made it through. And if he had tried to overpower her himself, through reflection, he would have had to own up to a violence that is not becoming of a Christian. In Dante’s narrative, as in Hegel’s System, it is only the Christian ‘God’ – through its Heavenly representative, or ‘world spirit’ – that effects this violence, be it as ‘necessity’ or be it as ‘fate:’ an ontological-spiritual “it is what it is.” If Dante had insisted to *reflect* on her (teleologically necessary) fate, he might have remained there in Hell, petrified, seduced by the vanity of its thresholds/‘letters,’ unable to follow the spirit and tell the narrative of (his) absolution.

Remaining down there, he would become one with the other ‘spiritual remainders’ in the Inferno: by this I mean *not the sinners* who populate the various Circles, but the vanishing victims of spirit, those that are “there” and yet have no place or lost their place – the neutral angels, Medusa; for Dante is not yet dead, had not sinned on Earth, and so, if petrified by Medusa, will be truly placeless, a member of what might be called spirit’s utopia of cowards. They are the hostages of Hell’s very logic, mute(d) testimonies to the *nomos* that characterizes God’s “remainder.” As if it were light stuck in the “in-betweens” of reflection itself, this utopian (non-)community is left to the fate of its “difficult freedom” – to wonder, stuck “before the Law,” as to the ‘Why?’ of that ‘spirit’ that urged them move forward without looking back, or, more precisely, without looking back at the wrong things, in the wrong

method/way. Even in Hell, these horrors to spirit will be denied an appeal to justice, to Truth and testimony, by a spiritual necessity that bids, by Divine Decree, that they be both victimized, and are, eternally and in principle, *not in a position to complain*.

2.4 A Spiritual Cultivation of Affects, or The Fate of Pity

The affective change that Dante undergoes in the Inferno is clear, and had been commented on many times. The first contrast that sets the stage is the tertiary structure that appears in the affective dispositions of Dante, Vergil, and Beatrice in the beginning, before the entry into Hell. There we see Dante, the man, in crisis: beset by animals, guided by the sun, and yet unable to extricate himself. Then we see Vergil: a poet, a man of Reason, who knows the secrets of Hell and Purgatory, who knows the dangers that beset Dante and how to evade them, and yet is stuck in Limbo, unable to reach Paradise, and – from his exchange with Beatrice – is still somewhat affected by Hell’s horrors. The third character is Beatrice, the Heavenly maiden, who authorizes (i.e. “blesses”) Dante’s journey, and, as Vergil notes in amazement, can descend to Hell without being touched, neither physically nor affectively, by its “grief.” She is, literally, above and beyond such things – and she, indeed, represents not only the ‘spirit’ (Love) but the telos (Salvation) of Dante’s entire journey. Hence Dante’s need of Vergil, an intellect to direct his still raw, animalistic-natural “will,” and, as we learn in Canto IX, both Vergil and Dante need Divine assistance, the blessing (and destructive powers) of the ‘spirit’ (which, once again, shows a Beatrice-like indifference, going even further to betray a slight annoyance, with these landscapes of grief). This is the dialectical machinery that Dante will be put through (or put himself through) throughout the Inferno. As I will show, it is of course Vergil, *as the middle figure of this dialectic*, that handles all the “work.”

And this, Christian, *askesis* does have its blessed consequences, as we see when we go down to Hell with Dante and Vergil. At first, Dante feels immense sadness and pity towards the suffering that he sees: “great sorrow” towards the Limbo dwellers (who are not even actively tormented, except having no hope of being with God; IV.43-45); overcome with pity (V.72) and sadness (VI.3) when hearing the stories of the second circle’s “lustful” sinners; in the third circle that punishes gluttonous souls, he is brought to tears (VI.59); and the fourth circle’s torments of the avaricious “pierce his heart” (VII.36).

In the Fifth Circle, sins of anger, there is the first fold in the narrative: Dante is accosted by a soul of a man he – Dante the author – personally knew in real life, a man named Filippo Argenti.⁵²⁴ There is the first time Dante expresses something other than *pieta* towards the suffering sinner – Argenti is

drowned in a swamp eating mud, occasionally torn apart by other mud-suckers like himself – and pushes Argenti back to the swamp, asking Vergil to wait so that he can make sure that Argenti indeed sinks back into the mud (VIII.41-53). Vergil himself is *pleased* at this prospect (VIII.57), giving Dante a kind of justification to his cruelty, a mentor-dynamic that repeats itself in both positive (like here), and negative forms. It is no accident, however (to my reading) that this, *first outburst towards a suffering sinner* happens *precisely there where cowardice had died*: the fifth circle is the last circle before the gates to the city of Dis.

The next time Dante shows an affective response – for, many times, he merely reports on the scene, listens to Vergil’s elucidations, and moves on – is in the 7th circle, where sins of violence are punished. Its second “subcircle” is where Dante encounters another affective challenge, where those who commit violence towards themselves are punished. Very much reminiscent of the effaced Angels from the vestibule, Dante hears their sighs of pain but does not see them. When he asks Vergil to explain, Vergil urges him to break one of the reeds that are growing on the swamp they are sailing through. It turns out that these reeds are the tormented souls of those who committed suicide, and the reed cries in pain and bleeds heavily upon Dante’s violent (yet still innocent) action; indeed the poor reed asks Dante if he has no pity(!) (XIII.34-36). Vergil, of course, “handles” that entire exchange, for Dante is weighed by pity and cannot speak (XIII.84), and of course cannot justify himself – for that would implicate his revered teacher and guide, Vergil. It is not unlikely, as has been commented before, that the challenge to be bested here is that of self-pity, to which Vergil shows the (proper?) treatment of torturing it further. Judas, after all, was a suicide as well; and pity that is directed anywhere other than the human soul – i.e. what is “salvable” in Man – is sinful. This is, of course, doubly true for a *self*-directed pity – hence the parallel with the neutral, “*per se*” angels from Canto III. Note, also, that the violence to which Vergil is responsible – as the voice of Reason – is fully visible and present (if sly and indirect); not so in the case of the Heavenly messenger’s “divine violence.”

Another positive encouragement by Vergil to Dante’s affective responses occurs in the last subcircle of the same 7th circle, the circle of the sodomites. There Dante Brunetto Latino, who gives him a prediction of his future (in the world above) that holds great honor and fame. Dante, however, is already without fear, his cowardice had already died, and his soul is already protected by Saint Paul’s chainmail; hence, this news is not as comforting or exciting as it might be for someone who had still not internalized the faith, had not understood that all honor ought to be “*ad maiorem Dei gloriam*.” Hence, Dante responds with the proper “as long as my conscience does not reproach me I am ready for Fortune,

whatever she will” (XV.92-93), something which immensely pleases Vergil, who congratulates Dante, telling him that he is indeed learning (*bene ascolta*; XV.99).

The 8th circle, also called *Malebolge* – where sins of “simple fraud” (distinguished from the 9th circle of *treacherous* fraud) – is divided into 10 subcircles (*bolgia*), and provides Dante’s most decisive break with, or training of, his ‘*pieta*.’ At first, Dante confesses seeing ample *cause* for pity, but does not profess it himself (XVIII.22). Then, deeper in the circle and its tormented souls, he praises the justice of God (XIX.10-12).⁵²⁵ In the 3rd *bolgia* Dante goes a step further, and indeed says to Pope Nicholas III Orsini, a sinner that he does not know personally (unlike Argenti from the 5th circle), to, “stay here, for you deserve your punishment” (XIX.97), and goes on at some length recounting the crimes of the clergy in accepting bribes, etc.⁵²⁶ As Dante takes care to comment, (t)his reaction, once again, pleases Vergil, who listens with a contented smile to Dante’s rant (XIX.121-122).

But the 4th *bolgia* denotes a challenge, indeed, a turning point, from which, as Dante will himself acknowledge, there will be no turning back. Upon seeing the punishment of the “diviners,” whose bodies are so distorted and grotesque that they cause Dante to weep, Vergil’s wrath is ignited, and he chides Dante in the most explicit account of pity’s demanded askesis. When Dante confesses that “surely I wept,” so much so that he could not walk further but was “leaning on one of the rocks of the high ridge.” Vergil’s patience snaps: “Are you still one of the other fools? Here pity lives when it is quite dead: who is more wicked than one who brings passion to God’s judgment?” (XX.25-30).

This is, in fact, the best summary to much that I have been merely alluding-to all this time. When Vergil says “here pity lives when it is quite dead,” he recalls not only the famous Pauline treatment of Judaic Law – for the letter kills, but the spirit brings life” – but precisely how this dynamic plays out on the affect of pity. Indeed, for a religion of Love, of Divine and unconditional, all-embracing Love, this is where the contradiction, the irreconcilable difference, is betrayed: pity must be trained, and cannot dispense itself everywhere towards everything and everybody every time (or there will be crimes, as one takes pity on self and one’s own stifled desires, suicides (argued above), etc.). In order to complete his training, Dante must understand that pity can be directed to the wrong things; which is the education of the coward, who, as Aristotle had already put it, fears the wrong things.⁵²⁷ No, something in pity, something in the affective response to the suffering of both self and others, needs to die; and they have arrived at that place, where the sins are so crucial that pity itself – *in order to “live”* as a properly Christian pity – *must* be considered dead there.

No, if the example, *the internalized symbol*, of Jesus Christ had taught us anything, it is that, precisely as Vergil states, one must not bring one's own "passion;" after all, the entirety of (the formerly Jewish) God is already contained in the (Christian incarnation of) Jesus' own Passion, the Passion of God made Man, the right, "Just" passion. Indeed, a concept that would make no sense to Judaism – which Kant also called, with some disdain, a "statutory" faith – this training of passion, this claim to have made God's justice completely affective, denotes the birth of the soul in Man, his equivalence of humility before God, all with reference to this, what I called above, the "gold standard" of *guilt*. Indeed, so long as one brings one's own passion – not having reconciled it with God's (through the incarnate symbol of the Passion of Christ on the Cross) – one is not ready to be saved. Dante gets the message loud and clear. From now on, any such unwarranted pity is no longer possible, like a thoroughly burnt piece of wood that will no longer support a flame: "Master, your discourse is so sure and so gains my belief [*fede*] that any others would be spent coals [*carboni spenti*] for me" (XX.100-102).

On this charred soil no "wrong" passion, no undirected pity, will be allowed to grow. Hence, in the 10th bolgia of the falsifiers/counterfeiters, where Dante sees all sinners as hospital patient, sick and wounded and huddled together, saying there "strange lamentings struck me;" a challenge that tests his resolve. But Dante remains true to his word. Now he describes *the agony of (sinful) others* as "arrows whose iron heads were made of pity", and "pity" becomes perceived as the source of an attack, perhaps even an aggression towards the pious believer. Of course, the believer must *tolerate* this pain, now *taken as aggressive* (or at least challenging) – so long as one is still alive and cannot, like Beatrice and the Heavenly representative, be utterly *indifferent* towards it – and hence Dante says "I covered my ears with my hands" (XXIX.43-45) so as not to hear the sounds of these, God's victims. One does not bring *one's own* passion to God's judgment. And so the affective path is set: from tolerance, to indifference; from a "because we suffer we know that we have erred" to a "because we do not suffer (any longer) we know that we are right".⁵²⁸ Of course, this is not at all the professed "creed" of Christianity, not even of Protestantism, but it is, I maintain (along with Nietzsche), a *temptation that is unique to Christian resentment*, that had never existed before such a "Jewish" appropriation of (or "reconciliation" with) pagan cruelty came about.

This aforementioned "aggression" is, hence, a new creation (by the Christian affective demands on/through "pity"), something that Judaism had averted (in maintaining that the affective question is irrelevant to God's Law), and that paganism, as Nietzsche shows, kept external and singular. Here, with the becoming symbol of the Christian incarnation/internalization, any perceived pain (of self and others),

insofar as it dare complain of, or suggest an injustice, evokes automatic aggression, once the proper training had been achieved, through which this pain is appropriated. Hence, if someone slaps me on one cheek, the resulting aggression must be turned back against me as something that should not occur; the promise, of course, is that I will become, like Beatrice, utterly indifferent to it. If there are explosions along the way, if some individuals find it too hard and suddenly, say, their toleration gives in and they take an automatic rifle kill as many people as possible, well then that is, as the Christian priest's brilliant "reversal of direction" in resentment would tell them, entirely *on them*, on the weakness of *their* 'will,' on the wanting of *their faith*, on the sinfulness of *their souls*. Their passion had not been properly mastered and made to properly cohere with the symbol of divine justice, and hence innocence, that had been made of the wrathful legalism of the Jewish God and the edifying spectacles of pagan cruelty.

Towards the end of the Inferno, in the 9th circle, Dante is already fully trained, betraying his own aggressive explosion; an explosion for which, furthermore, he has achieved the necessary, divine, indifference: he kicks one of the sinners, there submerged in the ice of Cocytus, in the face/head XXXII.77-78), something of which he admits, *with neither shame nor guilt nor pity*, that "if it was wish [*voler*] or destiny or fortune, I do not know" (XXXII.76). Then, in response to the other's (justifiable?) weeping and scolding (XXXII.79), he retorts "Who are you to reproach others so?" (XXXII.87 [*my underline*]) Later, in the last circle of traitors, Dante encounters a soul whom he does not know, and agrees to a very small gesture of kindness towards it in order to learn its story: Dante is to break off the ice formed by the souls tears from weeping over its fate (this would provide only a split-second of "relief" – i.e. of shedding tears – before the latter congeal again, for eternity; XXX.112-117). But even this is too much for Christian pity to show traitors: Dante leaves once hearing the soul's story, without fulfilling his promise. Even as the soul calls after him "But stretch out your hand to me now, open my eyes", Dante would not do it; not for haste or inattention, but, precisely because it was demanded by Christian courtesy, indeed, "it was courtesy [*cortesial*] to treat him boorishly" (XXX.148-150). The word "courtesy" might seem strange here (if one takes it to mean a certain kindness), but is here actually a perfect fit: it combines the etymology of Monarchy and sovereignty (the King's court), with a moral concept of consideration towards others. This word will repeat itself, as I will show, shortly, in Kafka's *Penal Colony*; but with a different 'Why?' in mind.

The price of admission to the city of *Dis* was that "cowardice" must die, and that the vanity of unregulated passions/affects must no longer hold sway on one's will; must not "petrify" the spiritual

pilgrim in her straight-and-narrow tracks. What had to be “dis-abused” of for cowardice’s demise never gets a proper burial, subjected to a passive (Dante) aggression (Angel), assuming ‘fate’ or ‘God’ – or their secular equivalents, ‘natural necessity’ and ‘Truth’ – to be responsible for the Law, the *justice*, of its unmourned, unmarked death. Hence, the price of this “non-violence” is a self-directed violence, the killing of the coward and all the affective training that this “justified murder” entails; as Gandhi said, training the violent to be non-violent is easy, but there’s no such hope for the coward.

This “non-violence” means that cruelty disappears here altogether, but – because of this *disappearance*, because it simply evaporates in the face of Faith/God’s Will/‘*Weltgeist*’ – becomes an *automatically* justified ground: this automaticity is *nihilism*; and this appropriation spells what Nietzsche called the “grand politics of revenge.” It is only from a “cowardly” perspective that this can be shown to be an ethico-metaphysical violence that seeks to avoid conflict, to avoid responsibility for irreconcilable differences. It is the only violence that makes sure to leave no *traces*, that marches forward with the dream of being absolved of all guilt – this, “divine violence” of Monotheism, no longer divergent and pagan, can only spell the automatic purges of annihilation for which no one is left responsible.

One had been, after all, dis-abused by/from it.

2.5 It Figures: The Coward’s Dialectical Perfidy

For us it is enough that, first of all, our Christian faith finds here most substantial proof, and that such verses afford me very great joy and comfort that we have such strong testimony also in the Old Testament. Second, we are certain that even the devil and the Jews themselves cannot refute this in their hearts and that in their own consciences they are convinced. This can surely and certainly be noted by the fact that they twist this saying [...] (as they do all of Scripture) in so many ways betraying that they are convinced and won over, and yet refuse to admit it. They are like the devil, who knows very well that God’s word is the truth and yet with deliberate malice contradicts and blasphemes it. The Jews feel distinctly that these verses are solid rock and their interpretations nothing but straw and spiderweb. But with willful and malicious resolve they will not admit this; they insist on being and being known as God’s people [...]. [...] It is just as if the devil were to boast that he was of angelic stock, and by reason of this was the only angel and child of God, even though he is really God’s foe.

– Martin Luther⁵²⁹

[...] Considering the Satanic skill which these evil counsellors displayed, how could their unfortunate victims be blamed? Indeed, I found it extremely difficult myself to be a match for the dialectical perfidy of that race. How futile it was to try to win over such people with argument, seeing that their very mouths distorted the truth, disowning the very words they had just used and adopting them again a few moments afterwards to serve their own ends in the argument! [...]

[...] I realized that the Jew uses language for the purpose of dissimulating his thought or at least veiling it, so that his real aim cannot be discovered by what he says but rather by reading between the lines. This knowledge was the occasion of the greatest inner revolution that I had yet experienced. From being a soft-hearted cosmopolitan I became an out-and-out anti-Semite.

– Adolf Hitler⁵³⁰

[...] *Every coward* is a liar; Jews, for example, not only in business, but also in common life. It is hardest of all to judge Jews; they are cowards.

– Immanuel Kant⁵³¹

I am a Lutheran, and through philosophy have been at once completely confirmed in Lutheranism.

– G. W. F. Hegel⁵³²

Dante's *Inferno*, as argued above, provides its reader with an edifying narrative of Dante's own conversion, at the stage where this conversion is indeed the hardest, there where it hurts. This pain, I argued, was in its quintessence the pain of fear (*paura*), of cowardice (*viltà*), against which both Reason (Virgil), and Faith (Beatrice, the "Heavenly representative") were *necessary*. This hard, undoubtedly moral training enables Dante to emerge from Hell unscathed, *strengthened* in his faith, and continue, "from good to better," until he finally achieves the theodicial result of (being deemed worthy of) ascending all the way up to God. In terms of narrative, and the theology/metaphysics which underlies it, I have analyzed the *Inferno* "killing" of cowardice (Dante) and effacement of cowards (neutral Angels) as the fulfillment or apotheosis of a specific ethico-metaphysical presupposition that this narrative plays out before its reader. A *necessity* dictated by the theodicial imperative that was placed upon what used to be a Jewish Monotheism of Law/Justice, now replaced by a Christian Monotheism of Faith/Truth. Nietzsche's genealogical insights into the workings of resentment – in the way it denies, and is slowly made blind, numbed, to its own cruelty and violence – were also bolstered by this treatment.

Yet the Nietzschean, as well as the Lévinasian, demands are still not met, since the question of method did not yet come to the fore in its *means*, but only in its (theodicial) 'ends.' I did not yet sufficiently address the means, the questions of language and signification, that these ends necessitated. Levinatztch cannot abide that: Lévinas was a proud proponent of Jewish hermeneutic wisdom, the wisdom "of the letter," often citing and even offering his own clarifications of various verses from this vast tradition; and Nietzsche, of course, was, despite disciplinary objections, always also a philologist. In a way, the careful attention I placed in this dissertation on words and etymologies – as I explain in the previous chapter – owe much to what I would risk calling Nietzsche's "philologico-historical sense;" the understanding, or better yet the assumption (and the responsibility that comes with it), that any kind of

presence or Being, any Truth, any, in short, historico-ontological horizon against which “facts” and “evidence” assumed their *meaning*, is given to an only “indirectly accessible” decision, a “pre-history” of violent scissions, what Lévinas calls the “an-archy” of the Other.⁵³³

It is this, crucial dimension of *sense* – which Lévinas calls ‘signification’ – that I am yet to address in this, otherwise perfectly speculative-dialectical System of Dante’s *Commedia*; and to do that, I need to go back to Nietzsche’s comment of “that ghastly symbol,” and ask the reader to recall my discussion of Lars von Trier, and what I call therein “becoming symbol.” This kind of “etymological history” –is *itself* a speculative effort of constructing a kind of “history of traces:” ancient texts merely yield a synchronic snapshot of the word’s use, a meaning that needs to be gleaned in reference to its historical context; but that is *itself* a matter of *historical interpretation*, that is, itself based on another layer of signs (‘evidence’), as a “second-order” history, one that has to take a distance from itself.⁵³⁴ This temporal, historical dimension of language itself, then, betrays a speculative capacity like no other, and this is specifically important, and exponentially more dangerous, when it comes to the single text, the Law, of a Monotheist ‘God.’

Tracing the way that signs were understood in this “second-order appropriation” that I will trace here in/as the “*figura*,” will help qualify one of German Idealism’s, and Humanism’s, chief claims: being a continuation of, or assimilation and progression from, the Ancient Greeks, and, importantly, a fulfillment of Judaism. Theologically speaking, since the Greeks were Pagans and their adoptive religion – Christianity⁵³⁵ – was Monotheist, the former’s appropriation by the latter might also give a clue as to what had to be changed, what kind of “skandalon” had to be “aufgehoben” by Christianized Judaism; in a word, what is the linguistic equivalent to the appropriation of cruelty discussed above. This will, in turn, reveal another trace of what I sometimes call here “metaphysical antisemitism,” that hatred that Christianity had preserved – yet made silent, made *work* – within itself (in a word – *ressentiment*).

In his *Scenes from the Drama of European Literature*, Eric Auerbach, himself a philologist and a Dante scholar, dedicates an entire chapter to the etymology and semantic transformation of the Latin word ‘*figura*.’ Beginning in pagan Antiquity, Auerbach shows how the word had developed, starting from a meaning quite close to “plastic form.” Sharing the same stem as “effigy,” Auerbach traces a history of this word, first adopted and developed by the pagan Roman poets and rhetoricians, in what he calls the “Hellenization of Roman education” in the last Century Before Christ (BC).⁵³⁶ Starting with Marcus Terentius Varro, the word was used to mean “outward appearance” or “outline” (ibid, ibid). Not being a philosopher but a writer/rhetorician, Varro used *figura* interchangeably with *forma* (“form”),

which, strictly speaking, was already a blurring of the original Greek meaning; the Greeks had many words for form (*morphe*, *eidos*, *schema*, *typos*, *plasis*), but at the hands of Roman scholars, and due to the aforementioned “Hellenization,” it started to receive a more abstract, “formal” meaning, something akin to a *grammatical* form (e.g., of inflection, derivation, etc.). In Aristotle, Auerbach shows, a clear distinction was made between *morphe* and *eidos*, as the idea that informs a matter, and *schema* being only the perceptual shape of the matter. Hence, the Roman rhetoricians’ blurring of this line gave way to a more abstract and pliable word in *figura*, which had still retained its “plasticity” of old, but also, “side by side,” a formal, conceptual meaning as well (ibid, pp. 14-15). Hence, ‘*figura*’ becomes more abstract and conceptual than *schema*, but retaining its plasticity, becomes “more dynamic and radiant,” which explains its growing attraction for the pagan Roman poets and rhetoricians, each adding some further metonymic elaboration of the word: Lucretius uses it, for the first time, with reference to the imagination, in the sense of “dream image” or “figment of imagination” (ibid, p. 17); and in Cicero’s “frequent and extremely flexible” treatment, though not adding to the above meanings, the latter nevertheless had become widely disseminated and familiar (ibid, p. 18).

One aspect of the word that had been affected by Cicero, on top of the popularity he has given it, was his use of it as a technical arch-category in the art of rhetoric; not yet in the now-popular meaning of “figures of speech,” but, as he writes in his *Rhetorica ad Herennium*, as *an overall category* to depict all oratorical styles (“*figura gravis*,” *figura mediocris*,” and “*figura extenuata*,” ibid, p. 20). Considering the vast dissemination and canonical standing of this Cicero text,⁵³⁷ it became very popular throughout the educated of Europe in the Middle Ages, having a special appeal to the poets, who had always been attracted to the relations of model and copy: *figura*, with its aforementioned blurring of the original Greek distinction, allowed this freedom – owing to its “plastic” flexibility – to enunciate many different shades within that, formerly stricter, Greek boundary.

Finally, Auerbach presents the 1st Century AD Roman rhetorician Quintillius, noting that in his usage the rhetorical concept of *figura* had been refined, so as to become distinct from other rhetorical *tropes*. Tropes, as such, perform a similar function of substituting words for other words; and discourse itself, which is itself a certain “figuration,” or forming, of sense, was distinguished from its use as figure primarily in that *figura* was used and developed almost solely for poetic and rhetorical purposes. Here we come to the famous “figure of speech,” where rhetorical “tropes” such as the ‘rhetorical question,’ or the anticipation of counter-arguments (prolepsis), were defined as *figurae* (ibid, pp. 25-26). The rhetorical figure that was regarded as the most important, however, was that which had to do with a

coded or hidden message; an allusion that the rhetorician wanted to make without committing himself to it directly (ibid, p. 27). Thus “*figura*” came to be associated with a hidden, implied meaning.

The word starts a far more dramatic shift of meaning – enabled, but not necessitated, by the aforementioned developments – with the Early Christian use of the Church Fathers. Starting with Tertullian, for whom the Jewish command to circumcise by a knife on a stone came to be a *figure*, an allusion, to Jesus Christ as the rock, and his precepts and statements – the knife. Another example of *figura* is Tertullian reading the Old Testament story of the entry of the people of Israel, after the exodus from Egypt, to the land of Cna’an/Palestine, claiming that the fact that it was Joshua that led the people of Israel there, and not Moses, who died beforehand, is a prefiguration of Salvation, as *figured* by Cna’an, that would be finally arrived-at, fulfilled, by Jesus, as *figured* by ‘Joshua’ (ibid, pp. 28-29). As Auerbach writes, in this theological use of *figura*, “vague similarities in the structure of event or in their attendant circumstances suffice to make the *figura* recognizable,” provided, he then immediately adds, that one is “determined to interpret in a certain way” (ibid, p. 29 [my underline]).

Here is the crux of the matter, recalling the character (and force) of the symbol, which I cited de Saussure in saying that it is already a “motivated” sign: while as a plastic “trope,” the figure could be used for *all* intents and purposes – indeed “figural interpretations” are *rife* in the Jewish scholarship of the Talmud and the Mishna – with the Church Fathers one finds a specific direction for it. The *figura*, hence, is no longer merely a neutral vehicle to be used by this or that orator/poet, in order to achieve this or that effect, but a *Dogma*, an orientation that, now placed upon the Word of *the One God* (impossible in pagan Antiquity), and already attaining God’s promise/Messiah *as a fundamental orientation* (impossible for the Messiah-less Jews, for whom there were, proverbially, “70 meanings” to God’s Law), could be used as the key to unlock the “true meaning” of the Jewish God’s Law; therein was born the idea of the ‘*Pleroma*,’ the fulfillment of the Torah, the Jewish Law, by the Truth of Jesus’ Faith and Love. The *figura*, which was Judaism, was the Flesh of Christ, that same Flesh that had to be – by Divine Mandate – excoriated and consumed, “paid” for the Sins of Humanity, so as to release His Spirit into the world and Absolve it (ibid, p. 31). The Old Testament receives a direction, a reduction/decision of sense, by what Nietzsche called the New Testament’s “ghastly symbol of God on the Cross.”

The “figural” interpretation of the Old Testament, at least as far as Tertullian was concerned, was utterly reconcilable with the claim that the biblical events indeed actually, “*historically*,” happened (ibid, p. 30); both this interpretation, and the “facts” that it reads into, do not contradict one another. Thus his “realism,” even when contested – by other theologians who claimed some of the events had only an

“imaginary” meaning and did not happen as depicted – could maintain the most important aspect of his “figural” employment: precisely its ‘*spirit*’ (ibid, pp. 32, 36, 42).⁵³⁸ Starting with Tertullian, and from the fourth Century onwards, the usage and method of the “figure” in Christian theology had become fully developed, and pervasive throughout Christian theological writings and thought: the Jews to the Christians were like the Flesh to the Soul, the Law to the Love, the Letter to the Spirit, the Figure to *the Truth*.

Indeed it was finally in Saint Augustine that the “middle road” between the “realists” and the “idealists” (or the historicists and the spiritualists, as Auerbach calls them) had been reached. He would not reject the literal meaning, but maintained that it was there as a gateway, still valid on its own – like the Law – that should be passed through, in time, to reveal its Truth and come closer to Christ and God (ibid, p. 39). All that was left, alas, were those who were stuck at the gates, “*vor dem Gesetz*,” and were too obdurate, too proud, to pass through it: the Jews, refusing to forego their ancestral separation (what Luther calls, quite disdainfully, their ‘nobility’), their charge to be the witnesses and recipients of God’s Torah/Law, in *distinction* from all other nations. The identification of the sinfulness of the ‘flesh’ and the “death” or “pathology” of the ‘letter’ hence, had theologically originated – and given hermeneutic force – by this, *figural*, interpretation of the Jewish Law. Saint Augustine expresses this in no ambiguous terms: “these men accepted the law in a carnal sense and did not understand its earthly promises as types [*figuras*] of heavenly things” (quoted in Auerbach, pp. 40-41). Hence, also, the passive aggressive nature of this problem that the Jew became once this brand of Christian theology/thought had begun to gain momentum (especially, as Luther’s frustrated and agitated comments above suggest, in the imperviousness to being converted, the “obstinacy” of their, devilish, *pride*):

[...] When the judgment shall be finished [by “God’s hands,” i.e. by “Fate” – this is the “passive” element; SC], and this heaven and this earth shall cease to be, and a new heaven and a new earth shall begin. But this world will not be utterly consumed; it will only undergo a change [again – passive voice; SC]: The fashion [*figura*] of this world passeth away [here is the destructive, aggressive element; SC], and I would have you to be without care [that is, if you are a faithful Christian; SC]. The fashion [*figura*] goes away, not the nature [i.e. only that which was contingent, or abominable (recall Hegel’s horror!), to nature; SC] (quoted in Auerbach, p. 37).

I accentuate these elements – the passive, the aggressive – in an antipathological manner; here is what I see as the antipathological axis of what had come to be named the ‘*Judensfrage*’ in Europe, especially in Germany, but, more insidiously, throughout the canon of Western philosophy. Hence I argue here that a similar violent impulse is hidden in this early theologico-hermeneutic maneuver as was in its later elaboration (Luther), and its still-later manifestation (Hitler), and understand or, more

precisely *speak to* its frustration and anger.⁵³⁹ This theologico-hermeneutic move with which the Church Fathers, appropriating a Greek, then Roman, figure, aligned itself with a Truth and a Love that built itself upon what Nietzsche calls the Jewish “trunk” of hatred; thus containing within itself a silent but deadly force – *tolerated* for as much as “humanly possible” – that keeps bumping up against the Jews as an obstacle, a *skandalon*; a metaphysical coward that would, shamefully, resort for any *other* meaning than the (Christian, Final) Truth.⁵⁴⁰ The coward’s is – what Lévinas called, and discussed above as – a “*difficult freedom*,” but it is still a singular one. This, admittedly frustrating, freedom is *not* presented here as an alternative or choice, between itself and what I called the “harsh” freedom that comes after its “spiritual revolution;” I only mean for *these two* (for there may be *others*) to communicate something of their – old, already structural and muted – animosities to one-another, as a matter of responsibility, one that is growing more and more urgent, particularly in today’s global “climate” (pun intended).

The aforementioned theological hermeneutics, a *systematic* appropriation of – and reconciliation between – Jewish Monotheism (text/Law) and Roman Paganism, comes to its fullest fruition and example, as Auerbach notes, in Dante’s Late Medieval *Commedia*, where it is the figural forms that, as he writes “predominate and determine the whole structure of the poem” (Auerbach, p. 64). In this figural structure, he continues, historical events are, of necessity, preserved, while being interpreted as (Christian Divine) revelation in/as Dante’s own experience, what I showed above to coincide with his own conversion (and the intended conversion-by-example of the reader); where a personal and historical context is being itself converted from the figural, “shadowy” meaning it had for Dante (*ibid*, p. 63), *in life*, to the truth that he encounters in the eternal locus of the afterlife.

Quoting from his previous work on Dante – where he advances a view that was not yet connected to this study of *figura* and yet already, as he professes, Hegelian – Auerbach writes the following, which will do nicely to sum up his findings with regards to what had been discussed above. Auerbach writes that in Dante’s *Commedia* as a whole – in a manner that, by now, ought to immediately remind the reader to what I have been elaborating as the ethico-metaphysical vision of Hegel’s *absolutes Wissen* – the latter had,

[...] conceive[d] the whole earthly historical world . . . as already subjected to God's final judgment and thus put in its proper place as decreed by the divine judgment, to represent it as a world already judged . . . in so doing, he does not destroy or weaken the earthly nature of his characters, but captures the fullest intensity [i.e., the spiritual essence; SC] of their individual earthly-historical being and identifies it with the ultimate state of things (*ibid*, p. 71 [my underline])

The story of Dante's conversion is, hence, also a story of sublation; of history becoming imbued, before the reader's (and Dante's) very eyes with the Divine Spirit, and thus arriving, just as in Absolute Knowledge, not to its erasure, but at its proper place. Here it is only the contingency and injustice that are gone; only the irreconcilable (and hence fleeting, inessential) differences are evacuated from this vision, but this does not diminish the outcome, but *perfects* it. Dante's conversion narrative – in and through the rigorous affective training he undergoes in his epic journey – is nothing less than a rewriting, or more precisely re-positioning, of reality itself. Judged in this manner, that is, from its *telos* – which to both Hegel and Dante was a reconciliatory, single, and infinite-eternal one of perfect Truth/Necessity – the worldly reality that is only the figure/shadow of its eventual Truth, “[...] is not only future; it is always present in the eye of God [...], which is to say that in transcendence the revealed and true reality is present at all times” (ibid, p. 72).

Except, of course, that Dante's quest to provide an edifying example – an effort that itself, as Freccerri had noted, was modeled after the example of Saint Augustine's *Confessions* (as an edifying tale of his own conversion, which itself hearkened back to the Ur-example of Saint Paul's) (Freccerri, pp. 1-5 and *passim*) – betrayed something of the violence of a resentment that had, since his time, become victorious and difficult to see, and even more so after having been given philosophical credence and systematic mien in Hegel's speculative dialectics. Hegel would not have “signed on” to Dante's System, of course, for in its formal, externalized structure – of what is supposed to be fully internal(ized) and made transparent with AK, like life itself – it was, just like Catholicism, still too obscene, too “positive;” it could only boast of a high-er rung on the spiritual ladder (than Paganism and Judaism), but not the high-est (as was the final promise of Hegel's Protestantism-cum-Philosophy).⁵⁴¹ Hegel's witness, of course, is nowhere to be found in his philosophy; he leaves himself “out of it,” having perhaps, as Hegel scholar Daniel Breazeale had remarked (in comparison with Nietzsche), too good a taste for that.⁵⁴² Dante's witness – “Catholically” wishing to edify the reader under the symbol of Christ (rather than, Protestantly, leaving it to the latter's own, “individual” devices) – *has* to tackle the affective challenges to his own faith as a Christian, and, hence, *betrays* precisely the “spiritual maneuvers” that oblige him, as a believer, to train his sympathies (and antipathies) so as to fit them with what is eternal; so as to internalize the symbol of Christ on the Cross and to accept all worldly suffering, his own as well as others', as prefigurations of Divine necessity/Justice. Dante's witness, of course, does not see this as anything but just, and does not question it on any fundamental level; his betrayal still needs an antipathological witness, like Nietzsche, or me (or, as I will soon show, Kafka).

The linguistic-hermeneutic appropriation of the Jewish Law betrays *in external signs* the direction and training – the self-directed violence – that had preferred, in/as resentment, to remain silent, as internal(ized) affect. It shows nothing less than the ethico-metaphysical “ground” from which all violence, all “fate”, are reconciled to/in the bosom of the believer, and, later, to a growing community of believers; all of whom suffer quietly, guiltily, all of whom are denied the legitimacy of complaint. Having internalized the “regulative ideal” of the Christian symbol, the Jew and the Pagan reconcile to become a figure, somewhere between Jewish ethical subjectivity and the Pagan idolater; both are now equalized in a “human soul” that is judged as guilty by God (the Jewish inheritance), but promised Salvation in/through a Divine symbol (seducing the Pagans⁵⁴³). Allegory, or any kind of metonymic exchange between words/signs (one word/sign “standing in” for another) was perhaps innocuous enough in Greek and Roman Paganism (though it was the latter that placed such heavy emphasis on *Rhetoric*). Even when applied to the Jewish Law – the written Torah handed to the Jews by The One (and only) God – its signs could disperse into a myriad of meaning between whom there had been no final arbiter, and this by the Divine decree of the Second Commandment, which had also constituted the Jewish “pride” vis-à-vis the paganism that Abram had broken away from: the true meaning of the Law, which is the very Being of the Jewish God, is never to be represented, and considered idolatry of the highest order. The sign had to remain open to future interpretations, to future essays, admitting of no fixed direction or impetus; like sparks flying out from the work of a hammer, the meanings gleaned out of the text could “fly” *anywhere*.⁵⁴⁴

That is precisely what made the Christian appropriation – the “reconciliation” – of both the *plasticity* of Pagan idolatry and the *strictness* of the Jewish Law so dangerous in Nietzsche’s eyes, and its hermeneutic treatment of the sign so violent in Lévinas’. For the Holy Text of the One God no longer admitted to a myriad of versions. It is true, many differences could be admitted within its interpretation, but from the Church Fathers (perhaps even from Saint Paul) onwards, they had to accord with a certain direction; and this direction had to be, ultimately, universal, comprehensive, finally absolute. It had to usurp the Jewish God’s transcendence, its separation from the world; had to give something to the converted Pagan, some kind of happiness and virtue, for which it had to avail itself to the theologico-hermeneutic tool of the “after-life” (which Nietzsche so disdained). In this way, transcendence was appropriated in much the same way that the Jewish text/sign was: the sign was no longer conceived as what Lévinas called (and discussed above) as signification, but became a *figure*; a *projection*, already

receiving a motivation and direction towards a future that was already assured and known, a future that would admit of no more separations and no more Difference (what Hegel called *Unterschied*).

Instead of the Law splitting its meanings, instead of the Jewish God that intervenes as persecution, as interruption, there is a “Love” that unites the meaning, coheres and comprehends it, and can give it equally to everyone, for *all* are *guilty* in the eyes of God, *all* are possessing of a *soul*, and *all* are capable (if only they *convert*) to receive Salvation. This figuration of Jewish Law, in short, had usurped its former signification, in much the same way that I have already described above: while signification was, indeed, the creation of meaning *for the Other* (*necessarily* separated, *always* at a *Distanz*), figuration was the creation of meaning for the Same, for the “I” that, as Hegel famously writes, “is we, and the we that is I;” not the persecuted signification of a hostage left at the mercy of a commanding Other, but the already absolved (in principle) significance of an *ekklesia* that sees expansion as fulfillment, reconciliation and concord as absolution (which Hegel translates to philosophy in/as “knowledge as redemption”).

But, of course, there is a remainder; a problem, a question, persists: why are the Jews so unwilling to accept this fulfillment of their own Law, and move on to, literally, bigger and better things? Why remain in this state of misery – both historically (Diaspora, persecutions by Christian antisemites), and metaphysically (still with the same old “angry” and “exacting” God of theirs) – when the way and the truth and the life had already been given to them? This, at bottom, is what underwrote all manners of “the Jewish question” in Europe; there where the religion of Love had, under cover of resentment – owing greatly to the radical internalizations authorized and fostered by Protestantism – *worked* this hatred, this separation- and difference-driven force, until the excessive remainders of their consumptive appropriation (of the Jewish sign/Law) had finally erupted in a truly “grand politics” of revenge, having finally *worked-out* this question’s “*Endlösung*,” its “final solution.” This was no wanton scapegoating for political purposes; it was another in a series of attempted resolutions of this “question,” this problem, this *scandal*. Already, as shown above, for a still Catholic Dante, this problem cannot be fully relegated to the afterlife and to God’s final judgment – leaving the structures of the afterlife to articulate the various penalties and rewards for all souls – since the very makeup and matter of his *Inferno* precisely consists of the aforementioned Jewish remainder, the excess of signification over (pre-)figuration. Placing Judas in the last circle of Hell is, hence, only the visible counterpart for having placed Abra(ha)m’s betrayal – as the more philosophically systematic Hegel figured out – as the very horizon

of that visibility; the background of cowardice against which the whole edifice of the Inferno (there where God hides His violence) makes sense.

This irreconcilable conflict between figuration and signification, between subjecting meaning-making to a symbol and leaving meaning-meaning open, indeed exposed to the future, is how my antipathology treats of the accusations of “dialectical perfidy;” the Jews’ cowardly *escapes*, in/through language/signs, that both Luther and Hitler found not only so frustrating, but, in the end (since it seemed to both provoke, and be impervious to, attempts at conversion/convincing), so *justifying* of the most horrible violence (the former in *de jure* recommendations, the latter in *de facto* – ‘world-spirit’ always moves only forward – operations). Luther, who had begun by extolling the Jews as the people of Christ, and had learned to read and write their Holy Language (Hebrew), had come to the point of recommending the burning of their synagogues, their exile from the country, and the forbidding of their teachings (on pain of death). If whichever way he tried to prove to them that the “plain meaning” was there, that the Old Testament is, in fact, a prefiguration of the New one, that Moses was a prefigure of Jesus, they would not concede. The same with Hitler, who started out not having any opinion of Jews, and sometimes admired them, began to see how the Jew “uses language” and had, as he says, undergone the most profound “inner revolution” of his life, a new *convert* to Antisemitism. Both had one problem, and a problem that proved insurmountable, and necessitated the disappearance of this disease (both used this simile): and this was precisely the problem of their cowardly use of language, the problem of this strange *signification for the Other* (that has to remain Other); that in the Jew’s mouth, meaning had slipped away, could never, *on principle*, come to full cohesion. A metaphysical coward through-and-thorough, since, indeed – as the title to this section succinctly puts – *it figures*.

4. *In the Penal Colony: A Bloody Culture*⁵⁴⁵

[...] God on the Cross – is the fearful hidden meaning behind this symbol still understood? – Everything that suffers, everything that hangs on the Cross, is divine.... We all hang on the Cross, consequently we are divine.... We alone are divine.... Christianity was a victory, a nobler disposition perished by it – Christianity has been up till now mankind’s greatest misfortune.

[...] And could spiritual subtlety imagine any more dangerous bait than this? Anything to equal the enticing, intoxicating, overwhelming, and undermining power of that symbol of the “holy cross,” that ghastly paradox of a “God on the cross,” that mystery of an unimaginable ultimate cruelty and self-crucifixion of God *for the salvation of man*?

– Friedrich Nietzsche⁵⁴⁶

I have argued above that the becoming symbol of the witness is precisely the way in which *passivity wages war*: when the Sign becomes enlisted to the ‘Just cause’ as *figura*, so as to come out the other end of history – seen as a “crucible of fate” – as *undeniable* Truth. I also tried to allude to how this problematic is irreducible to the question of Truth (or, at least, to Truth when defined Hegelianly, that is, as *undeniability*). The ethico-metaphysical privileging of the latter – all the more pervasive the more ontology is fundamental or a theoretical framework is deemed “not metaphysical” – conceals Western onto-theology’s violence to an ‘Other’ that is specifically left out, or more precisely left *in the shadows*. The different witness I was trying to bring to the fore was the one whose concern with the truth of her testimony is wholly secondary, if at all relevant, to the ‘Why?’ that attends her speech. This ‘Why?’ is not reducible to Heidegger’s historico-ontological projection that is *Dasein*, and is particularly scandalous for Hegel’s speculative dialectic of ‘Spirit.’

The other witness, the one whom I refer to here as the ‘coward,’ is a Levinatzschean witness: beyond, over and above ‘Truth’, it testifies in the name of Justice – and, true to its “negative theology” – to its absence or transgression. The problem itself, seen with the eyes of Western metaphysics, hails back to the Jewish approach to a Monotheist God’s “revelation,” and the *particular* predicament that it calls forth for its witness. This witness is almost literally “stuck,” a stumbling block on the narrative that, following a Western-metaphysical imputation of ‘necessity’ (both ‘spiritual’ and ‘natural’), leads from the Greek “*theoros*” directly to the Christian martyr: like the former (and unlike the latter), the Jewish witness relays her testimony to – and/or from within – the confines of *a national specificity*, and like the latter (but unlike the former), she witnesses a Monotheistic God. Unlike both, however, she witnesses not God Himself in “True form” (i.e. either as ‘idol’ or as spiritual ‘immanence’), but only God’s transcendent and separated *Law*.

What I called above “the bloody art of the *Bildung*” can *only* be exposed – after what Nietzsche diagnosed as the victory of resentment – by the treachery of *this* witness, by the coward.

Nietzsche saw the Jewish move as the most fateful, the most radical declaration of war against Greek/pagan nobility, where the reality of their well-being (the origin of the moral value ‘good’) gets turned on its head, a reversal in which the distance between the weak (Jews) and the strong (pagans) becomes virtual/imaginary, and hence trans-historical or infinite. *Whatever* the prevailing value, the Jews can reverse it: unlike the pagans that could only effect this overcoming in actual conflict/combat – where their life and values were exposed to the vicissitudes of fate – the Jews exacted their revenge, as Nietzsche says, “*in effigie*,” carving out an existence “in fate’s despite,” to paraphrase William Blake.

What had been a principle of *virtualizing* revenge, becomes, in Christian theology, a principle of “sublating” it; one that does not “stand” on the Jewish hermeneutic ceremony, but passes through to an *affective conditioning* of the believer. This is what Dante’s witness, when spied with the cowardly eyes of a Levinatzschean witness, betrays of Christian theodicy. This mechanism of conversion – becoming “like” Jesus Christ and evangelizing in His Name – means internalizing His symbol (“God on the Cross”), but this internalization already denies the one “vanity” which the Jews persistently “boasted” and “held on to with their teeth:” the transcendent, Divinely-ordained difference that must not be reconciled/incarnated – owing to the same metaphysical principle that made the Jewish God’s Second Commandment forbid any knowledge/representation of Him.

With the latter eventuality, the cowardly/alienated revenge of the Jews *begins to gain courage* in Christianity’s newly-converted pagans. The latter already had a mechanism for “deifying” individuals had already been in place (i.e., Europe’s pagan gods were always already incarnate in worldly, mostly anthropomorphic representations; pagan legends often featured human “demi-gods,” etc.). The new, Christian “spiritualized” pagan – ensnared by a “sublated” tragedy of self-sacrifice and self-deification – could then become the positive tool of the Jewish “virtual” in a fulfillment of the Jews’ negative tutelage; where the courage of the pagan is tricked and directed, through the affective mechanism of their tragedy, to “fulfill” the Jewish mission. This seductive maneuver makes the ‘Jewish example’ concrete, while keeping it ahistorical: the Jews no longer signify an interminable hermeneutic obsession with absolute Justice (God’s transcendent Law), but are solidified, their obsession unleashed on the world – the “spirit kernel” squeezed out of their “letter shell” to become a new, indeed the *ultimate*, icon or symbol.

As Nietzsche showed in the *Genealogy*, like the Jewish priests had invented a procedure by which *to avoid*, or evade, any and all idols and fetishizations of the Divine, the proto-Christian ‘priest’ *uses this pagan mechanism* to offer a new, ‘True Idol’ that can use this imperviousness as a weapon; the function that in Judaism operates so well, *ad infinitum*, to steer clear of any and all incarnations of Monotheist divinity is weaponized in a new all-embracing symbol, designed specifically to “overcome” any *other* such idols/symbols from ever becoming recognized/legitimated. The main innovation of Christian ‘reconciliation’ consists precisely in this new “weaponized aversion” of the Jew; where the virtual revenge that the Jews took on the strong pagans is made to work, is actualized (‘*wirklich*,’ in the Hegelian sense). While the Jews maintained an absolute difference from everyone else, from all other world nations/“religions,” Christianity allows this qualified similarity – of incarnating divinity in a

single symbol/icon – to function as a seduction, a kind of Trojan-horse tactic to convert pagans to Christians.⁵⁴⁷

Franz Kafka was very much aware of, and greatly in agreement with Nietzsche concerning this conversion mechanism, something I will show in my reading of his *In der Strafkolonie* ('In the Penal Colony'). I show here how and to what extent the question of the witness – and the ethico-metaphysical problem of the Christian "seduction" (through an incarnated Divine Truth/Justice) – was a central concern for Kafka. In fact, what had been discussed earlier with Lars von Trier and his "becoming symbol" is already captured very succinctly in one of Kafka's Zürau aphorisms (which Roberto Calasso comments are the closest Kafka comes to providing a "theology").⁵⁴⁸ Kafka here takes issue with the (self-)sacrificial aspect of Christianity, especially the metaphysical 'humility' that it imposes on its "devotees" (which Kafka will call, not accidentally, *Anhänger* – both hanged and hangman – in his story); as is evidenced by this almost Nietzschean aphorism: "Martyrs do not underestimate the body, they allow it to be hoisted up onto the cross. In that way they are like their enemies".⁵⁴⁹

Kafka, just like Nietzsche, is aware that this position of the martyr – especially in the (self-)absolution implied in its self-sacrifice (as the ultimate 'Truthful' witness) – presents an ethico-metaphysical conundrum; a problem of *responsibility*, of a *cruelty* that, as the machine in the colony will eventually betray, is perpetrated while denied. This kind of ideological/metaphysical 'humility' – Nietzsche's "democratic prejudice" that makes "being like the enemy" *built into the very definition* of 'Man' – is Christian morality's/ressentiment's most clever seduction and circumvention of will to power (and, consequently, the wellspring of all moral valuation): it undercuts the value of the pagan's deeds by means of his affects, the latter used as the clandestine battleground where equalization, the "mediocratization," of 'Man' takes place.

Hence, by becoming "like" my enemy, I obviate all ethico-metaphysical (not just ontological or moral) 'distance' between us, making "the very concept of master" lose, as Nietzsche says, not only its efficacy, but its very *sense*. This supposedly "non-violent strategy" – for it is, indeed, a strategy (with its own agenda/'hatred') – has a cruelty within it that Nietzsche relentlessly pursues, and that Kafka details in the most unnerving, brutal manner through the colony's "mechanical justice system."

This 'procedure' cannot operate without leaving a remainder. This remainder is prophesied to disappear in the course of time/history (owing to the imputably "absolute necessity/drive" of 'spirit'), but until then, it can be discursively or consciously avoided by precisely voiding its witnesses of any credit or credibility. The fate of Judaism and the Jews in modern Europe – another of Kafka's constant

concerns – precisely designates how this “remainder” (and its witnesses) are treated by those who operate in accordance with this ‘spiritual justice system;’ how the ‘should-be-gone’ attitude of this spirit to the question of difference (or ‘Otherness’) betrays the hatred and violence that it purported to have sublated or overcome. It had been the consistent assumption of my investigations here that the historical phenomenon of Christian antisemitism – consistent from ‘Ancient,’ through ‘Medieval,’ and up to ‘Modern’ times – is symptomatic of a *passive* Jewish “genius of hatred” that Christianity must proceed by *actively* denying in itself: this denial, made effective by being made *affective*, is precisely what stands in the way of being responsible to this, muted and well-intentioned, violence.

I read Kafka’s *In the Penal Colony* as an apposite genealogy of moral valuation to Nietzsche’s, except in a far more concise and “coded” manner.⁵⁵⁰ Both Kafka’s *In der Strafkolonie* and Nietzsche’s *Zur Genealogie der Moral* contain a story that hails back to a long-forgotten history – the ‘old commandant’ and his legal code in Kafka, ‘Jewish hatred’ in Nietzsche – and how it maintains its operation in/under late modern Europe. Furthermore, whether the “bad air” of *ressentiment* or the stifling heat of the tropical colony, Nietzsche and Kafka’s heroes are both explorers into a space where violence had been tucked away by Europe, specifically a Western Europe broaching of liberal values. Kafka’s old commandant – whose grave radiates “the power of earlier times,” and whose influence is still operative, yet denied, in the colony – is very much akin to Nietzsche’s genealogy of Christian moral values, where the latter pretend that their “fruits of love” do not in fact, as the *Genealogy* reveals, stem from the Jewish “trunk of hatred.” Thus the new commandant can persist in running the colony, disdaining of, and yet secretly relying on, the “old commandant’s” procedures, now, *ostensibly*, deemed inhumane and unjust.

The work of mediating Nietzsche and Kafka here is to be performed by Dante’s *Inferno* – as a counterpart of Kafka’s text, and a liminal figure for Nietzsche’s critique. The latter, indeed – as the epigraph above also suggests – was ambivalent towards Dante, though this ambivalence only confirms Dante here as an ideal partner. On the one hand, Dante was not yet what Nietzsche disdainfully called a “modern man” – still a Catholic, Dante was, in Nietzsche’s eyes, in a position to demonstrate the enormous creative potential/power that had been enabled by Catholicism’s Absolute Dogma/regime: “Dante gives us pure enjoyment through this fact: that under an absolute regime one certainly need not be narrowly restricted” (‘One Owes the Christian Church,’ LN 34[92], p. 7); of course, on the other hand, Dante is still a devout Christian, still pursuing (or is pursued by) a *telos* of *Monotheist* theodicy (the only kind of theodicy that was repugnant to Nietzsche), and whose works, hence, also betrayed the fact that

he had been, “merely a believer, and not one who first *creates* truth” (EH ‘Thus Spoke Zarathustra’ §6, p. 342).⁵⁵¹

In Dante’s *Inferno* cowardice played a role akin to that of betrayal in both content (i.e. an ‘evil’, a ‘sin’) and structure: while historical ‘traitors’ are to be found within ‘Hell,’ Dante assures their fundamental structural role in populating the last of Hell’s “circles” with them, a circle whose very name, ‘*Judecca*,’ recalls the greatest “human” traitor, Judas Iscariot. Betrayal itself is, hence, privileged in Dante’s *Inferno* as a defining center, a kind of “negative telos” – recall the previous chapter’s problematic of the empty symbol – of ‘Evil’ in and of itself.⁵⁵² Cowardice and cowards, for their part, combine structure and content in comprising and populating the major *thresholds* of the *Inferno*: cowards populate the threshold to Hell (the abstaining, “*per se*” angels and other historical-human ‘cowards’), and cowardice is named (and fought) as Dante’s own, *affective* thresholds – i.e., his moral challenges – in all key moments of the *Inferno*’s narrative.

Driven by *love*, an initially cowardly Dante – fearful to witness the signs of God’s wrath in Hell – learns how to convert this cowardice to a reasoned prudence; learning that his love – to his demised Beatrice (i.e., a ‘spiritualized’ love, one without a carnal component) – protects him. That he emerges from the depths of Hell – so as to be able to, in time, achieve the beatitude of Paradiso – ties this love to Dante’s faith, challenged-yet-strengthened (or more precisely challenged *in order to be strengthened*) throughout the “obstacle (/‘*skandalon*’) course” of the *Inferno*. For this *pilgrim*, the challenge is very real: one’s own salvation/absolution requires an unwavering (spiritual) love with an unwavering faith in God, a lesson Dante (as pilgrim) had to learn and to exemplify; had he failed in either of these roles, Dante would have, *in both/either role(s)*, never made it to ‘Paradiso,’ but expired in the entrails of the *Inferno* and its horrors.

If there is an ethico-metaphysical “rhyme and reason” to Dante’s *Inferno*, I maintain it is here, in the betrayal of the coward, a combination so “antichristian” that it constitutes the minimum requirement for Hell’s very existence/power/viability, what Freccerri calls the “zero degree” of Dante’s Hell. If the entire artifice is *based* in betrayal (‘*Judecca*’ in the 9th Circle), and all major *differentiations* within it, its “thresholds,” are steeped in cowardice and cowards, then Dante’s own conversion narrative shows a rare glimpse of how a Christian theological system operates as an affective conversion-machine – precisely what Nietzsche identifies as the function of the priest of *ressentiment*: translating “ungodly horrors” to “Godly justice.”

The alchemical process of the conversion occurs there, where all pain and horror are brought under, which also means directed towards, a reconciling embrace with *the* symbol, the Divine *exemplum* of Absolute Goodness/Truth, all the previously unreachable knowledge and justice of a Monotheist God now made incarnate in his Son Jesus Christ. It is a slow, painful process of Man's *Bildung* or maturation out of spiritual infancy, to no longer be animal-like or slavish to the Letter of God's commands, but "living" and internalizing them in Spirit, letting this Divine model, this "*Bild*" for Absolute Goodness, train and direct all negative, difference-insisting affects to, literally, *brave* them as necessary foils on the straight and narrow path to Self-Absolution; a *Bildung* of 'spirit,' then, that by sheds, through this justified torture-procedure, all vanities, all that which would recoil at this "necessary sacrifice," and threaten to interrupt the spiritual chain, sabotage the entire machinery, by, literally, refusing to "get over" the chain's singular "links," its 'letters' and pathologies. The spiritualizing narrative must not be broken: the edifying show must go on, nothing stands in the way of this progress (or, more precisely, no 'thing,' no sign, that cannot be used against itself, and annulled).

But not without a trace. In Kafka's *Penal Colony*, a precise reversal of Dante's *Inferno*, this trace will be the only thing left standing – once witnessed by the coward – leaving the conversion machine beside it, nude and ruined; with nothing with which to conceal the violence of its *Bildung*, which is also, as to any theodicy, its shame.

4.1 Summary: Masters of our Death

[...] The Divine in its form and objectivity is immediately double natured, and its life is the absolute unity of these natures. But the movement of the absolute contradiction between these two natures presents itself in the Divine nature (which in this movement has comprehended itself) as courage, whereby the first nature frees itself from the death inherent in the other conflicting nature. Yet through this liberation it gives its own life, since that life is only in connection with this other life, and yet just as absolutely is resurrected out of it, since in this death (as the sacrifice of the second nature), death is mastered.

– G. W. F. Hegel⁵⁵³

For through law I died to the law [νόμῳ/*Gesetz*], so that I might live to God. I have been crucified with Christ; | and it is no longer I [ἐγώ/*ich*] who live, but it is Christ who lives in me. And the life I now live in the flesh I live by faith [πίστει/*Glauben*] in the Son of God, who loved [ἀγαπήσαντος/*geliebt*] me and gave himself for me. | I do not nullify the grace of God; for if justification [δικαιοσύνη/*Gerechtigkeit*] comes [only] through the law, then Christ died for nothing [δωρεάν/*vergeblich*].

– Saint Paul⁵⁵⁴

How do I get out of this sentence?!

– Lars von Trier⁵⁵⁵

Kafka's *In der Strafkolonie* begins when a foreign 'explorer' ('*Forschungs-reisenden*') arrives at a tropical penal colony at the invitation of its current Commandant. He arrives in order to 'witness' ('*beizuwohnen*') a demonstration of its "peculiar apparatus" ('*Eigentümlicher Apparat*'), a machine through which infractions of law are punished in the colony. The explorer is met in a 'valley' ('*Tal*'), by a French-speaking officer, and a soldier, holding a chain to which a condemned man ('*Verurteilte*') is shackled, all awaiting the live demonstration of the machine. Since the new commandant is nowhere to be seen (and will remain so throughout the story), the officer is left, rather happily on his part, to clarify ('*erklären*') the machine's operation himself, and use this opportunity to win this "high visitor/(re-)searcher" ('*höhen Besuch*') support of the machine – though the explorer seems rather indifferent at first, and not much taken with this apparatus ('*hatte wenig Sinn*').

The officer-executioner intimates that he is a 'devotee' ('*Anhänger*') of the colony's former Commandant ('*frühere Kommandaten*') – dead and buried, but prophesied to return – who was the machine's inventor, and the one responsible for the colony's entire 'organization' ('*Einrichtung*'). This commandant had designed the apparatus to deliver its sentence ('*Urteil*') by "writing" ('*geschrieben*') the infringed law on the condemned's body, "punctuating" the end of the procedure with the condemned's death. The execution to be demonstrated in this case is of a servant/soldier that – having fallen asleep on duty – had been condemned of disobedience, and hence sentenced to an 'Honour thy superiors!' inscription. The fundamental axiom of all his judgments, the officer explains, is that, "guilt is always without doubt [*Zweifelloos*]." Thus the justice operation of the colony proceeds from the lodging of a complaint by a figure of authority,⁵⁵⁶ at which point the officer – thusly spared from the hassle of *proving* this guilt (by cross-examination, etc.) – assigns the proper sentence, and promptly arrests the 'condemned' pending execution.

The machine itself, the officer explains, is composed of three main parts: the 'Bed' ('*Bett*') is the lower part upon which the condemned is gagged and restrained; the 'Designer' ('*Zeichner*') on top, where the movement of the needles is coded in advance for its center-piece, called the 'Harrow' ('*Egge*'), comprised of a glass surface in human form ('*Form des Menschen*') that holds a set of needles that inscribe the appropriate 'script' ('*Schrift*') on the body, with one short needle, the 'engraver' ('*Stichel*'), that "punctuates" the back of the condemned's neck and kills him at the end of his "sentence." At the end of the procedure, the bed automatically lifts up, and dumps the lifeless corpse

(‘*Leiche*’) of the condemned into an especially prepared ditch. This intricate execution, as the officer goes on explaining, takes 12 hours to complete, with a ‘turning point’ (‘*Wendepunkt*’) at the 6th hour, where the condemned is said to have attained an understanding (‘*Verstand*’) of the justice of his sentence, deciphering (‘*entziffern*’) the writing with his very wounds. The ‘script’ is undecipherable to anyone but the officer (including the explorer), and is said to contain the law that has been broken, coded to the Designer’s programming.

The new commandant, the officer opines, disdains of the machine, and wishes to abolish its use forever – though there is no other justice system in place. The old commandant, he continues, has many supporters in the colony, but they are silent, almost dormant, due to the officer’s lack of power (*Macht*); a power which is now, the officer says, in the hands of the new commandant. Despite this power, the officer managed to evade the new commandant’s attempts to discontinue the use of the machine, and all the latter could do so far was merely neglect it, mostly through sanctions to its maintenance budget (which is why the machine’s operation grates noisily). This “stand-off” is also why the officer comes to perceive this “demonstration” as a clever attempt by the new commandant to rid the colony of the machine, by having the explorer – due to his position as a “respected foreigner” (‘*angesehener Fremder*’) – testify against it. The officer, however, plans to use this very testimony against the new commandant, and to secure the old commandant’s legacy/power by making sure the explorer delivers a positive, rather than negative, testimony of the machine, thus turning the tables on the new commandant’s plan.

The explorer, already disturbed by what, to him, is this procedure’s inhumanity and injustice, has to remind himself that a penal colony is not the same kind of community as other (presumably western-European) ones, that it must have special regulations and a necessarily military procedure. In addition, he considers that he is neither a citizen of the colony nor of the state to which it belongs (France?), which was a possible retort to any claim he might make – to which he found no reply. He *hopes* (‘*Hoffnung*’), however, that the new commandant will be able to change this procedure: after all, he seems to have both the necessary indignation towards this procedure, and the *power* to act on it (despite the officer’s ability to evade this power until now).

Due both to his devotion, and to the explorer’s polite evasions of broaching his negative opinion directly, the officer believes the explorer to be on his side, willing to help him with his (counter-)plan. Yet when the officer confesses the details of his aforementioned plan and asks the explorer *directly* if he will help him, the explorer has no other recourse but to flatly answer that he will not. The explorer

explains that he was opposed to the procedure from the beginning and that he intends to talk to the new commandant privately to recommend its discontinuation.

The officer, however, does not lose faith, and decides that, in order to prove the justice of the machine, that he should enter it himself and demonstrate its operation to the explorer as a final proof: after all, how can the explorer remain indifferent to the turning point at the sixth hour – a spectacle that once was the main attraction of the entire colony, when they all (children first) basked in “the shine of this finally achieved and soon fading justice (*‘Gerechtlichkeit’*)”? The explorer, of course, would like to stop the officer from entering this inhumane machine, but (again) reminds himself that he has no right (*‘Recht’*) to do so. The officer then orders the condemned – who in the meantime had already been strapped to the machine – to step out of the machine (with the soldier’s assistance), and informs the former that he is free. He then chooses the maxim ‘Be just!’ to program the ‘Designer’ and, after undressing completely, takes the condemned’s place on the ‘Bed’ and starts the machine. At first, quite surprisingly, the machine works silently, with no grating noise.

The condemned – who throughout the story had been consistently “taken” with the machine, even following the officers explanations (though not understanding French) – follows this process of silent torture intensely, even more-so since he thinks that the officer was himself placed there as punishment. The explorer finds this obscene, indeed offensive (*‘peinlich’*), and orders both the soldier and the condemned to leave. While the soldier seemed prepared to go, the condemned refuses, and drops to his knees, praying-cum-begging to be allowed to stay, seeing this *banishment* from the machine-spectacle *itself* as “punishment” (*‘Strafe’*). The explorer gets up to chase the praying man away, yet at that very moment he hears the ‘Designer’ starts making noise again, except this time the noise marked not the machine’s function, but, its (grating) *dysfunction*: the ‘Designer’s’ lid opens by itself, as if compressed by a great power (*‘große Macht’*), and an endless succession of cogs/wheels eject themselves from within it and roll on the sand, until there are no gears left in the Designer. Now, then, the machine was no longer writing (*‘schreib’*), only stabbing (*‘stach’*): with only the ‘Stichel’ repeatedly stabbing the back of the officer’s head remains – instead of making its “final mark” only after the 12 hours had passed – what appeared to the explorer as “unmediated murder” (*‘unmittelbarer Mord’*). Finally, releasing the officer’s corpse from the harrow – for the latter also failed to do that – the explorer gains a glimpse of the officer’s face, which showed no sign (*‘Zeichen’*) of the promised Salvation (*‘versprochenen Erlösung’*). Only the *Stichel*-point in his forehead differentiated his expression from the one he normally had.

In the second and last scene of the story, the explorer and the soldier, followed by the condemned, are walking towards the colony, where the soldier point out the “Tea-House,” where the old commandant is buried. Though not visibly different from the other colony’s buildings, the House still had the effect of a historical reminder to the explorer, feeling the power (‘*Macht*’) of earlier (‘*früheren*’) times. Inside, in a place where some dock-workers were sitting at tables, the soldier and the condemned pointed out the old commandant’s grave. Pushing the tables aside, a gravestone was indeed revealed, that read: “Here lies the old commandant. His followers [‘*Anhänger*’], who must now be nameless, have dug him this grave and placed this stone. It is prophesied that after a given number of years the commandant will rise again, and will lead out his followers from this house to reconquer the colony. Have faith and wait! [‘*Glaube und Wartet!*’].”

After this, once the tables have been put back in place, the explorer distributes some money to the dock-workers, and then immediately makes his way to the harbor (a careful reading of the story reveals that this is one day too soon for him to depart). The soldier and the condemned had delayed in the Tea-house a bit with some acquaintances, but, as the explorer noticed, soon came running after him, probably, as the text says, to leave the colony with him. The explorer, however, was already on the boat when they arrived near it; they might have been able to jump inside, but the explorer threatened them with a heavy rope, and they were left behind.

4.2 “That ghastly paradox”: Does Anybody Here Remember ‘Vera Icona’?

[...] No other writer has obeyed the commandment “Thou shalt not make unto thee a graven image” so faithfully [as Kafka].

– Walter Benjamin⁵⁵⁷

The concept ‘the Son of Man’ is not a concrete person belonging to history, anything at all individual or unique, but an ‘eternal’ fact, a psychological symbol freed from the time concept.

– Friedrich Nietzsche⁵⁵⁸

May I never boast of anything except the cross of our Lord Jesus Christ, by which the world has been crucified to me, and I to the world. | [...] | As for those who will follow this rule—peace be upon them, and mercy, and upon the Israel of God. | From now on, let no one make trouble for me; for I carry the marks [στίγματα (stigmata)] of Jesus branded on my body [σώματι/*Leibe*].

– Saint Paul⁵⁵⁹

Kafka’s story is rife with Christological elements, both from popular European-Christian folklore and scholastic theology. For one, the Penal Colony’s Apparatus, as is perhaps apparent, constitutes a rather precise rendering of the Christian Holy Trinity. It is divided in three: the Designer, as the *locus of*

the Law, represents God ‘the Father;’ the Bed houses “*der Man*,” Jesus Christ, His Son; and the Harrow is the Holy Spirit through which God the Father is “fit” into the ‘Form of Man,’ there where the Word is made Flesh in Christ.⁵⁶⁰ This fact, combined with the obvious allusion that the machine’s structure has to a printing press, provides a rather strong “figural” interpretation of this system of justice.

In a nut shell, I see this machine as the mechanical allegory of the way in which the figural interpretation of Jewish Scripture, discussed above, is *worked* and made Hegelianly ‘actual’ (*wirklich*), internalized through the symbol of Jesus Christ as the mould, the Divine example, of ‘Man’ (for *all Mankind* are expiated by Jesus’ sacrifice). While the apparatus is an invention of the old commandant (p. 112), and the drawings, that fit the Law to the appropriate settings in the Designer, are also his own (pp. 115, 119), *the Law itself* is of an unknown origin. The machine itself already *incarnates* this Law in this tripartite manner, following what have to already be the old commandant’s “translations” or *transcriptions* of it. The machine is the incarnation of the Law, and the ‘figures’ are already there – as *transcribed* Law – in the old commandant’s *Schriften*.

If the Designer holds the ‘Figure’ of Law, the Law as already *prepared* to be actualized/internalized, it is the Harrow’s role to mediate this Law and mould it to the “form of Man;” the Sign – the text of Law – having thus become transcribed as/in “figure” – is “mediated” through the Harrow on(to) Man’s Body. Since it is not the original text of Law, but only a transcription designed specifically for this machine, whatever “mistakes” arise in the machine, when a strap breaks or a wheel grates, are not infractions of the machine’s *justice*, only in its *systematic efficiency* in doling it out. Regardless of who is put into it, *or why*, the question of justice was already decided by the machine’s very *existence* – as incarnated Law, it had *already answered the ‘Why?’ of original Law* by, almost literally, “im-personating” it.

Hence, what I referred to above as *the ethico-metaphysical decision* is here *already made*: this system of Justice knows no Otherness that is not mere malfunction or inefficiency; so long that it exists, it matters little who operates it, nor who is judged to be inscribed by it, *nor even Why*. Its judgment represents, indeed incarnates, the Judgment that might be imputed *only* to the Jewish God: it is Absolute, and Single. It is this incarnation that assures that the only Whys that this machine allows to be asked are the Whys of the Same; the Whys that come only after the ethico-metaphysical ‘Why?’ had been decided – made steel, made flesh. This appeal to justice is thoroughly exhausted in a Divine example, one through which *a perfect expiation of guilt* is achieved: *whatever* the guilt, *whoever* committed it, this machine is designed to unburden the souls of those who enter into it, to make them innocent in the eyes

of God/Justice, in a system that is based on an assumption of a “zero level” *guilt that is equal to all*. Provided, of course, that they have faith that this procedure is, in fact, Divinely sanctioned; that it does, as it professes, fulfill God’s (Judaic) Law, puts an end to pointless obsessions over the letter, and inscribe the believer with its infallible spirit, the one, simple meaning of the Law that always converges on, as prefiguration, the example of Christ on the Cross.

This judgment is effectuated by following the pattern of a Divine example, which accounts for the harrow’s “human form” as the symbol of Jesus, “the Son of Man”.⁵⁶¹ The Harrow “inscribes” the body by “piercing” it with needles, which utilizes the German *sticht* (p. 117/173), the last “punctuation” of the sentence performed by what is called *Stichel*: both hail back etymologically to the Proto-Indo-European root of **stieg*, i.e., from which the New Testament’s *stigmata* is also derived, the famous wounds of Christ as he is nailed to the Cross (featured in the above epigraph by Saint Paul). Just as the *figura* is not to be confused with the textual sign, nor the sign confused with the more “motivated” *symbol*, so the “stigma” ought not to be confused with the *grammatikos* of the Biblical “letter:” the former is a *particular kind* of ‘sign,’ an indicative mark – an ‘index’ in Peircean linguistics – of a puncture. The Christian stigma – as the wounds on Christ’s body (from the Cross) – is the *grammatikos made affective*, it includes within itself the pain of the flesh into which something is carved, something is inserted. The Jewish-Lévinasian ‘interruption’ of the demand for Justice, hence, here becomes *visceral*; but for that very reason, through that very mechanism, it can also be trapped, grasped, *begreifen* through ‘Man.’

The process itself, as a writing of justice that redeems any sinful body, takes twelve hours to complete, at which point the *Stichel* kills the condemned. In the modern version of Jesus’ “*via dolorosa*” (17th-20th Century) – the narrative that follows Jesus from his condemnation by Pilate, through to his Crucifixion, ending with his being placed in his tomb – was said to have had fourteen “Stations,” various landmarks where Jesus was spoken to, where he tripped, where he was helped, etc. The 12th Station is precisely there where Christ dies on the Cross; it is the “point,” not of the Divine narrative itself (which includes 2 more stations, not to mention the Resurrection that is sometimes, apocryphally, depicted as the 15th), but precisely *of the Symbol*: the ‘Jesus/God on the Cross’ symbol. This is yet another indication that the positioning of the condemned in the apparatus is akin making the condemned “go through the stations” of Jesus’ Crucifixion, dying like Christ at the 12th hour/Station in direct observance of his Symbol.⁵⁶² This interpretation is bolstered by the fact that the result of the procedure is being described in the story – at least insofar as the faith of the officer had been “promised” – in the NT and theological term of ‘Redemption’ (i.e., deliverance from sin), *Erlösung* (p. 134/196).⁵⁶³

One of the most crucial aspects of Kafka's story has precisely to do with the idea of the incarnation as a *narrative* of redemption, and how narration treats of the question of *time*. The machine itself, as noted earlier, incarnates the Law in accordance with an already irretrievable, pre-historic principle that only the old commandant has witnessed. It is again a question of time: with regards to the machine's conversion process/narrative, the old commandant's appropriation or transcription of Absolute Law is his testimony; hence it marks what I called here the an-archy of the other, or the "pre-historic" *decision that brought this testimony into being* – precisely the 'becoming' that Nietzsche associates with the will to power's non-conscious dynamic. Like them, the old commandant's decision is unreachable and unchangeable, but still traces – *given the right witness* – its own "primordial" violence. In the machine's mechanism, Jesus' Passion unites with his (hi)story, to become a set procedure, one that "works by itself" (p. 124), in a "uniform [*gleichförmig*] manner" (p. 117/173). The "bad historical sense" of the English psychologists, hence, was precisely to start from the fact of this machine, without questioning the temporal breach that it serves to cover or smooth-over. As if the machine's 'Designer' – as the present value (modeled after the Christian God) – was received "as is," did not itself have a complication, a decision, within it.

What the narrative-machine does, hence, is indeed radical with regards to time: in its fixed and autonomous/automatic structure and function, it effectively appropriates the *time* of Jesus' Passion, much as it does His *pain*, in what ceases to be a *temporal* situation and becomes reduced to a *causal* one. As one cogwheel of the machine feeds into and moves another, a fixed arrangement is formed that makes each moment "follow" on the other one (i.e., a causal *chain*). This kind of "fixing," however, is *historio-graphical* rather than temporal, where the cogs follow one another in a way that betrays a subtle (but *decisive*) difference from how Jesus'/God's "moments" followed one another. If one were to conduct a 'phenomenology' of this device alone, then, it would be a phenomenology with 'Reason:' the temporal situation where each moment is Other to the next becomes a *narrative*, a *fixing* of Jesus' (hi)story (and its use or appropriation). Temporally speaking, the "passage" from one moment to another is already the site of a radical difference, where each moment lays destitute and open to the Otherness or futurity of the next, Wholly Other moment. Limiting itself to mere 'history,' then, the phenomenological narrative had, itself, *already made the decision with regards to each moment's meaning and future*, making each moment "prefigure" the next in what is now a mechanical, determinist progression.

Once again, Levinatzsch calls attention to this fact not to "condemn" it – for such a "fixing" is necessary for any historical narrative – but to raise the problematic or responsibility to the violence, the

scission, involved in this decision, and the “historical sense” with which to treat it. The violence of this an-archic selection or scission, indeed an act of *valuation*, spells an asymmetrical relation to any “I” or “will” that might claim its own “freedom” or “good intentions” or even “scientific method”: the latter are only late and insufficient responses to this pre-historical decision, meaning that no cohesion, however “empirical” or even ontological – i.e. however “Truthful” – it may be, could efface the trace of its scission, its duty to affirm this selection, its responsibility in the face of this violence. This decision might inaugurate a history as a selection that presupposes this temporal predicament, though the latter will forever remain within it, as a trace or an *il y a* that would always interrupt, and hence put in radical question, any systematic closure. But it takes a special kind of witness with a particular ‘Why’ in order to insist on the ethical significance of this interruption, on this primary asymmetry between the temporal and the historical.

If this is true, of course, then the moment of *Reason* – said to occur in the 6th hour (p. 119) – is significant, and worth looking into, for it is the *center* of this “becoming symbol” process of conversion or redemption from sin; the process whereby *the narrative itself* arrives at its self-apotheosis or theodicy.⁵⁶⁴ The ‘via dolorosa’ narrative has Jesus going through 14 Stations, and depicts a unique occurrence at the 6th Station. There, a woman approached Jesus, whose name was said to be Veronica, who – moved to pity by Jesus plight – brings him a white handkerchief so he could wipe his face of the grime and sweat of his torturous journey.⁵⁶⁵ When Jesus, God incarnate, wipes his face on the handkerchief, he leaves *an imprint* upon it – a ‘true icon,’ a veritable *presentation*, of ‘the face of God’ – which in Latin reads as “*Vera Icona*” (which accounts for ‘Veronica’ as its anagram in the Christian popular legend). Here one steps, literally, over the “gap” of representation and arrives at its full meaning, its true Being, the Truth of its presence.

I read this “True Icon” of God is, indeed, the *Ur-Bild* – the primordial (*Ur*) image (*Bild*) of God’s face, the *Truth* of God – which authorizes all subsequent im-prints in His image as just, as a *Bild-ung* directed toward God and authorized by God. This ‘Truth’ is what, in Kafka’s story as in Christian theology, *justifies* the entire narrative. In Kafka’s story, this interpretation becomes bolstered by the curious appearance, throughout the story, of “ladies’ handkerchiefs:” they are mentioned for the first time at the beginning, as the officer stuffs them between his body and his heavy uniform while preparing the apparatus for the condemned (p. 112), and are said, much later, to be presents that the new commandant’s ladies had given the condemned; and so when the officer enters the machine himself, he gives them back to the latter (pp. 132-133).

In terms of the aforementioned '*figura*,' one could say that it is its plastic quality, its susceptibility to imprint – received and preserved by the Romans from the Greek – that bypasses the Jewish *witness* to the Old Testament *sign*: the machine converts this sign, whose singular witnessing was unique to the Jews, into a *figure* to be imprinted or “incarnated” (i.e. written into the flesh) *equally*, upon *all* ‘Mankind.’ Unlike the Jewish Torah as a Sign, the Good News of Jesus, *God on the Cross as a symbol*, was given equally and freely to ‘Humanity’ writ large – and writ large precisely to cover over the “small print” of the Judaic witness (that keeps harping on *points*) – through the figural machine. The latter allows all to put themselves in Jesus’ place, to “be as perfect” as the Heavenly Father, which is precisely the mantra that accompanies their painful *Bildung*, their process of conversion from guilt to Salvation. This *Bildung* is what authorizes all (Christian) suffering as the mortification of that which has no soul, is vain and condemned to perish.⁵⁶⁶ The *figura*, in short, is there where *grammatikos* is worked into the flesh and becomes *wirklich*, actual; it is the *grammatikos* become *stigma*.

This absolute symbol of Man is what, logically, authorizes and fashions ‘Man’ out of the mere “subject” or “animal” excess – the “guilty flesh” or the dead letter that all men (like all animals) are, *imputably*, born with, but that only Man, once properly trained/educated, can shed to achieve true life in ‘spirit’. This is how the Divine Example, the *Symbol* of ‘God on the Cross,’ “motivates” the Old Testament *Sign* to become its “prefiguration”; how the spirit goes out of itself (‘letter,’ ‘body’) in order to return to itself as (Divine) Truth. It is the Absolute goal, or the fixing of a *telos*, that would “confirm” Hegel’s philosophy of the spirit⁵⁶⁷ on its path to Absolute Knowledge, to an incarnate/actualized Truth:

[...] the *goal* is as necessarily fixed for knowledge [...]; it is the point where knowledge no longer needs to go beyond itself, where knowledge finds itself, where Notion corresponds to object and object to Notion. Hence the progress towards this goal is also unhalting, and short of it no satisfaction is to be found at any of the stations on the way. (PS §80, p. 51)

The necessity of said progression what authorizes Hegel’s entire spiritual phenomenology as precisely a narrative that,

[...] can be regarded as the path of the natural consciousness which presses forward to true knowledge; or as the way of the Soul which journeys through the series of its own configurations as though they were the stations appointed for it by its own nature, so that it may purify itself for the life of the Spirit, and achieve finally, through a completed experience of itself, the awareness of what it really is in itself. (PS §77, p. 49 [my underline])

For this, of course – as Hegel’s moral analogy concerning the Absolute reads – requires courage, and the ability to reconcile oneself to the, now called ‘necessary,’ pain (the pain of *both self and other* – for they are, ultimately, One for Hegel); the courage to self-spiritualize, to “die to the law so as to live in

Christ” (Galatians 2:19). Philosophically, or ‘Scientifically,’ this means for Hegel to rid “knowledge” and “history” of their vain, irreconcilable differences, to *internalize* Judaic Law through the affective-apparatus of the priest or resentment – that bestows upon *all* (those who are) suffering the mantra of “if we suffer we know we erred” (and therefore are not yet at Absolute Knowledge, not yet arrived at the presupposed goal of ‘Truth’).

Kafka’s explorer and his non-position serve two functions in this context. The first is to show that whatever the moral values may be that underlay something like “human rights” – however humane and just they might call themselves vis-à-vis other values (e.g., western systems of ‘punishment’ contrasted with “barbarian” customs of ‘revenge’) – it leaves an ethico-metaphysical quandary, at best, as is the case here, unanswered (at worst – irresponsible and oppressive, as shown in the BLM case). In Kafka’s story, it is because he is engrained with “courtly” a kind of “generalized respect” that the explorer cannot perform almost any of the tasks that his European values dictate that he make: because of them he avoids discussing the machine’s injustice with the officer, and he refuses to actively work to abolish the use of an apparatus that, to him, is doubtlessly “inhumane” and “unjust.” Since he is a stranger, he cannot interfere with the colony; since he must respect every human beings will equally, he cannot stop the officer from entering the machine himself. As Kafka writes “he was determined not to mix [*riihren*] with it” (p. 132 /194 [translation modified]).⁵⁶⁸

Here, a curious – but I think hardly coincidental – connection suggests itself between Kafka’s text and Dante’s. To recall, Dante strikes a fraudulent deal with brother Albergino – promising to break off his frozen tears in exchange for hearing his tale of woe – but in the end does not, commenting further that this, rather pitiless, treatment was a courtesy; implying that in that context – the eternal torment that was devised by God Himself – it was indeed the “courteous” thing to do. In Kafka’s story, the apposite German word for courtesy, *Höflichkeit*, appears all but twice, but in key moments of the story: the first, depicting the values that impelled the explorer to arrive at the colony in the first place (“politeness;” p. 111/164), and the second, describing the way he has been received by the colony and its officer (“courtesy;” *ibid*, p. 122/179). The German and the Italian here share an intimate etymological – not to say historical – connection: both “*cortesa*” and “*Höflichkeit*” recall one to the courts (*corte*; *Hof*), to the servile and unobtrusive demeanor in which the King’s advisors/entourage carried themselves in the presence of His Honor (*this* “court” lies literally *at the root* of the legal/liberal-democratic one).

Kafka’s allusion to this “common root” of moral or “humane” values speaks towards the latter’s *limits* when it comes to the question of witnessing violence, of regarding the pain of another, specifically

when the latter is claimed to be just. Dante, to reiterate, realizes that in the *Inferno*, as “God’s court,” it is indeed *proper* to show no pity and no “civility” to its sinners, and so enacts the negative aspect of Christian courtesy “without batting an eye.” Kafka’s explorer is more “modern,” in that sense, but the point of the matter is that this “modernity” has no effect whatsoever (it is only – to anticipate – his that foreignness does). The explorer is, in fact, placed in a bind, limited by the same “humane” values that are seemingly being so gruesomely violated in the colony’s procedure: on the one hand, the explorer is faced with a cruelty that dramatically contradicts these values, and he reflects to himself that, “[t]he injustice of the procedure and the inhumanity of the execution were beyond all doubt” (p. 121); yet, on the other hand, he understands that – as a ‘stranger’ (“*Fremder*,” *ibid*/179), whose only *reason* for visiting was “politeness” (*Höflichkeit*) towards the commandant’s invitation (p. 111) – he has no place to intervene, since he has no real *grasp* of the colony (“*nicht begreife*,” p. 121/178), is not one of its members, and hence, by direct *implication* of these same European values, *ought to have no rights* in/on it. The officer spells out this implication, sometimes referred to as (Western) ‘*pluralism*,’ most clearly: “you have seen and learnt to respect many peculiarities of many different peoples, so perhaps you will not speak out in full force against our procedures, as you might do in your own country” (p. 125). Having no officially sanctioned role to which he had given his free consent, the explorer’s arms are tied.

In this respect, the “courtesy” that the explorer is shown (by the colony’s officer) is still too insufficient a link between him and the colony to justify intervention on his part. It also does not help – à propos politeness – that the person who shows him this courtesy is none other than the most vocal devotee of the machine that so horrifies the explorer. Himself a European (presumably French), the officer understands European manners and values very well, and can show them to a fellow European, yet to those he “condemns” he seems to have no trouble giving nothing but what a European would deem “unjust” and “inhumane” treatment. The explorer’s resistance to the procedure is further taken aback time and again due to this politeness in the face of the officer’s utter trust in, and courtesy towards, in the explorer; the latter consistently feels ill at ease to contradict the officer to his face, or help impede his “inhumane” acts. Though the procedures offend his deepest moral convictions, the explorer is placed in a position from which he cannot allow himself any influence on them.

The second function of the explorer is to be, precisely, a *foreign witness*. This is something only *partially* achieved by his present situation (as visitor), and the way this situation influences – through his aforementioned values – the way he (does not) act(s). That this foreignness is essential to Kafka’s story can be gleaned from the curious instances in which the explorer does, in fact, act, specifically towards

the condemned. Indeed, it is (always arguably) the turning point of Kafka's narrative itself that the explorer should physically threaten the condemned, as he does when the latter shows such perverse fascination with the officer's self-execution/sacrifice (something that, furthermore, was enabled by the explorer's inaction). Here, suddenly, the explorer shows a rare initiative: his attempts to stop the condemned from witnessing the officer's ordeal are *active*, the most active gestures he had made so far in the story, indeed a veritable intervention. Was this finally his values that caused the explorer to intervene like this?

I would risk answering in the negative here (which is, especially with this Kafka story, quite a risk). To my reading this activity is Kafka's way of *achieving the machine's disintegration*. To recall, the machine, at first, seems to be quite "in its element" when executing the officer; its previous noises and "aches" seem to be gone, and it proceeds both in complete obedience to the officer (bordering on supernatural), and in complete silence (p. 133), despite its heavily worn parts (a miracle?). The machine only begins to disintegrate when the explorer actively interrupts the faithful link between the machine and its witness. For, in its normal use – and *a fortiori* when it was the center of the colony's attention – the machine always had at least one *believer* to witness its operation, which was the officer. Putting himself inside the machine, the officer ceased to be a witness to the machine's justice and decides to himself become a testimony for it. Yet, in order to operate, the machine needs an external witness to it; and the fact that it breaks down, for the first time in its history, only when the explorer interrupts the condemned's fascination, and then prayer (almost as enamored with the machine as the officer, if not more), suggests that it also needs this witness to be a faithful witness, a witness that takes part, has an interest, makes sense of the machine.⁵⁶⁹

Now, the officer in Kafka's story *explicitly objects* to this interpretation of the machine. After a very emotional scene – in which the officer has just finished nostalgically describing the spectacle of the 6th hour "glow of Justice" ('*Schein [der] Gerechtigkeit*;' p. 124/181) at the time of the old commandant – the officer "pulls himself together," and apologizes: "I wasn't trying to upset [*rühren*] you" (p. 124/182 [translation modified]). Then he goes on to say that despite the fact that these times are not comprehensible ('*begreiflich*;' *ibid/ibid*) today, "the machine still operates and is effective on its own [*wirkt für sich*]. It is effective even if it stands all alone in this valley. And the corpse still falls at the last [...]" (*ibid/ibid*). To my reading, what the officer spells out here is precisely that which is betrayed by the explorer, precisely the substance, not to say the force/power, of the officer's faith: here the machine represents the work of (Hegelian) 'spirit' – that *appears* as "fate," as something unavoidable and

obscure that “remains” there, pathological and ungraspable – but continues, despite this ungraspable remainder, to be effective. That it can do this even without any *external* witnesses – other than the “martyr” within it – is precisely where “faith” plays a *decisive* role: it is the assumption upon which all violence done by this “spiritual machine” is based, that it can and would work itself, like “world history/spirit,” with no “external supplements” needed, no remainders left to its Truth or Reality (in short – its *Wirklichkeit*). This is, in short, the officer’s bit of ‘spiritual’ *speculation*: without an external witness – and this is why Dante’s narrative had to betray its violence to my (Levinatschean) witness – he cannot, by definition, provide any direct evidence of this statement’s “truth;” that ‘spirit’ can perpetrate this “*für sich*” work is a matter, and I think the matter, of this speculation, this faith. This is, indeed, the perfect theodicy of the machine’s violence: the corpse still falls, and there is no one there to witness it – what the officer is describing is, to my reading, precisely the utopia, the Idea(l), of this justice system.

Following this interpretation, it becomes apparent that the machine must disintegrate, must die, when this “life-line,” this “line of faith” (from its external witness) is broken. The explorer has, until now, only passively held to this disconnect with the machine, being its mostly silent opponent (p. 128). This passive resistance was not enough to dismantle the machine, in much the same way as the explorer’s “European values” could not move him to act on his opposition. For this apparatus, like Dante’s *Inferno* narrative, is indeed a conversion machine: it needs a faithful, yet external, witness (like Dante was) in order to perpetrate its violence *as justice*, one that will persist through its violence, holding a promised redemption in front of one’s eyes as what Hegel above called “the goal.” The explorer’s *concentrated attack on this line of faith* – the one between the machine and its witness – transforms the witnessing situation to one performed *only* by a non-believer; this would be akin to Dante’s having tarried at the gate of Hell to ask after the Angels (of whom Vergil refused to speak), or the fate of Medusa (who “mysteriously” disappears from the scene). If that were the case, as discussed above, the *narrative* would have been impossible, for Dante would have never made it out to “testify” to God’s Justice-cum-Love; just as the narrative, the machine’s conversion-operation, becomes impossible here once it is no longer witnessed with faith.

Kafka’s entire story revolves around the necessity of witnessing: the officer needs the explorer’s testimony, it seems, even more desperately than the new commandant (who invited the explorer for this very purpose). Both, it seems, plan on *effecting a decision through it*; for as it is the colony continues function seemingly on mere inertia from its “golden” past. This external witness, the officer and the new

commandant hope, will either bring back the golden age of the machine, or bring a decisive end to its use, respectively. Both the faithful devotee of the machine, and its opponent, need this external witness precisely for his externality; it seems that in making this decision – which I interpret here as an ethico-metaphysical decision concerning the legitimacy of a justice-system already in place – this alienation, this foreigner, was a necessity.

But, alas, a necessity that betrays. Kafka's witness, unlike Dante's pilgrim, proves that he cannot, or should not have been be trusted. All the explorer "contributes" to the colony is uncovering the 'hatred' that its justice machine had embellished over: the violence of its *Stichel* left bare, like the "hateful trunk" of its cultivating Harrow as "fruits" that, upon such faithless witnessing, fall off or die, betraying the shameful nudity of this hatred, this "unmediated murder." The explorer leaves this "shadeless valley" to the same death that was to be traversed by the light of faith; now instilling the same fear, exposing the injustice that hides in this overbearing, *oppressive* light. Kafka's story reveals this oppression by introducing a difference, a "gap," between the lit and the merely "shadeless" (in the valley's allusion to the "*valle umbrae mortis*"): the shade, like the hatred, has been *negated* (*schattenlosen*; p. 113/166), yet this negation results in the *oppression* of the valley's "all too heavy" sun ('*allzu stark*;' *ibid/ibid*). Like the *Erlösung* at the end of the conversion-process, like Christian love (and its *Bildung* towards Absolution), proves to be, as the explorer says upon seeing the face of the officer's corpse, "an illusion" (*Täuschung*; p. 134/195). This faithless '*hohen Besuch*' ("eminent/high visitor;" p. 115/169) indeed brings forth to bear a *height* that teases out this "gap" as a *difference* that the machine's basic assumption – guilt is always without doubt (i.e., *all* who enter it are *equally guilty*) – cannot abide, cannot write/narrate/cultivate its way out of.

As ought not be surprising by now, Nietzsche saw this all too clearly. This is indeed the point of Nietzsche's genealogical arrow, showing precisely what happens when the Judaic principle is made to expand and include "all" in its ambit, denying the fundamental separation that it had "held on to with its teeth." It is, as Nietzsche says – in terms that remind one of the will to power (and its methodological insight into the problem of writing/narrating a 'history for all') – an exceedingly crude misunderstanding of an "original symbolism," left, presupposed and unresponded-to, within it. This quote from the *Antichrist* summarizes his "symbolic critique," and combines it seamlessly with the methodological one about "historical sense:"

Our age is proud of its historical sense: how was it able to make itself believe in the nonsensical notion that the *crude miracle-worker and redeemer fable* comes at the commencement of Christianity – and that everything spiritual and symbolic is only a subsequent development? On the contrary: the

history of Christianity – and that from the very death on the Cross – is the history of progressively cruder misunderstanding of an original symbolism. With every extension of Christianity over even broader, even ruder masses in whom the preconditions out of which it was born were more and more lacking, it became increasingly necessary to vulgarize, to barbarize Christianity – it absorbed the doctrines and rites of every subterranean cult of the *Imperium Romanum*, it absorbed the absurdities of every sort of morbid reason. The fate of Christianity lies in the necessity for its faith itself to grow as morbid, low and vulgar as the requirements it was intended to satisfy were morbid, low and vulgar. (AC §37, pp. 160-161)⁵⁷⁰

This was, indeed, the fateful revolution that happened in reaction to an irreconcilable “original symbolism.” The Christian *figura* held the sign literally “in captivity” to the symbol that marks what ought to be its final meaning, its *Pleroma*. Like the ‘*cattivo*’ angels of Dante’s *Inferno*, the Judaic “passivity more passive than any passivity” had to be trained or contained, through Christ’s Passion, to become a willing captive doomed to be buried; to be made inconspicuous in the love/reconciliation of a free(d) ‘soul’ or ‘will’ that embody the Law’s significance/spirit, rather than remaining a ‘hostage,’ commanded to speak, in hateful/difference-mongering, interruptive signification/letters. The ‘*cattivo*’ angels, in this sense, will have been the “apposite opposite” to Saint Peter with regards to the Christian faith: they are “the rock” from which the *anti-Church* was built.⁵⁷¹ The only reason they are even brought up – for *Dante’s Vergil asks not to talk about it (Inferno III.51)* – was indeed to educate and edify, through a conversion narrative, a faithful (or at least *unsuspecting*) reader/witness.

This captivity, however, was *betrayed* by Dante’s systematic theodicy. To stay true to its goal, it had to show itself, precisely, *as a “gap” in the Divine narrative* – for these Angels were irrevocably “*per se*” (for themselves, not even “for evil”) – whose witnessing *must* be brief and fleeting. This “must” however, is once more an ethico-metaphysical one, one whose denial inaugurates something of a spiritual game of “hot potato:” hold it in your hands too long, contemplate/suspect the justice that’s involved in this captivity for too long, and the entire narrative breaks, following which all manner of devils and wicked souls are freed once again to challenge God in *another* (epic? tragic?) battle. These angels are nowhere on Hell’s map, but rather the ink with which Hell’s map is drawn; the justice of their Da-sein cannot be questioned, or, well, all Hell will break loose. Thus the voice of reason, Vergil, and our faithful witness, Dante, pass over the *cattivo* angels – who are appropriately *invisible* – with relative ease; and, most importantly, *quickly*. In this forward-going narrative of Redemption – trained upon the goal of Salvation in Paradise – the goal of orientation overrides obsessing over the characteristics of the lines with which the map towards salvation is drawn.

Kafka's explorer is, hence, indeed an "inverted pilgrim," a reversal of Dante's narrative-progression: the explorer was never interested in the machine to begin with, and grows only more and more horrified as the procedure unfolds. True to his "*vor dem Gesetz*" stubbornness, Kafka has *his* "Dante," *his witness*, expressing so much "*sospetto*" that he invariably forces the "Vergil" charged with explaining the Penal apparatus to challenge his faith, to recognize the breach, and to do what every faithful Christian, who has internalized the Divine example of Jesus Christ, would do: sacrifice himself as the last thing he could do to vindicate this justice-mechanism. This is why Kafka's story is so radical in this respect. It asks the dreadful question: What needs to happen for the "gap" to produce a *crisis* of faith? He then points the reader to the only susceptibility of the conversion machine, an interruption of height and Otherness, when it is being put in radical question by the Other; for the Penal Colony's apparatus needs the officer's attempts – done in *full* faith – to close it precisely this "gap."

Hence, in Kafka's version of "descending to Hell," the narrator of the narrative/machine finds, *and shows*, that all his faith (and all the Reason that he accepts as Scripture, as Divine *Schrift*) is not only insufficient to the theodical task, but potentially *abominable* for it; this is the one thing that no believer can do without *compromising the integrity of their faith* – pay *direct* heed to radical "suspicion." One might say that, in this sense, Vergil was wiser than the Officer, but, then again, Vergil explained himself to someone who was a believer-in-the-making, and not an outsider whose only relation to the colony is that of mere politeness. The machine, indeed, only edified when it is presented as a spectacle of justice – as the officer explains was the custom in the days of the old commandant – from a young age (p. 124); a visceral-spectacular training that, much like the machine, educates through repetition. Only then will have the grown-up *Anhänger* already learned – not through words, but through the assumed legitimacy of the machine's repetitive operation (like the "*vera icona*" moment) – that here is justice beyond any doubt, above any suspicion. One only needs to have enough faith so as to "leap" (or "skip") over the small gap in its reasoning, that small gap between the needles and the human-formed rack; like children whose innocence precludes any judgment (and, hence, any suspicion).

4.3 Hegelian Returns: Future Echoes of a Broken System

"Everyone his own priest:" behind such formulas and their peasant cunning there was hidden in Luther the abysmal hatred against "the higher human being" and the dominion of "the higher human beings" as conceived by the Church.

– Friedrich Nietzsche⁵⁷²

The animal twists the whip out of its master's grip and whips itself to become its own master – not knowing that this is only a fantasy, produced by a new knot in the master's whiplash.

– Franz Kafka⁵⁷³

[...] 'West' signifies freedom of spirit. All its virtues and some of its vices follow from this. Freedom of spirit, in a very precise manner, announces the wish to maintain an inner link with truth: to be self-effacing before the truth, but to feel the master in this effacement, like the mathematician who bows before the evidence, conscious of a supreme freedom. This marvellous coincidence of obedience and commandment, subjection and sovereignty, bears a well-worn but handsome name: Reason.

– Emmanuel Lévinas⁵⁷⁴

[...] [P]hilosophy [...] has as its object the true, and the true in its highest shape as absolute spirit, as God. To know this true not only in its simple form as God, but also to know the rational in God's works – as produced by God and endowed with reason – that is philosophy. It is part of knowing the true that one should dismiss one's subjectivity, the subjective fancies of personal vanity, and concern oneself with the true purely in thought, conducting oneself solely in accordance with objective thought. This negation of one's specific subjectivity is an essential and necessary moment

– G. W. F. Hegel⁵⁷⁵

Like in Dante's *Inferno*, in Kafka's *Penal Colony* a "pilgrimage" also takes place – a witnessing that entails a radical moral challenge/horror – except no conversion is achieved through it. Kafka's 'explorer' emerges unconverted from his witnessing. Worse, starting out as someone who is said to be "fundamentally honorable and without fear" (*Penal Colony*, p. 128), Kafka's "pilgrim" ends up betraying everyone and everything that/who was invested in him in some manner (viz. the officer; the new commandant; the soldier and the condemned; even his own values). The fate of the colony's principle of valuation – embodied in its officer's assumption of unquestionable/undoubtable guilt that underwrites the 'writing' of the colony's 'apparatus' – lay in the balance, yet Kafka's pilgrim leaves only the unmediated violence of the principle, its "point," destroying the entire narrative that ought to lead up to it. When Dante was shouldered this responsibility, he saw to it that the narrative remain edifying, that the principle remain intact, and that the only way out was the way through this narrative's principle of valuation, considered Absolute; which led to Dante's own remorseless cruelty being considered, to recall, a "courtesy."

Thus, Kafka's *Penal Colony* and Dante's *Inferno* provide each-others' counterpoints, presided-over by my 'Levinatzschean Why?': this way, Dante's descriptions of Hell betray a glimpse of the intricate, unreadable "scripts" that the old commandant, in Kafka's story, had coded (and that only his apprentice, the officer-judge, could read); while Kafka's explorer, on the other hand, gives "flesh" to

what precisely had to be invisible and immaterial in Dante's narrative. The *Penal Colony* is hence the best setting for a final antipathological "showdown" between these two "discourses on method," especially since both *necessitate* a morally-horrified witness, both constitute "conversion narratives," and both, moreover, take up a position in, and towards, conversion *as* narration; thus straddling a similar line between methodology and pedagogy.

Dante's journey through Hell needs him to "train" his moral sensibility, his "*pieta*," if he is to make it to Paradise without blasphemy (i.e., without "suspecting" God's 'negative Judgment'); Kafka's 'explorer' is also urged to train his moral sensibility in the face of an unquestionable and *irreversible* "death sentence" that claims, much like God's condemnation of souls to Hell's eternal damnation, an absolute justice. While the witness in Dante overcomes the problem of cowardice ('*vilta*') – insofar as he can go on with his journey without being caught in the "blasphemy trap" so to speak – Kafka's witness, the explorer, remains unconvinced by, and hostile to, the colony's "method of justice," eventually running away, saving only his own skin.

This last statement, of course, also brings the difference between these two "methodological adventures with Justice." Dante goes into his conversion narrative with, as it were, an "open soul" – ready to be educated vis-à-vis 'evil,' in the loving light of God's comprehensive/loving Wisdom and Vergil's Reason; Kafka's explorer, due to his "European values" (p. 125), refuses *any* such decision/susceptibility and, surviving the ordeal and escaping the confines of the colony, maintains his exteriority, and thus the cleft or difference, between/within his aforementioned "European morality." If these two "souls" are witnesses to the contradictions, not to say cruelty within the claim to absolute justice (the tortures of Hell, those of the apparatus), the one responds by being saved and transformed, and the other by escaping unchanged. *En bref*, the first indeed *succeeds in reconciling* the contradiction between God's Love and the cruel, eternal punishments of Hell (i.e., God's Judgment), the second does not: by escaping the penal enclosure Kafka(s' explorer) flees into the only (non-)position from which he can emit *other* signs to *other*, perhaps uncolonized ears; to appeal to *other* principles of valuation (though unknown, *future* ones).

Kafka's witness' only "contribution" to the colony, is, hence, as immaterial and insubstantial – with regards to the colony's *ostensible* values and commitments (represented by the new commandant) – as it is *fatal* to its "actual," *wirklich* system of justice. Once the officer is dead and the Designer destroyed, the holy *Schriften* become useless, unworkable, their narrations of justice could no longer be realized: no one is left who is able to read them, or fix the machine – which now dispenses an

“unmediated murder” where, before, it dispensed its justice narratives through an edifying mediation (torture), and with great artistry (*‘kunstvoll;’* p. 119/175). Kafka’s explorer is a witness whose very (non-)position exposes not only the frailty of this system’s cohesion/coherence but also, and perhaps necessarily, the violence that it denies and yet requires.

The explorer is placed in a bind by what he witnesses as the abject entrails of this “justice procedure” – done in the name of a colonial power, hence also, in a way, presided-upon by “European values” similar to his own – for, on the one hand, they indicate that this procedure is inhumane and unjust, but, on the other, also bid him to not interfere. This “gap” in the *comprehensive claim* of these same values – of “human(e) justice” – is precisely the non-lieu that spells out the explorer’s impossible predicament, its traumatised witness: his values bid him to both be horrified, and command him to not intervene, to, in a way, respect the “sovereignty” of the colony.

Of course, one could argue, that respecting sovereignty, and communicating with or influencing it, is something these values can still allow without contradiction – e.g., through rational discourse and public deliberation – but here, too, Kafka introduced a gap. On the one hand, the officer is directly available to the explorer, and so the explorer might have addressed him. Except that all deliberation with the officer is already doubly doomed: for one, the officer has no *decisive* power over the procedure itself (politically, he is the subordinate of the new commandant); and second, he is a firm believer, a “hanger on” (*Anhänger*) of the old commandant (who is dead and, hence, also cannot be “reasoned with”). On the other hand, the one who *does* hold the political power over the procedure, the “new commandant,” seems to – for reasons that are never spelled-out in the story – need the aid of an external and likeminded witness in order to perform any action based on (what the officer calls in disdain) his “feminine” values (this was also one of Nietzsche’s pet insults vis-à-vis “Christian values”). Perhaps the new commandant dares not make this radical move before convincing – with the explorer’s help as a “fellow European” – those whom the officer calls the old commandant’s “silent followers,” but it is difficult to know for sure; they are too silent (they do not speak of their allegiances, they no longer attend the executions, etc.). And so the new commandant and the explorer share the same predicament (the officer hints that they are very much alike): each supposes the other has the necessary power so as to finally act, *de facto*, on their shared European, *de jure*, values.

The values themselves, hence, are unable to close this “gap,” which, I maintain, is precisely a gap of responsibility. It is responsibility for justice that gets lobbed from the new commandant to the explorer and back again, a responsibility that these values always keep at bay, at a distance, from the

justice procedure (and the severe questioning of this procedure's "justice" with regards to these values): the new commandant, who inhabit the colony, is nowhere to be seen or heard throughout the story, and has no contact with either the officer (the latter is not invited to the commandant's administrative meetings), or the procedure, which he never arrives to witness. The explorer is there only from politeness, and comes to witness the procedure, but *only as an outsider* with no ties to the colony, with no established function vis-à-vis its procedures. And both, of course, are estranged from each other – they never meet or speak in person, *only through intermediaries*, and, at any rate, never addressing the justice of the procedure directly, between themselves.

All the new commandant had done so far – that is, until the arrival of his "Trojan Horse" explorer – is only to neglect this "legal system": he no longer attends the executions, no longer provides logistical/financial support in the upkeep of the machine – in short, reconciling himself to the passivity of a denial/aversion rather than vainly declare an active opposition; as if something *above* the legal system itself were at stake. As mentioned above, the new commandant's 'values' are far from endorsing the procedure – that, nonetheless, he has authority over and is responsible for – and yet he does not and cannot provide an alternative justice procedure that would better conform to these values. Instead, or so the officer opines, the new commandant calls in a "foreign" ('*fremde*') witness, foisting his own "authorial privilege" upon *the explorer's reaction* to the proceedings, rather than the commandant's own. But *why?* what is the nature of this relation between the colony's two living governors and this uncanny witness?

This general fact itself is already narrated by the officer, who is also the colony's sole judge ('*Richter*'): "the colony's organization [*Einrichtung*] forms such a self-contained enclosure [*in sich geschlossen*] that his [i.e., the old commandant's] successor, even if his head was bursting with new schemes [*Pläne*], would find it impossible to alter any part of the old system".⁵⁷⁶ Thus, while the new commandant, says the officer, might "sho[w] signs [*gezeigt*] of desiring [*Lust*] to interfere in my judgment", he immediately adds that "hitherto I have succeeded in warding him off and will continue to do so" (p. 116/166 [translation modified]), though he never explains exactly how this resistance is made possible/effective. As he says a bit later, "although he has power enough to proceed against me, he doesn't yet dare, but what he means to do is expose me to your judgment, the judgment of a respected foreigner" (pp. 124-125). It seems, in fact, that it is only due to the "womanly influence" over the new commandant (p. 123) that he does not *act* on his desire ('*Lust*') directly, but only issues signals (*geziegt*; from *Zeiger* – index) that seem to express it.

Here it is vitally important to emphasize that the entire process of describing and vindicating – issuing the necessary signs that will bestow a stable significance/meaning upon it – is always, and only, relayed by the thoughts and whims of this bureaucratic worker of justice. The new commandant never appears in person, and so it is left to the ‘bureaucrat’ actually operating the machine – recall the police officers in the BLM controversy from the previous chapter – to both execute and “clarify” (*erklären*) its justice. Though ‘justice’ is still being ‘executed’ in the colony, the fact remains that *no sovereign is there to assume responsibility for it*: the “old” sovereign is dead, and can only be said to be “there” in structure (colony, machine) and in telos (the epitaph on his grave that calls his devotees to wait for his resurrection); while the new sovereign, despite being in power and alive, is only “there” through these ambiguous and ineffectual ‘signals,’ through his projected hopes on this “respected foreigner”.⁵⁷⁷

Unlike the ‘prudent’ – the one Nietzsche depicts as possessing “the right to make promises,” a ‘person’ or ‘will’ that, by definition, presupposes a pre-existing *investment* – the coward’s radical act of separation absolves her from all previous ties, and hence, also, all such “investments,” all (moral) accountability or guilt. If the prudent – and this includes both ‘loyal members’ to their community (‘good’), and those this community regards as ‘criminals’ (‘bad’) – works in reference to a particular economy of ideals and affects, a particular principle of valuation (what Hegel calls ‘Right’), the coward is the contradictory ‘meta criminal’ whose “principle” is itself an estrangement to principles. Perhaps even more than ‘evil,’ the coward detaches from the entire system/structure – whether accolades or guilt – that this principle distributes. Like Hegel’s Abraham, she loses the very *propriety* of what makes her ‘human’ (and not merely a “subject”) in the eyes of ‘Right’. This confluence of will with right, this necessity of propriety and appropriation, is what Hegel could count as the definitive, indeed the decisive element that makes for a human being, that starts a right-less “subject” on the path of becoming a member of an ethical community, a *Sittlichkeit*; appropriation of the external world, actualization of one’s will in/on it, becomes the very basis of right tout court. In his *Grundlinien* Hegel puts it like this:

[...] ‘Person’ is essentially different from ‘subject’, since ‘subject’ is only the possibility of personality [*Persönlichkeit*]; every living thing of any sort is a subject. A person, then, is a subject aware of this subjectivity, since in personality I am for myself as such. The person is the individuality of freedom in its pure being-for-self. (PR §35A)

Abraham, of course, whose entire approach to *Sittlichkeit* had been usurped by an Absolute Other, would have no such personality, for he is not for himself as such, but for himself through an Absolute Other. Indeed, recalling Hegel’s comments on Abraham in his Spirit essay, and keeping in mind the

Lévinasian ethics of being for the Other, one might hazard a speculation that Hegel's thinking simply cannot accommodate any form of for the other: thus, even when judging a radical break with *Sittlichkeit* like Abraham's, one that put left Abraham himself (and later his most precious son) in a rather precarious situation, leaving him to "father" a 'fate' that is full of suffering and can arouse only horror in Hegel, he has no choice but to deem this as an act *directed at the 'self,'* except in the most unnatural way imaginable. In this, he is just like Heidegger's 'fundamentalizing' *Dasein's* being-towards-its-own-death. Being (Heidegger) and signifying (Hegel) for the Other is something neither can even imagine having any philosophical import, nor, a fortiori, any ethical priority.

Lévinas' philosophy of the Other is no longer Rimbaud's "I am an Other," but a Jewish-elected, *first philosophy* of "I am *for* the Other;" without this priority of this ethical phenomenology of thought (rather than ontological, transcendental or spiritual). His philosophy of justice is not reducible to Hegelian 'right' and its voluntary (however 'spiritual') basis – not given to the freedom that is implied in its concept of Truth (as the reconciliation of will with itself) – but is, rather, an "anti-personal" philosophy of radical separation. The Lévinasian "hostage," as shown above, is not "the individuality of freedom" but closer to being an entity that *attests to an Other* 'freedom,' a "difficult" freedom that holds the "individual person" in abeyance – the Other taking "me" as hostage without consent (not even the Other's consent). The Other calls me in an an-archic manner, before any "will" can arise. In this sense, Hegel's "It is the will in and for itself which is *truly infinite*" (PR Introduction §22) shows that Hegel projects a "will" onto where the Jews indeed were only allowed to see a Law (and not the "will," the ultimate 'Why?' that is behind it). I would hazard saying that it is this projected "will" – as a dynamic appropriation of the Jewish God's infinite separation – that animates and gives the substance to his concept of 'spirit.' This is the "infinite" that will be deemed "true," while the other infinite – the one associated with the Judaic God – will be deemed "bad" as precisely the infinite which does not return to itself, that is not, the like free will, utterly and absolutely for itself.⁵⁷⁸

This 'will' must, hence, be presupposed in young Hegel's views of Abraham's act, for it could only devolve on some "will," and, in the absence of any incarnate existence of this will, must be accorded to Abraham himself, even if this creates a tension with Hegel's other statements on the complete lack of subjective actuality on the part of the Jews. Hence Abraham, for Hegel, "tore himself free altogether from his family as well, in order to be a wholly self-subsistent, independent man, to be an overlord himself" (ETW, p. 185 [my underline]). His "spirit," Hegel has no choice but to conclude, was "a spirit of self-maintenance" (ibid, p. 184 [my underline]), which, eventually, will be accorded to the

“spirit” of the Divine, of the Absolute itself (like the Jewish God, except, of course, that here “letter” had already been usurped by “spirit”).

This Jewish/Abrahamic (non-)position presents a problem for Western thought, particularly when it sets out to establish the “zero degree” of what is human, to separate the ‘human’ from the ‘animal,’ a “free will” from a slavish one, between the “living” spirit and the “dead” letter. This zero degree, as already betrayed in Dante, cannot be fully defined, and must operate silently under the surface as an overarching assumption – which is also why the coward is such a dangerous threat to it. Abraham, like the Jew in general, seems to this framework to be stuck in Dante’s “unregistered” ‘vestibule,’ somewhere between human and animal. Entirely in the sphere of Nature, the animal still has its beauty and legitimacy, while Jewish existence truly appears as an abomination, some human-animal hybrid that blurs the distinctions between the two, for it uses a human will to will an animal slavishness of not willing, of relinquishing all *propriety* (of thought, of *power*) to God:

The principle of the entire legislation [i.e., Mosaic Law; SC] was the spirit inherited from his forefathers, i.e., was the infinite Object, the sum of all truth and all relations, which thus is strictly the sole infinite subject, [...]. [...] [...] they are without intrinsic worth and empty, without life; they are not even something dead a nullity yet they are a something only in so far as the infinite Object makes them something, i.e., makes them not something which *is* but something *made* which on its own account has no life, no rights, no love. Where there is universal enmity, there is nothing left save physical dependence, an animal existence which can be assured only at the expense of all other existence, and which the Jews took as their fief. This exception, this expected isolated security, follows of necessity from the infinite separation (‘Spirit,’ ETW, p. 191)

Now, since, for the mature Hegel, “[p]ersonality is that which acts [...] to claim [the] external world as its own” (PR §39 [my underline]), then the coward, the one who reverts back to his own “infinite particularity” with no ownership in sight, with no ontologically defined telos (which could only attain presence as an onto-historical projection, as *Da-sein*), has no “personality,” is not a real “person.” Like Abraham, the progenitor of the Jews, his desire is purely negative: “not to love” (ETW, p. 185), to remain separated, in the name of something which must, on pain of death, remain non-incarnate, unworkable, irreconcilable, alien. It necessarily leads to a “base” existence, at least in the eyes of the European *Bildung* of which Hegel spoke, *whose philosophy of right Hegel articulated*; what I called above the “decisive element” to separate the (modern *category* of the) “human,” from its lower, or barbarian existence as “animal”.⁵⁷⁹ The latter seems to always throw it all away for the sake – but this is an assumption, *itself* made from a particular (Hegelian-Christian) ‘spirit’ – of the vanity of its own “particularity.” And, once again, it is the “higher” that can leave this vain obsession behind:

[...] Since, in personality, particularity is not present as freedom, everything which depends on particularity is here a matter of indifference. To have no interest except in one's formal right may be pure obstinacy, often a fitting accompaniment of a cold heart and restricted sympathies: for it is uncultured people who insist most on their rights, while noble minds look on other aspects of the thing. (PR §37A)

With regards to Western metaphysics, hence, this is a tough, *always questionable* absolution ('Why?'), one that spells the "*difficult* freedom" of her detachment as an ethico-metaphysical nomad. As discussed above, the coward can only make utterly *unreasonable* "promises," oaths whose logic runs "ahead of itself," excessive to the point of perjury, addressed to no-one and to no-thing (e.g., the Jewish "we will do and we will hear," or the Abra(ha)mic "*me voici*").⁵⁸⁰ What's more, like Abram's disillusionment with and self-exile from his pagan roots, she no longer receives the same support from the horizons of understanding upon which her 'Da' is projected, as if a disturbance in Being's very Truth interrupts *all* such projections until such (unknown) time when a new 'Da(sein)' could be patched up for her, a new 'Truth' that (be)comes to be "held" (perhaps to be betrayed again – the Nietzschean experiment).

Such a radical stance of separation is, of course, no more *universalizable* – philosophically and/or politically – than a contract signed only by traitors is graspable/conceivable; a blind spot of Being, a scandal of telos, an 'exception' that, as yet, can cite no *definite* 'sovereign.' Like Abram, the coward is stuck between a present "daddy" that she rejects and an 'Unknown' ("*über/unter-daddy?*") that she, *imprudently*, follows. An antipathology was necessary from the outset, then, because the phenomenology of the coward's betrayal could only come from its accusers, those she betrays or leaves behind, not just chronologically (Judaism's break with Paganism, Abram's break with his community), but logically (Christian antisemitism). She herself has neither substance nor argument, nothing to "contribute" – in the realm of 'Right'/'*Sittlichkeit*' – but the pain of these torn, abandoned project(ion)s, be they spiritual, ontological, or communal.

Antipathology was necessitated by this structural predicament, that the coward can never, in any way, "speak for herself" in a manner that would be comprehensible to her betrayed surroundings. She does not even have "herself" to offer, as a kind of sacrifice that would solidify or "incarnate" her "point" (e.g., Jesus Christ), for her point is already the plaything of a transcendent that took over her very 'personality' and *pointed her elsewhere*. All the coward can do is save her 'skin,' and all she has to "work" with is the 'spiritual abjection' that this entails; her "soul," the 'substance' of her 'person,' doesn't even enter (indeed *precluded* from entering) into it. It is almost as if the coward's betrayal – and

the comportment towards the worldly ‘Das’ – spelled a human Hell-bent on *becoming* an animal, a *Dasein* that separates herself from all ‘Das’ of the ‘world’: if the animal is “poor in world” according to Heidegger, here is one who “sells” it for free, who quits it – an abomination that even the animal is not capable of. The young and unabashedly antisemitic Hegel spells this logic out – as well the metaphysical assumptions that gives this logic its force/conviction – with laudable precision, and rare candor:

[...] The state of independence [*Zustand der Unabhängigkeit*], linked to universal hostility, could not [historically] persist; it is too opposed to nature [*Natur*]. In other peoples the state of independence is a state of good fortune, of humanity [*Menschlichkeit*] at a more beautiful level. With the Jews, the state of independence was to be a state of total passivity [*völligen Passivität*], of total ugliness [*Häßlichkeit*]. Because their independence secured to them only food and drink, an indigent existence, it followed that with this independence, with this little, all was lost or jeopardized. There was no life left over which they could have maintained or enjoyed, whose enjoyment would have taught them to bear many a distress and make many sacrifices; under oppression their wretched existence at once came into jeopardy and they struggled to rescue it. This animal existence [*tierische Dasein*] was not compatible with the more beautiful form of human life which freedom [*Freiheit*] would have given them. (‘Spirit,’ ETW, p. 202/S.1:294 [my underline])

The coward’s “awakening,” hence, leaves behind – be it *actively or passively* (since ‘will’ is suspended, undermined in this “state of *total* passivity”) – everything that gives sustenance to her political life (‘Right’) and/or substance to her faith (‘Truth’), in the name of a commitment to something that does not make sense, does not appear on, but *interferes* with, the ontological/communal radar. The frantic looks of this “chosen,” persecuted hostage are, hence, nothing like the diffuse panoramic vision of the Greek noble’s leisurely ‘wonder,’ nor the aspiring gaze that’s directed towards its ‘absolution’ or ‘salvation’ in fulfilling the ‘Good.’ The only traces that they ever leave, for ‘me’ (*not* ‘us’) to follow, is the hatred of those it betrays, quits supporting, leaves behind. The coward’s act is so scandalous because it cannot – and in Judaism this is an overriding principle – be incarnated or invested in any universalizable economy; it cannot be translated without remainder to a system that would reconcile itself with the rest of the world or its ‘*Weltgeschichte*.’ Hence the radicality of the Jews’ symbolic nomadism that can never affirm a freedom of will, and, hence, *can never translate itself affectively* to any other people other than the chosen ones. It will be, indeed, up to the priest of resentment to effect this translation, and up to the Evangel to spread it throughout Europe.

CONCLUSION

One does not set out to think (about) betrayal just like that, out of nowhere. One must be *hard pressed* to think it, whether from the self-coiling of its agonized victim, or the destitute, not to say abject necessity of its perpetrator. Betrayal seems to cut through any demarcation, any propriety or identity, whether that which defines a communal “we” or an individual(‘s) “I,” whether rooted in the same ground or projecting towards the same horizon.

As a term of political rhetoric, betrayal taps into a unique knot in freedom; a (non-)position from which to claim the force and necessity of the witness, *theoros* or *martyr*, to write or overwrite a (hi)story that, somehow, never turned out as expected. As witness is traced through her ‘testimony,’ the latter opens to the radical question of its justification, the ‘saying’ of its ‘said.’ There is a Why between her and her testimony that coheres its legitimacy, that coheres her very sovereignty, that solidifies her rights as witness and her narrative’s rights as a Truth.

But it is also a metaphysical pandora’s box that must not be opened, and the sovereign knows it; a “dark knowledge” she shares with only one other – the traitor.

Be it in the soliloquy of a vow, the *parrēsia* of an oath, or the universality of knowledge, the ‘What’ that seems to present itself cannot, in itself, exhaust this presentation; language, ritual, fact, all insist, for better or worse, that the ‘What’ finds trust in something beyond it. A mechanism, a causal-chain, a narrative – all demand ratification: ‘I’ need to remember my vow, ‘we’ need to believe the oath, a ‘scientific finding’ needs to cite methodological support to a community of peers. What-ever “comes up,” cannot come up on its own: be it a figment of the imagination or a measurable occurrence, this ‘What’ needed something *other* than itself to come into Being.

The question of trust, then – and this is doubly important in an age that is now dubbed the age of post truth – cannot be avoided. Modern Physicists, arguably *the* scientists of ‘What,’ are now generally in agreement that mere observation already introduces a change in the ‘What’ measured or observed, a change that, itself, cannot be measured or observed.⁵⁸¹ Descartes had shown that my senses cannot be trusted to give a stable, trustworthy ‘What’ that is true for all (other) circumstances and all (other) observers. Kant complained the Reason itself betrays us by leading us to think we know there where we cannot know. Nietzsche confirmed that every memory will, eventually, always succumb to pride.

What-ever it is that is taken for ‘real’ – whether appealing to own senses or a *sensus communis* – will always imply a *process* by which this ‘What’ came to be, a ‘Why’ that connects a cause to an effect. The common question “says Who?” – whether answered by “me” or “science” or “everybody” – would

always pull (on) this chain. Whether it is my senses or memory, the scientist's measuring tools or her methods, the "ground" that the 'What' relies on is always one of testimony, a transmission. This troubled and murky past of each 'What,' then, the distance from which it is given or "gives itself," place us right at the center of the problem of 'betrayal:' *tradere*, a compound of *trans* and *dare*, a "giving over a distance." The question of 'Who' decides reality, then, will always open up this very distance, even if reduced to a supposedly a-tomic "I," thereby splitting it: 'Senses' and 'Cognition,' 'Intuitions' and 'Concepts,' 'Pride' and 'Memory.' Any unity or synthesis between the two, to give both the 'Who' and the 'What,' the 'Subject' and the 'Object,' the ontological *solidity* they presuppose, always implies this transmission, this connective chain.

This space or spacing between the 'Who' and the 'What' is also, to use Jacques Derrida's expression, where the limit trembles. Betrayal, at its very "zero degree," indicates a *difference* that threatens to break the identity of the 'What,' to recall it back to that nebulous pre-history where it was still becoming, when its closure or coherence were still *a question*. It could be a simple incident of a chair that breaks apart the second someone sits on it, bringing the assumptions that underlie the 'What' of the chair into question (is it really a chair if it cannot be sat on?); it could be the much graver incident of a citizen of a nation-state that divulges sensitive "national security" information to the rest of the world (which includes that nation-state's enemies and rivals), bringing his identity as 'citizen' – with all its spoken and unspoken assumptions – back into question. A chair "should" be available for sitting, but it turns out to be an unstable assemblage with its own frailties and contingencies; a citizen "should" always pursue the good of her 'country,' but she turns out to be the site of a struggle between the country's laws/habits and its good. A critical distance is opened here, perhaps, but it is all the more painful for that.

Following the ambitious project that Emmanuel Lévinas had dubbed "ethics as first philosophy," I treated this problematic of betrayal as first and foremost an ethical one, where 'testimony' replaces the traditional epistemological notions of 'experience' and 'causality.' Thus, 'reality' itself became a testimony, a 'What' that, for all its apparent solidity, always arrives with this "sketchy past," originating in a Who that always remains unseen, like Aristotle's unmoved mover, or the theologian's God, or Descartes' *genium malignum*. Though a decidedly *asymmetrical* relation, the 'Who' that remains unseen and all-powerful not only betrays "me" with this 'What,' but also itself. No direct connection can be claimed here, no absolute necessity can be proven, but this betrayal itself affords entry to 'the Who's

Why.’ Unlike Heidegger’s “ontological fundamentalism,” Lévinas asks not ‘Why is there a ‘What?’,’ but, forever the “complainer,” ‘Why not *otherwise*?’

When Friedrich Nietzsche dared to pose the question about the value of Truth, when he dared to enter the Why that held reality together as an ethical question, a vast field of questioning opens up before him; not yet questions, but the “stuff” of questions; an unsavory location for a “tryst [*Stelldichein*] of questions [*Fragen*] and question marks [*Frage-zeichen*]”.⁵⁸² If the ‘Who’ is the question, and the ‘What’ is what *marks it as a question*, the ‘Why’ is precisely where they conduct their sordid and temporary “affairs.”

This brings us back to Schmitt’s problem of ‘Sovereignty’ and ‘exception.’ It is perhaps the one unique gift of *any* ‘sovereign power,’ any Subject, to have made it out of this ‘Why’ cloud with a ‘What:’ some form or contour, an image or symbol of justice or truth (e.g., a crown, a cross, a contract) that would both assure a stable, sanctioned origin of the testimony, and protect it from being found-out or exposed. Not only is this an implication that sovereigns are forever threatened by and therefore hate, as Plutarch testifies, but also a ‘love’ *that all of them share*. The sovereign has nothing against betrayal, for she know its enormous power to impose a change (preferably after her own will); she does, however, *hate* to see it reflected in its *remainders*, in the ‘traitors’ themselves.

These nomads of political power forever remind the sovereign that they hold a power at least equal to, if not greater, than hers. Traitors can effect a change in a more radical, often quicker manner than any military strike or dialectical rhetoric – they know the ins-and-outs of the(ir own) system, its inner logic and weaknesses, and are hence in a unique position to “cut it off at the knees.” Swearing to represent Almighty God or the Greater Good, betrayal’s perfidy and perjury refer both sovereign and traitor to this common origin, a “*nom de per*” they both share: a lie could only come through (*per*) oath, just as ‘evil’ could only come through faith.

It is from this non-place – covert, “seedy” and dynamic – that the categories of ‘traitor’ and ‘hero,’ ‘terrorist’ and ‘freedom fighter’ issue forth concretely in the sovereign’s testimony, but not without tracing an origin to the unceasing inter-contamination and flow of that impenetrable cloud. The sovereign’s declaration of ‘traitor,’ then, *resonates* with this space’s “questionable” dynamic, both affirming this infirmity and taking hold of it. The abjection of the traitor follows Sovereignty like a knowing smile from the concierge in that love-hotel that the former “just had to visit,” once, in her youth, or a couple more instances, in a time of sovereign crisis. It was all for the greater Good, for the glory of God, for Justice or Truth.

The ‘What’ that appears, the being that is consciously affirmed and/or institutionally confirmed, provides an ‘identity’ or ‘subjectivity,’ an anchor upon which trust and loyalty hang as the necessary links that make up a ‘reality’ or ‘actuality.’ Whether these links are seen as analytic, logical, moral or historical-empirical – i.e., pertaining to language, thought, value or natural-law (respectively) – they imply a decision, a direction or delimitation of a ‘Why’ that “holds the ‘What’ together,” as it were. The same logic, hence, continues onto ‘history,’ for history is a ‘What’ always already delivered by a sovereign: a *narrative* that must proceed through an assumed Why, the causal coherence wherein millions of tiny decisions concerning human will and/or the phenomenology of perception will be made in the interest of allowing this ‘What’ to “stand on its own.”

This “‘Why’ predicament” of testimony and witness – both ethical and metaphysical in its scope – corresponded the problematic of betrayal with a problematic of *method*. As the fundamental questioning of any mediation, the ‘Why’ needs to be claimed before any rights or power are accorded its resulting ‘What’: whether a King claiming a ‘Divine Right,’ a Sovereign that cites the ‘general good,’ or a historian that traces a ‘causal narrative,’ there is always the suspicion that something might have been lost (or purloined) “in translation,” attended by the ideal/hope that somehow, miraculously, it was “true to source.” So long, then, that this sovereignty is open to question – i.e., so long as it is not considered absolute – looking at the way (‘*hodos*’) that this path is travelled, taking a critical distance (‘*meta*’) from it, becomes not only necessary, but crucial, urgent; attended by all the dangers and promises of sovereign *power*.

This problem is perhaps most fundamentally a problem of change, a temporal knot that no ‘What,’ however well thought-out, however ‘proper,’ can untie. The process by which the chair or the citizen became “unworthy of their name” so to speak had to include a shift that only the ‘What’ can register. But does it register it faithfully? As far back as Aristotle the tracing of time had been made possible only as a measure of change⁵⁸³ in the ‘What.’ Would time itself be different if my watch had a different pace than other watches? The reality of time is only ever asserted, juts into existence as it were, when a change in the What is perceived; whether looking at a watch, falling with a has-been chair, or judging a betrayal.

The traitor’s radical power/promise proceeds from her knowledge of the host system’s susceptibility to change, the logic of its ‘Whys’ – how it effects its own ‘What’ by channeling various forces (that, left to themselves, might very well dissolve it); an access provided precisely because the traitor is herself a part of this logic, her own drives and Whys being *intimately associated* with her host

system's appropriative 'What,' but *not wholly appropriated* by it for all that. For a sovereign to claim 'a traitor,' then, is already to hail back to this intimate space where "I" was "in bed with the Other," as it were, there where the threat of contamination always-already looms.

Hence it was the *hatred* of the sovereign to the traitor that I found most compromising of the sovereign Who. Modern philosophy's attempts to secure this sovereignty by putting its 'Why,' as Kant wished, on the secure path to science, could be spied to betray something of this Who through its constant insistence that the only relevant Whys are Truth and Necessity; or, as Hegel put it, that it was all out of 'Love.' The disdainful way with which this supposedly sober or divine Why treated of the skeptic gave a first indication not only to locating this space of questioning (i.e., Nietzsche's "the value of Truth"), but to the desperate urgency that the Who enlists to avoid it "being opened again." Hegel understood that skeptics cannot be trusted, and so he "reconciled" them into his System, there where 'Who' and 'What' lived in a happy edifice of 'Spirit,' using the skeptic's Why to mix the cement. This was a clean, philosophical solution; it could claim for itself the name of Reason and Reconciliation, posit the skeptic as the hateful and vain schismatic, "killing it softly" with 'Love.' The skeptics, after all, were that *other* witness – the Kantian nomad, with no reverence for "the work we're doing here" – that jeopardized, not philosophy itself, but precisely its sovereignty, its *scientific assurance* (as Truth).

Alas, while that may have worked with the pagan and Christian skeptics, with the Greek *theoros* and the European *martyr*, things were not so simple with the "chosen" witness. In his youth, Hegel had identified the Jews as the *odium generis humani*, and to the last did not quite understand what they are still doing here. He looked at their unnatural tragedy, as he saw them suffering persecution after persecution – the direct result, the 'fate,' of their 'spirit' – for still worshipping their "bad infinity", the vanity of holding on to their absolute particularity. His 'World Spirit' could 'reconcile' everything else – seduce every other all witness to the Truth (as the final solution to all ethico-metaphysical 'Whys') – except *the Jewish witness* that, unlike the skeptic, was present and glaring, forever provoking hatred from our loving Christian.

How could a people witness the same Revelation from the Same God and still not be willing to "let go" of their vain idea of witnessing? Why could they not just merge with the Truth of Christ through His spirit or love and reconciliation? Just "find their place" in the totalities of 'world' and 'concept'?

Even Heidegger, for all his attempts to avoid the Hegelian "theology" by staying "this side of history," could not, in the end, avoid this metaphysical hatred. Seeking to regulate the 'Why' through history and place (i.e. 'Da'), he encountered a people that refused to locate themselves in either. Once

again, it was this hatred, *specifically the 'Why' of this hatred*, that betrayed Heidegger's shared 'spirit' with Hegel; bringing the "theology" he thought he had "ontologized away" from, back in through the back door. For all his rigor and "ontological fundamentalism," for all his anti-theology and resistance to Hegel, it was Heidegger's hatred that betrayed him in the end, be it in his *Schwarze Hefte* or his *Rektorsrede*. His philosophy of Being betrayed some other, foreign interest to ontology; precisely the ethico-metaphysical interruption he sought, *like Hegel*, to avoid. The very sovereignty of history and Being were heretofore betrayed by this hatred; Heidegger knew this, but could not speak to it.

Like Nietzsche's own witness to the 'will to power,' the Jew maintained a vain, not to say mad relation to 'Truth.' This 'vain' witness would always break apart that which European thought sought to secure. Neither history nor "ground," neither Truth nor God, could claim rights over their Law, a Law which owes a radical responsibility to the enormous, historically unparalleled forces it could unleash if given a single direction. The Truth, the final solution to the Why, would not itself bring Justice, but would only arrive after Justice already reigns; the Jew's was never a Truth of history but always meta-historical in the original sense of the word – it comes only *after* history had come to a close. Nietzsche, likewise, subjected Truth to justice by asking, perhaps for the first time *within* 'philosophy' – after its value. Nietzsche too was worried about Absolute Truth falling, not to the "wrong" hands, but to *any* hands.

Perhaps this is what marked the Jews as 'spiritual traitors' in the eyes of western thought's (conception of) sovereignty; the one 'exception' that even Schmitt's exception turns away from in horror. The sovereign has the most vested interests in not opening up the 'Why' to question again, but knows, along with the traitor, that this is an ongoing struggle, requiring the discipline of a principle that assures this closure. Indeed, the traitor's only "point of attack" – where it touches or communicates with the sovereign most intimately, most painfully – to turns this principle against the sovereign; to interrupt or destroy the system's claim to self-absolution. The sovereign, witness to Truth and a firm believer in its civilizing mission(s), simply cannot sympathize, neither with the skeptic, nor with the Jew: even if it is always a lie that sovereign power or veracity is based on, what does it 'matter' 'What' lie (or 'Who' came up with it)? What difference does a "*per*" make for the *fides* or the *iuris*? It had always-already compromised their integrity, so why bother splitting hairs? No final solution would come of this procedure, it is empty and vain, its "negativity" only yields senseless conflicts that do not, *in the end*, make a difference.

But *until the end* – for she who is averse to all absolute principles, to all “ends” – *it does make a difference*. In the eyes of western thought, hence, insofar as it can claim a grasp on/or sovereignty – which it does in the name of ‘Mankind’ or ‘Humanity’ – ‘the Jew’ will always fall short of both. Her permeating the “world” without taking part *in it* forever retards the latter from the totalized de-finition of the Christian embrace; no world-spirit, no overarching ‘Why,’ only repetitive interruptions of attachment, a million of *particular* ‘Whys’ that obsessively refuse the ‘reconciliation’ of a comprehensive view. The Jew no longer plays a “master-slave” game/war with Nature (like the rest of the world’s nations), but escapes, to Hegel’s horror, to worship a foreign principle *with no ‘end’ in sight*. Her political abjection coincides with the moral abjection Hegel(’s system) has for the Jew: the “groundless” latter refuses the dialectic – that can fashion, or presuppose, a “free will” out of this ‘ground’ alone – and instead cowers behind an alien “Why” or “will” that separates her from the world and reduces her to the ‘fate’ of this abject non-position.

It was, I believe, this abject non-position of the Jew that corresponds to Lévinas’ concept of ‘hostage,’ and that it is the Jewish ‘spirit’ to remain such hostages that marks them as cowards and traitors to God’s ‘spirit.’ This radical interruption in the “freedom of will” – and the philosophy of time/history it implied – had made Heidegger so disdainful towards the ‘*Bodenlose*’ Jews, whose existence was indeed deemed empty due to their inability to commit to a historical Why, never rising to the level of ‘Destiny.’ Similar to Nietzsche’s “a priori,” the Jewish hostage has a “permanent previous engagement” that – from an ethico-metaphysical approach to time⁵⁸⁴ – “always already” interrupts her historical being through interjecting between her and the ‘spiritual commitments’ imposed by the world she “out-habits.” A spiritual coward that, when the historical push comes to shove, will militantly refuse both to shove along and to “shove off.” An Other holds ‘me’ hostage, and this commitment’s *an-archival* stature overrides and interrupts all my historical horizons, my cares, promises and projections: despite coming later, “in history,” this interruption somehow manages to crawl behind its back of my ‘history’ – the various concepts and values that narrativize my “I” and the common ‘horizons’ that give it substance/meaning – and suddenly claims to have come *first*, usurping the appropriations that ‘will’ or ‘knowledge,’ ‘Soul’ or ‘Being,’ necessarily presuppose. This veritably *unreasonable* commitment – the “doing before hearing” kind – responds to an ethico-metaphysical command that overrides and suspends all existing values, all causal chains (i.e., the narratives that make them cohesive). Like a principle of evil, of an always-otherwise (than Truth, than Being), the Jew, the Coward, remains to testify in the name of the Other, to signify for the Other; literally giving a “bad” name to the “infinite”.

This suspension or alienation is achieved by challenging the *principle* of valuation itself, which also means undermining the ‘Truth’ that the coward had, formerly, “held to be true;” the ‘Da’ that gives her an ontological ‘existence’ or ‘presence;’ the “will,” along with its (treacherous) “freedom,” with which she had made her former promises. Once again, as in the case of the skeptic, this challenge is issued *through* the coward herself; it takes a particular kind of “metaphysics of will” to claim that this “through” actually means ‘by,’ and a particular approach to ontology to claim that beginning from (and returning to) ‘Being’/‘Da’ legitimizes obviating this distinction/difference.⁵⁸⁵ It is thus that *any kind of singling-out of the coward* will necessarily *expose* the particular ethico-metaphysical decision/violence made by this metaphysics, which is why the Jew will always remain – and is perhaps *held onto as* – a thorn in its side. If the Greek tragic hero, as seen/appropriated by German Idealism, has, as Schelling put it, “nothing left but fight and fall,” the coward, as the *other* tragedy’s “loser,” has nothing left but to escape, and complain.

The Lévinasian witness testifies, hence, not to a Truth Being but to the exteriority of its *il y a*. The witness to the ‘insubstantial’ trace, the purveyor of the *différance* behind Dante’s “any *other* fate”, this witness never allows the latter to congeal long enough to be reconciled; to be positioned and counter-positioned until it cannot be seen anymore. This metaphysical skeptic signifies *for the Other*, for a ‘Why’ That comes from *else-where* and goes *else-where*, with no “returns” on its investments, no expiation for its ‘guilt’.⁵⁸⁶ To this “non-theodical theology” (if this is not an oxymoron), Justice does not mean freedom from pain or injustice – by a Truth or a Knowledge that “puts them in perspective once and for all” – but rather calls ‘me’ to the “difficult freedom” of a chosen hostage. Not wholly a “slave,” irreducible to Hegel’s tragic dialectic, its “master’s” calls for *signification*, for speaking this testimony for the destitute Other in the becoming of a new moral regard, the saying that persecutes every new moral value that is held or “said.” This ‘difficult freedom’ never dreams of a day when the Other will no longer be Other, when the Other will finally be “on par” with the ‘I’ and hence can enter into my/our economy of valuation or guilt, and be “done” with. For this Levinatschean witness no principle of valuation is safe from this merciless destitution of the Other, just like no will is safe from the array of forces that brought it into Being but always murmur indignantly beneath, ready to breach its closures, to pull the ‘Da’ out from under its Truth.

It is this challenge, hence, that shows the coward’s uncanny “potential” in unravelling any system. It can undermine any community/*Sittlichkeit* that operates under the *assumption* of its own justification and “moral freedom” – its own “power neutrality” (e.g., Nietzsche’s ‘democratic prejudice’) – by

provoking this system to make an assumption-less justification of its operation, to employ the absolute justice that it claims *for* itself, *upon* itself. This is the core of her betrayal, for it is only with this provocation (from PIE root *wekw – “to speak”) that the denied power/violence of the system is *made to speak*, a squeaky wheel in a supposedly silent, remainder-less machine, eventually collapsing it to reveal what Nietzsche saw as the terrible price of this particular, *ethico-metaphysical* ‘prejudice.’

It might thus be said that the coward is a “hollow shell of an individual,” a pure ‘vanity,’ since all she can boast of is – and this is true both when judged from a “fundamental ontology” (Heidegger), and when judged from a “speculative idealism” (Hegel) – precisely the contingents and inessentials, the “exterior” of sense, the ‘skin’ rather than the ‘soul.’ It is indeed this “(almost) nothing” that the aforementioned system seeks to annihilate as a senseless resistance, one that this system “converts” to, so to speak, a “*proper* nothing”. I offer to take Hegel’s comment with utter seriousness when says (above) that, “with this little, all was lost” (‘Spirit,’ p. 202 [my underline]); indeed, it is precisely *the ethico-metaphysical horizon of the “all”* that is jeopardized by this obsessive vanity.

Hence, I construe the coward’s betrayal/interruption as the result of a Lévinasianly ‘passive’ *communication* with the Who. It spells a philosophical predicament, where the sovereign(‘s) ‘I’ – armed with history and ‘reasons’ – proves only a late appearance, following the “very little” of a ‘me’ that is called to respond for an *other* ‘Who’ “within” the sovereign’s. “I” am compromised, called to respond as the witness of a *trace* that – *spiritually* “bankrupt,” signifying *only* ‘difference’ (which, to ‘Truth’ and ‘Knowledge,’ precisely *counts as “nothing”*) – jolts ‘me’ to respond (yet *not “all”*). This *responsibility* is one that involves a singular (s)election, a chosenness and separation. The knotted temporality that Levinatztch bespeaks urges this ‘me’ in a veritably “unreasonable” manner, where any “free will” or ‘I’ is itself always-already “too late.” This makes for a kind of ‘will’ that is itself ‘vain,’ only a *singular* (not necessarily truthful/universal/spiritual) response given *before* understanding/comprehending, via an interminable process of signification. The ‘will’ of a hostage testifying for an Other that seems to “speak” only through interruptions and offsets, through an, admittedly very *frustrating*, “*otherwise*.” Just remember what this “otherwise obsession” did to Hitler and Luther, and how it affected (if not effected) their own “conversions” to antisemitism.

This witnessing/awakening takes an ethico-metaphysical precedence over all (what Nietzsche sees as) merely “held” ‘Whys’, like ‘Good,’ ‘Truth’... *A treacherous awakening* that recalls Who-ever holds the Why to a crisis of legitimacy; a crisis that awakens (in ‘me’) an *obsession* with the Law/Justice that always already usurps all my “Whys,” usurping all my “holdings.” This is a crisis that indeed

“signifies,” indeed produces signs and ‘letters,’ except not “for self-knowledge,” *not for the ‘Same’* to appropriate – so that “our” *Begriff* could come back “richer,” more substantially absolved as ‘*absolutes Wissen*.’ This *signification*, as Lévinas counters, is radically articulated *for the Other*, and hence can never be supposed to “return” with any kind of absolute assurance (e.g., from its “inner Truth,”); almost as if the coward, becoming (or being “chosen” to become) the witness of this ‘trace,’ involves a “becoming trace” herself, losing all hold on substance and significance, on ‘world’ and ‘Da,’ in signification’s vain madness of ‘letters’.

The Jewish coward is the witness to the gap that the Hegelian-Christian *Aufhebung* machine cannot reconcile; it is that vain remainder of ‘spirit’ that keeps throwing up interruptive reminders that ‘Truth’ is irreducible to undeniability, that Justice is irreducible to making sure that no one is in a position to complain, that the hatred of hatred is not identical with love. Ridding our thought of the witness to the traces that our sovereign violence leaves behind – however righteous or justified, however ‘spiritual,’ natural, or systematic/automatic –making sure the victim can no longer speak, does not exhaust the demands of Justice; it only aggravates them, in the full sense of the word. Thus, my Levinatzschean witness – wielding the ‘spiritual abjection’ that combines the madness of an interminable “test drive” and the “difficult freedom” of the hostage – attends both to the ignored/inappropriate breaches of Heidegger’s ontological closure, as well as the cries from the victims of Hegel’s spiritual “bonfire of the vanities.”

Levinatzschean antipathology shows that this dark riddle precisely becomes exposed in antisemitic hatred, in the historical form of seemingly irrational or spontaneous “outbursts” of violence from Christians towards Jews. Here it is the fact that the Jews *remain* – in their frustratingly irreconcilable position of inner/outer witnesses to violence and injustice (e.g., Hitler and Luther) – that points to the way this “dark riddle” had been allowed to “remain” as well; in the background, left of center, awaiting its next tragic catharsis. This pattern of thought can only be *told* by a coward traitor, and applies to any spiritual impediment or interruption of absolute metaphysical closures; at least insofar as they map onto Western thought’s oftentimes unconsciously violent, and yet well-meaning and spiritually justified, treatment of its others.

*

The a metaphysical difference/hatred that I track here might very well be undermined, redefined, or just internally troubled by the *other* historically irreconcilable hatred/difference that I had not addressed: the *sexual* one. This will have to be left to another time, in another project of tracking

betrayal through what I call the betrayal of the Corpse; the historically resilient hatred of women as a sign of the hatred of the Body and its own betrayal(s). This will be the next difference that I will have to speak to, that calls me to responsibility; it has held me hostage, accused, throughout this dissertation, of an unaddressed misogyny.

There is much room for other antipathologies, even for those who are already inscribed, even for those who are indifferent (for this indifference is always *afforded*), and, of course, for those who have historically fought against the system I am betraying here. Perhaps there are “me”s that will have been hailed by this example, or by other hateful encounters; provided there are those still willing to shake such unclean, irredeemable hands.

ENDNOTES

¹ Plutarch, 'The Life of Romulus,' *Plutarch Lives Vol. I: Theseus and Romulus. Lycurgus and Numa. Solon and Publicola*, trans. Bernadotte Perrin (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard UP, 1914), p. 141 (17.3)

² Jean-Francois Lyotard, *The Differend: Phrases in Dispute*, trans. Georges van den Abbeele (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 2007), p. 5

³ Change is, as Aristotle famously asserted, the *phenomenon* of time, for it is that through which time "appears." Cf.

⁴ Cf. Constantin Fasolt, *The Limits of History* (Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, 2004).

⁵ If Sin is transgression against the Law, and the new Law (or meta-Law in this case) is for 'Man' to internalize the Law in his heart, then vanity, Hegel and Luther's 'Eitelkeit' or emptiness, is the quintessential state of Sin, its basis; a stubbornness that insists on being separate from God, from the Truth of God. This is why vanity is inherently tied to the sin of the Devil, the Sin of Pride, of secession; and, of course, when inscribed within an *a priori* fullness (as the Angels are in God), all secession is a betrayal.

⁶ Margret Boveri, *Treason in the Twentieth Century: I*, trans. Jonathan Steinberg (New York: G.P. Putnam, 1963), p. 6.

⁷ OED defines treason as "the crime of betraying one's country, especially by attempting to kill or overthrow the sovereign or government"; and Betrayal as "the action of betraying one's country, a group, or a person" ('treason,' *Oxforddictionaries.com*, 2017, <https://en.oxforddictionaries.com/definition/treason>, accessed 28 June 2017; 'betrayal,' *ibid*, <https://en.oxforddictionaries.com/definition/betrayal>, accessed 28 June 2017).

Merriam-Webster defines 'treason' as "1. the offense of attempting by overt acts to overthrow the government of the state to which the offender owes allegiance or to kill or personally injure the sovereign or the sovereign's family 2. the betrayal of a trust. ('treason,' *Merriam-Webster.com*, 2017, <https://www.merriam-webster.com/dictionary/treason>, accessed 28 June 2017); and betrayal as: "1. to lead astray; 2. to deliver to an enemy by treachery; 3. to fail or desert especially in time of need; 4. a : to reveal unintentionally, b. show, indicate, c. to disclose in violation of confidence" ('betrayal,' *ibid*, <https://www.merriam-webster.com/dictionary/treason>, accessed 28 June 2017).

⁸ Cf. John Lewis Austin, *How to do Things with Words*, eds. J. O. Urmson and Marina Sbisa (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard UP, 1975), pp. 1-11.

⁹ F. W. Maitland, quoted in Stephen D. White, 'The Ambiguity of Treason in Anglo-Norman-French Law c. 1150-c. 1250,' in: Ruth Mazo Karras, Joel Kaye, and Ann E. Matter (eds.), *Law and the Illicit in Medieval Europe* (Philadelphia, PA: University of Pennsylvania Press, 2010), p. 89.

¹⁰ Cf. Jennifer J. Freyd, *Betrayal Trauma: The Logic of Forgetting Childhood Abuse* (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard UP, 1997).

¹¹ Bohnet, Iris, Fiona Greig, Benedikt Herrmann, and Richard Zeckhauser, 'Betrayal Aversion: Evidence from Brazil, China, Oman, Switzerland, Turkey, and the United States,' *The American Economic Review* 98.1 (2008), p. 294). This is a paper that extends the results of a previous paper to a more international scope; cf. "People care not only about the payoff outcome but also about how the outcome came to be. They behave as though there is a betrayal cost above and beyond any dollar losses" (Iris Bohnet and Richard Zeckhauser, 'Trust, risk and betrayal,' *Journal of Economic Behavior & Organization* 55 (2004), p. 474)

¹² John Kleinig, 'Patriotic Loyalty,' in Igor Primoratz & Aleksandar Pavković (eds.), *Patriotism: Philosophical and Political Perspectives* (Aldershot, England: Ashgate, 2008 2007), pp. 37, 39

¹³ Judith Shklar, *Ordinary Vices* (Cambridge, Mass.: Belknap Press, 1984)

¹⁴ Crystal Parikh, *An Ethics of Betrayal: The Politics of Otherness in Emergent U.s. Literatures and Culture* (New York: Fordham UP, 2009).

¹⁵ Cf. Avishai Margalit, *On Betrayal* (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard UP, 2017), p. ix.

¹⁶ Thus, not only do we find phrases like "I am less worried about metaphysics and more worried about the role that pictures [Wittgensteinian sense for seemingly natural or necessary frames of reference/understanding; SC] play in shaping social and political ideologies" (*ibid*, p. 153) while Wittgenstein, he admits, was more concerned about the metaphysical implication of 'pictures,' or a phrase like "Humans, not God, are my concern here" (*ibid*, p. 234) in a discussion revolving around the theological idea of betrayal. We also find more systematic assertions, axioms with a legislative force, the most prominent of which stands at the basis of the difference of Margalit's method, and mine: "Does the end justify the means? But of course [...]; what else can justify the means in not the end. The end does not sanctify the means, however" (p. 27 [my underline]).

There is a kind "secularism" here, that – as I show through the examples of Kant and Hegel – believes that by leaving the question of "God" outside the discussion, like Kant's "making room for faith" in his First Critique, suffices to defend oneself from metaphysical traps within the so-called "purified" space that is stipulated in this manner. Since I am tracing precisely a long-standing theological conception of betrayal (held both by theologians and by believers themselves), and the

secret collusions it reveals between theological thought and modern philosophy, this inquiry is specifically *beyond the scope* of Margalit's (and I believe Margalit would agree with this statement).

Another key example in this, metaphysical-methodological, regard – chosen from many – is when Margalit's aforementioned refusal leads to a sclerotic inability to understand the religious believer (as if so much of our 'world' was not inherited from them). Hence, when coming to grips with the idea of 'Zion' for exiled (and religious) Babylonian Jews, he – rightfully rejecting the idea of it as "real estate" – proceeds to "translate" it to "a locus of shared memories" (ibid, p. 61), as if Zion had not been a *divine promise* whose tradition goes all the way back to Abraham, as if, once again, "God" were "out of the picture." In another key example Margalit goes so far in his "abstracting away" from religion's metaphysical substance – and this has specific implications for my 'antipathology' of Christian antisemitism – is that for Margalit there is no difference between the Abrahamic gesture of cutting the ties to his family by virtue of a disembodied voice of a 'God' (never before conceived with a capital 'G'), and those of Jesus' disciples who cut ties to their families in order to join him in the name of the "already-there" God of the Jews (ibid, pp. 234-236). For young Hegel this would be outrageous, and, judging from Margalit's specific "picture" (if I may), Hegel's *hatred* towards the Jews, a hatred that precisely contrasts Abraham's separation with Jesus' *ekklesia* (as I will show), could not be understood, not even approached.

Similarly, and this is my final examples, Margalit can look at the idea of Jewish chosenness – which was at least as unique as Monotheism was unique (since they were tied together from birth) – as a mere "private case" of "group specialness" (ibid, p. 116-117), hence pertaining to any group by virtue of its being a 'group.' Margalit's "analytic" elision of the metaphysical dimension comes to a pitch when he declares Pinsker's depiction of the Jew as the "permanent stranger" as being unequivocally "wrong" (ibid, p. 64), and cites a study that shows that the Jews did not have any unique "social and economic position" (ibid, ibid).

¹⁷ The 'traitor' can betray without taking what he had betrayed seriously as a "constitution" of the relation (while the betrayed did), in which case the statement would not be true for "both sides" (at least *not in the same way*); or the 'traitor' might have been pushed, consciously or unconsciously, to commit the betrayal by the betrayed – there are still sado-masochists in the world – in which case calling it a "unilateral act" would be misleading at best, or an apology for the violence of the sado-masochistic 'victim,' at worse.

¹⁸ Trying to focus on betrayal as a concept, Margalit opines that, "[i]t is hard to disentangle the conceptual from the empirical [...] because of how often we shift from the act (of betrayal) to the actor (the traitor) (ibid, p. 17). Further on Margalit says that though 'traitor' is used – and he admits this might be the most common use – as a term of abuse that relates to the (moral) character of the betrayer, *he specifically wishes to "ignore" this aspect*. He states that "the important inference is not between the act [...] and the betraying actor; rather the main thrust should be the inference [...] to reevaluate the thick relations [...]" (ibid, p. 121)

¹⁹ Jacques Derrida and Maurizio Ferrari, *I Have a Taste for the Secret*, trans. Giacomo Donis, eds. Giacomo Donis and David Webb (Cambridge: Polity Press, 2001), pp. 57-59

²⁰ Immanuel Kant, 'The Blomberg Logic,' *Lectures on Logic*, trans. and ed. J. Michael Young (Cambridge: Cambridge UP, 2009), p. 166

²¹ Georg W. F. Hegel, *The Science of Logic*, trans. and ed. George di Giovanni (Cambridge: Cambridge UP, 2015), p. 9/S.5:15-16.

²² AC §54, p. 184

²³ Paul Guyer and Alan Wood, 'Introduction to the Critique of Pure Reason,' CPR, p. 1.

²⁴ In his *Prolegomena*, Kant famously admits that Hume's critique of causality (as an always-indefinite synthetic induction that never attains the solid, a prior foundation of an analytic deduction) was "the very thing that many years ago first interrupted my dogmatic slumber and gave a completely different direction to my researches in the field of speculative philosophy" (Immanuel Kant, *Prolegomena to Any Future Metaphysics That Will Be Able to Come Forward As Science*, trans. and ed. Gary Hartfield (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1990), p. 10/Ak. 4:260).

²⁵ CPR A761/B789

²⁶ *I Have a Taste for the Secret*, p. 41

²⁷ "These [skeptics] [...] even went so far as to say that everything is uncertain, even that it is uncertain that everything is uncertain. That was actually a kind of purgative of human reason, which was such that after it cleansed our understanding completely of all impurities, i.e. all false delusion, prejudices, incorrect judgments, it disposed of itself in turn" (Kant, *The Blomberg Logic* p. 166/Ak. 24:210)

²⁸ Forster makes a good argument to show that Kant fails to defend his transcendental system from Pyrrhonian skepticism, by neglecting to defend it against skeptical arguments concerning logic (specifically the law of non-contradiction) as well as the existence of analytic a priori knowledge). Hegel, in turn, will ascribe the Kantian problem to Kant's reflective philosophy

of the ‘Understanding’ (*Verstand*), in contrast with Hegel’s more developed speculative system of Reason (*Vernunft*); cf. Michael N. Forster, *Kant and Skepticism* (Princeton: Princeton UP, 2008).

²⁹ I am in complete agreement here with Forster, who shows that Kant had also thought of the equipollence argument as the core of skepticism (which in this context implies he knew very well what he was doing with skepticism when he advanced his Antinomian arguments) (Michael N. Forster, *Hegel and Skepticism* (Cambridge, Mass: Harvard UP, 1989), p. 186 n. 5; cf. CPR A388-389). The difference between them was, precisely, that Kant felt the Antinomies should be cordoned-off by his transcendental philosophical system, while Hegel merely reversed the attitude to make these Kantian exceptions (into the) rule (of) his own system of speculative knowledge. I am also in agreement that – though Forster fails to mention “the Kantian connection” in this context – that Hegel used the skeptical “procedure” so as to defend his own system from others (Kant, as I argued earlier, did the same thing when he obviated the philosophical struggles of the ‘pre-critical dogmatists’ by using the skeptical procedure in/on the Antinomies); cf. *Hegel and Skepticism*, pp. 4, 176-178). For an example in this context of Hegel’s account of his affinity with – and divergence from – Kant, cf. *Science of Logic* [Giovanni], p. 35/GW 21:40.

³⁰ Though this is an insight gleaned from two separate books, I believe I am not too unjustified in again expressing agreement with Forster who writes, in one work, that the Kantian philosophical *motivation* was “antiskeptical” (*Kant and Skepticism*, p. 3), and in the other that Hegel’s philosophical strategy was “antiskeptical” (*Hegel and Skepticism*, p. 3, p. 93 n. 4). For our antipathology, tracing *this* (mostly unstated) shared animosity (insofar as Hegel and Kant’s metaphysical ‘anti’s converge), is perhaps the only guiding principle.

³¹ Hegel’s “slippery” nature in this regard (and in many others) can be spied here as well, in the choice of metaphors he gives. Because his System encompasses both micro and macro in an identical manner (in Truth), this big machine that swallows skeptics – burning their negation while discarding their contingency – could just as well take a much more “liberal” garb of as single surfer who surfs from wave to wave, from negation to negation, an individual plotting a course rather than an ever expanding bureaucratic monster. This “two-faced” implication is indeed a brilliant aspect of Hegel’s thought; another indication on how it had appropriated the formal structures of betrayal – after Hegel, one face can always be seen on the other.

³² Here I am in agreement with Burnyeat that the skeptic’s passivity denotes her particular pathos, wherein both assent and refusal comes from a constraint. This constraint is – in metaphysical terms (though Burnyeat does not address this dimension specifically) – necessarily transcendent to both the skeptic and the dogmatist, and, in many ways, this already shows the usurpation of radical transcendence at work in Hegel’s ingenious maneuver. Thus I also agree with Burnyeat that this passive attitude is not possible for “human life;” cf. Myles F. Burnyeat, ‘Can the Skeptic Live his Skepticism?’ *The Skeptical Tradition*, ed. Myles Burnyeat (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1983), pp. 117-148.

I do, however, wish to continue an ethico-metaphysical exploration of this concept(ion) of ‘human life,’ and the silent workings of the ‘human’ that it is beholden to. To anticipate a bit, I will try to shoe the ‘human’ as a decidedly pedagogic function within the Kantian discourse, implicating the Kantian ‘spirit’ through-and-through and thus, indeed, also its Hegelian radicalization. We will come to see that ‘human’ is the “subjective” letter of the Hegelian spirit of reconciliation, a spirit that not only leaves behind the question(ing) of the animal, but also recoils in horror from the weird hybrid between the human and the animal that both Hegel and Kant identify in Judaism. This is particularly apparent in the ‘spiritual’ context we are courting here, for, as Hegel states, animals have only feelings and not thoughts, and, hence, have no religion (at this stage let me just anticipate that the essence of spirit is for Hegel the concrete reconciliation of (abstract) subject(ivity) and (determinate) substance, something which is divinely interdicted in Judaism’s absolute separation – both within ‘Man’ (as the Jews are particularized therein as ‘chosen’) and between ‘Man’ and the – wholly transcendent – God); cf. Hegel, LPR I (1827) pp. 372-373/271)

³³ Here, once again, I am in agreement with Forster who identifies the entire Hegelian enterprise as radically antiskeptical, directed against the “skeptical foe” (*Hegel and Skepticism*, p. 180).

³⁴ Hence, in the *Phenomenology*, Hegel speaks of “the skepticism which only ever sees pure nothingness in its result and abstracts from the fact that this nothingness is specifically the nothingness of that from which it results. [...] The skepticism that ends up with the bare abstraction of nothingness or emptiness cannot get any further from there, but must wait to see whether something new comes along and what it is, in order to throw it too into the same empty abyss.” (*Phenomenology*, §79, p. 51/GW 9:57)

³⁵ Here I am providing a complementary discussion to Michael Forster’s otherwise exhaustive account in *Hegel and Skepticism*. In a gloss that I suspect is symptomatic of a metaphysical nearsightedness of so much of Western scholarship, Forster identifies “the alienation of consciousness from [...] “a natural realm [...] and a divine realm” in the *Phenomenology*, as identified “mainly if not exclusively with Christianity.”

Even though Forster recognizes that there is a problematic omission on Hegel’s part here (for, he shows, in the *Spirit* essay, this alienated role was given solely to Judaism (ibid, ibid); cf. ‘The Positivity of the Christian Religion,’ ETW, p. 205),

he nevertheless glosses this problem with a problematic “and:” the aforementioned alienation is associated “with Judaic and Christian culture” (*Hegel and Skepticism*, p. 78). The gloss is not merely incidental, for it makes Forster blind to the fact that, in the Positivity essay just mentioned, Christianity is critiqued for its positive element as an alien(ated) Jewish element of which it should purge/rid itself, and that at the very beginning of this essay Hegel introduces the Jews – as contrast to Christ and his teachings – as a servile religion, wherein the moral law consisted in “slavish obedience to the laws” (ETW, p. 69) while Jesus “urged not a virtue grounded on authority [...] but a free virtue springing from man’s own being” (ibid, p. 71) and “that the essence of the virtue or the justice which is of value in God’s sight did not lie purely and simply in following the Mosaic law” (ibid, p. 73). Thus, the fact that Christianity became ‘positive,’ in Hegel’s view, was due to Jesus’ *Jewish* audience:

[...] Jesus was compelled for his own purposes to speak a great deal about himself, about his own personality. He was induced to do this because there was only one way in which his people were accessible. They were most heartily convinced that they had received from God himself their entire polity and all their religious, political, and civil laws. This was their pride; this faith cut short all speculations of their own; it was restricted solely to the study of the sacred sources, and it confined virtue to a blind obedience to these authoritarian commands. A teacher who intended to effect more for his people than the transmission of a new commentary on these commands and who wished to convince them of the inadequacy of a statutory ecclesiastical faith must of necessity have based his assertions on a like authority (ETW, pp. 75-76 [my underline]).

Indeed Hegel’s definition of ‘positive religion’ is “a religion which is grounded in authority” (ibid, p. 71). Thus, finally, even as Christianity is “condemned” as ‘positive,’ it is only for its not having yet rid itself of its (living-dead) progenitor. It is the Absolute Authority of God, as separate from (the human) being, which constitutes the essence of what Hegel refers to as alienation (cf. also ETW, p. 181: “We do see his [Jesus] successors renouncing Jewish trivialities, but they are not altogether purified of the spirit of dependence on such things. Out of what Jesus said, out of what he suffered in his person, they soon fashioned rules and moral commands, and free emulation of their teacher soon passed over into slavish service of their Lord”).

That is why Judaism is considered by Hegel – and we will see this in the ‘Spirit’ essay and other texts – as a kind of “dead end” of Spirit, a “dark riddle.” Only in Christianity does alienation constitute a problem, a (self-)contradiction, and hence provides what Judaism, by (stubborn; proud) definition, denies: the *immanent path* – of Spirit as Consciousness in the case of the *Phenomenology* to which Forster is referring here – to its self-Absolution.

Hence, once more, I am in complete agreement with Forster when he writes, “Hegel views the emergence and flourishing of the religious outlook of Faith, which is characteristic above all of Christianity, as partly explicable in terms of the suitability of this outlook as a defense of objective claims posed to the by skepticism. This religious outlook provides a kind of defensive rationalization of objective claims in the face of skepticism’s threat” (*Hegel and Skepticism*, p. 89). My complement of Forster, hence, is in probing the ‘negative’ accomplices of undomesticated skepticism as the (abject) threat to the Hegelian system, something which I (antipathologically) trace back to Hegel’s ‘metaphysical antisemitism.’

³⁶ Here I am in agreement with Bernard Williams, who quotes Descartes’ opining about Bourdin’s focus only on the passages in the *Meditationes* that dealt with the raising of doubt, where Descartes complains that this would be the same as concluding that Hippocrates only taught the method of falling ill (the implication being, of course, that Descartes’ (methodical) use of doubt is done in the spirit and purpose of (self-)immunization from it as if it were a dangerous condition, a disease). Williams separates Descartes from the Pyrrhonian tradition decisively: “[Descartes’ aim is precisely to replace uncertainty with knowledge”]; Cf. Bernard Williams, ‘Descartes’s Use of Skepticism,’ *The Skeptical Tradition*, ed. Myles Burnyeat (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1983), pp. 337-352, p. 337.

³⁷ So Hegel:

[...] Even nowadays, of course, scepticism is often regarded as an irresistible foe of any positive knowledge, and hence of philosophy too, so far as the latter deals with positive cognition. In response to this it needs to be remarked that in fact it is only the finite and abstract thinking of the understanding that has anything to fear from scepticism, and that cannot resist it; philosophy, on the other hand, contains the sceptical as a moment within itself – specifically as the dialectical moment. But then philosophy does not stop at the merely negative result of the dialectic, as is the case with scepticism. The latter mistakes its result, insofar as it holds fast to it as mere, i.e., abstract, negation. When the dialectic has the negative as its result, then, precisely as a result, this negative is at the same time the positive, for it contains what it resulted from sublated within itself, and it cannot be without it. This, however, is the basic determination of the third form of the Logical, namely, the speculative or positively rational [moment]. (Enc I, §81A, p. 131)

³⁸ *Hegel and Skepticism*, p. 78.

³⁹ Hegel calls this ‘science of religion’ “the *final* science within philosophy itself” (LPR, p. 365/265 [Hegel’s emphasis])

⁴⁰ Also cf.,

[...] Spirit is knowledge. For it to be knowledge, the content of what it knows must have [...] been negated in this manner. What constitutes spirit must have come into its own in such a way. Spirit must have been educated [*erzogen*],

must have traversed this circuit. These forms, distinctions, determinations, and finitudes must have been, in order for it to make them its own and to negate them, [...] (ibid, p. 184/92)

⁴¹ Cf. Hegel, PS, §442, p. 265/GW 9:240; where the central role that the Enlightenment is granted in the recuperation of Spirit (from its divide into ‘culture’ and ‘belief’) to attain – through conscience – a Spirit that is once again (though not *absolutely*, as of yet) certain of itself.

⁴² For Luther, for example, it was the word of God as reflected in the Gospels and the Old Testament that gave authority – or, as is commonly referred to in theology, justification – to the Christian as such. This interpretation and/as faith in Jesus Christ thus requires an individualized witnessing and faith in the Word of God, for no other’s ‘word’ can be allowed to usurp its absolute authority. As noted Luther scholar Althaus puts it: “[For Luther] the pure truth of the gospel gives genuine authority to the men of the Church who witness to Christ” (Paul Althaus, *The Theology of Martin Luther*, trans. Robert C. Schultz (Philadelphia: Fortress Press, 1966), p. 340).

Thus, as Luther puts it, “ecclesiastical legitimacy [...] does not necessarily include spiritual legitimacy” (ibid, 341). Cf. Martin Luther, ‘Against the Roman Papacy: An Institution of the Devil,’ trans. Eric W. Gritsch, *Luther’s Works*, eds. Jaroslav Jan Pelikan, Hilton C. Oswald, and Helmut T. Lehmann (Saint Louis: Concordia Publishing House, 1999), vol. 41, pp. 263-375/D. *Martin Luthers Werke: Weimarer Ausgabe*, ed. Ulrich Köpf. (Weimar: Hermann Böhlaus Nachfolger), vol. 54, pp. 206-299.

For Hegel’s own preference of the Protestant over the Catholic principle(s) of faith, particularly as identifying the former with “free self-certain spirit” and the latter with “bondage” and “non-spirituality” (Hegel, *Enc III*, §552, pp. 284-288/GW 20:531-537).

⁴³ Cf. ibid, p. 49/GW 9:56 [translation modified]. Miller’s translation, uncharacteristically, renders here the German ‘*unmittelbar*’ as “directly” instead of “immediately,” which is curious since this is a term of the utmost importance in Hegel’s scientific system of mediations, of knowledge as the self-sublation of mediation, as beginning with an empty immediacy (sense certainty) and ending with full(filled) immediacy (absolute knowledge).

⁴⁴ For example “*Erkenne dich selbst*” (Know thyself) and “*sich wissenden Vernunft*” (self-knowing Reason); *Enc III*, §377, p.1; ibid, §577, p. 314/GW 20:379, 570-571. The former is depicted by Hegel to be an “absolute commandment” [*absolute Gebot*] (p. 1/GW20:379 [translation modified; though placed in apostrophes by Miller’s version – as “‘absolute’ command” – no such turning-away or distance-taking from this phrase is designated in Hegel’s original German. Again, a curious modification in Miller’s translation])

⁴⁵ More specifically, I am referring to the words Hegel uses that have to do with a horizontal dimension (height and depth) as they pertain to the circularity of Hegelian ‘*wirklichkeit*,’ in order to signal, already at this stage, the appropriation of this dimension under the ‘*Kreis*’ of Reason according to Hegel.

⁴⁶ Just to show that I am not making any kind of “leap” here – i.e. from the metaphysical to the ethical – that Hegel would disapprove of, here’s what he writes in the *Encyclopaedia* of 1830:

[...] It is evident and apparent [...] that moral life is the state retracted into its inner heart and substance, while the state is the organization and actualization of moral life; and that religion is the very substance of the moral life itself and of the state. At this rate, the state rests on the ethical sentiment, and that on the religious. If religion, then, is the consciousness of *absolute Truth* [here Miller, again, contains the German *absoluten* in apostrophes that do not exist in the text itself. I took the liberty of removing them.], then whatever is to rank as right and justice, as law and duty, i.e. as *true* in the world of free will, can be so esteemed only as it is participant in that truth, as it is subsumed under it and is its sequel. [...] The ethical life [*Sittlichkeit*] is the divine spirit as indwelling in self-consciousness, as it is actually present in a nation [*Völker*] and its individual members” (Hegel, *Enc III*, §552, p. 283/GW 20:532).

This ‘ethico-metaphysical’ implication of Hegel’s thought – particularly in the way it is mediated by (the totality which is) the ‘state’ in his *Grundlinien der Philosophie des Rechts* (‘Philosophy of Right’) – will figure throughout this dissertation, particularly to contrast (and antipathologically harass) various commentators’ tendency to treat Hegel’s political philosophy “non-metaphysically;” as mentioned above.

⁴⁷ This is not only true in the context of ‘religion;’ to give another example of my claim that this is an essential factor in Hegel’s *Geist*, here is a quote from his *Phenomenology* that shows that this demand/search of *Geist* for transparency is indeed essential:

[...] Absolute freedom has thus removed the antithesis between the universal and the individual will. The self-alienated Spirit, driven to the extreme of its antithesis in which pure willing and the agent of that pure willing are still distinct, reduces the antithesis to a transparent [*durchsichtigen*] form and therein finds itself. (PS, §595, p. 363/GW 9:323).

⁴⁸ Cf. PS, §438, p. 263/GW 9:238: “Reason [*Vernunft*] is Spirit when its certainty of being all reality has been raised to truth, and it is conscious of itself as its own world, and of the world as itself”.

⁴⁹ I will return to the word *Verklärung* in the concluding chapter, specifically to show what kinds of allusions it is being used to make by Kafka, in his story *In der Strafkolonie*. To anticipate a little, this word is only used once, but designates

precisely the moment of justice within a very elaborate process of torture, whose spectacle is used to edify its audience as to the absolute justification of this very process.

⁵⁰ Cf. PS, §16, p. 9/GW 9:17. Below, in looking at the “cowardly” Abraham in Hegel’s *Theologische jugendschriften*, we will make the connection – here still implicit – between Hegel’s concept of ‘Fate’ (*Schicksal*) and that of ‘Love:’ this night of pure resistance to the light of Reason is precisely how Hegel perceives the concept of Fate, a concept that, in his analysis, was raised to the Absolute by the metaphysical alienation – not to say escape – of Judaism.

⁵¹ There is a reason that I keep insisting on the “voll=full” remarks, for this idea will play – whether explicitly or implicitly – in many Hegelian scholars’ understandings of the (limits of the) ethical, most notably to be found in Charles Taylor’s conception of the “fullness of Being.” That the *aufhebung* is a kind of filling-out (of the ‘lack,’ the *Mangel*, that is inessential and irrational and to be sacrificed/disposed-of (even if it hurts) in an (eventually) wholly justified violence) will then help mark the places where, despite assertions to the contrary, violence is a priori justified in those conceptions, with the added feature of their undiscussed metaphysical assumptions, which, as I’m trying to show, constitute a condition (not to say ideal) of a structural blindness to pain and violence caused the (inessential; unphilosophical; wholly-subjective; vain) absolutely other.

Charles Taylor’s *A Secular Age*, for example, is full of such “fullness” and – besides the incredible place he allots to Kant as an “unbeliever” in this context – introduces fullness (and its relation to morality) in the following terms:

[...] We all see our lives, and/or the space wherein we live our lives, as having a certain moral/spiritual shape. Somewhere, in some activity, or condition, lies a fullness, a richness; that is, in that place (activity or condition), life is fuller, richer, deeper, more worth while, more admirable, more what it should be.” (Charles Taylor, *A Secular Age* (Cambridge: Belknap Press, 2007), p. 5).

Whether “Christian” or “unbeliever,” this “modern we” is certainly very much Hegelian in its spirituality and metaphysics (which is to Taylor’s merit that he more-or-less explicitly admits), and, of course, as will be made clear in the foregoing exposition of Judaism’s Otherness, is decidedly *not a Jewish “we.”* The latter – and here I’m following, not only Lévinas, but also “our” experience as Jews – is based on a cleaving interruption of an impossible ethical demand coming from an absolute and terrifying – rather than loving and reconciling – Other (rather than ‘Self’); a servile, *particularizing* attitude which Hegel had the laudable *systematic* integrity to treat contemptuously as servile and, not least, *empty/vain*.

⁵² As Hegel elaborates it in his 1830 *Encyclopaedia*, it is the middle part (Phenomenology of Spirit) of the first part (Subjective Spirit; followed by 2. Objective Spirit and 3. Absolute Spirit) of the third part (*Philosophy of Spirit*; preceded by 1. *Science of Logic* and 2. *Philosophy of Nature*) in his system.

⁵³ This is not to be conflated with the religious parallel of the rise of monotheism in Judaism (even though Hegel will sometimes make that conflation), because, seen within Hegel’s history of religion, the empty night of the supersensible beyond was precisely what the Jews worshipped: in paganism there was no true – transcendent/alienated – ‘beyond’ which is why Hegel calls them religions of ‘beauty’ and ‘nature’ (i.e. where the link of Spirit and Nature still held; i.e. there was still no *determinate* ‘supersensible’); only Judaism enacted a ‘beyond of pure thought,’ held in infinite separation over-and-against Nature, though, as what Hegel came to call a ‘sublime’ religion, it interdicted any representation of this beyond (leaving it, indeed, ‘empty’); it is only in the Christian *incarnation* that the spirit once again can, literally, return to life/Nature, and where the ‘we’ becomes, in principle, unlimited (encompassing, potentially, all of ‘mankind’).

Even though this ‘mankind’ terminology sounds decidedly more Kantian than it does Hegelian, I am trying to show that, in radicalizing Kant’s spirit, Hegel nevertheless could not give up on this idea of ‘mankind,’ particularly as his initial goal and purpose was geared towards erecting a *Volksreligion* and Hegel’s self-conception as a *Volkserzieher* (cf. H. S. Harris, *Hegel’s Development: Toward the Sunlight 1770-1801* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 2002), pp. 1-47).

I will concede that, in its stubborn insistence on the finality of the State, Hegel’s social philosophy was decidedly not cosmopolitical as Kant’s – neither in letter nor in spirit – and that, as such, his political outlook affirmed more diversity within this family. Yet, there is something to be said of his elevation of the German state above all other states/nations, and of course, not least, of the implicit potential – which his philosophy does not contradict – of its taking over the world (through assimilation or colonization) and achieving a totality of ‘mankind’ (through the annihilation of nations that is not the annihilation of ‘nation’) in this manner.

Laurence Dickey, for example, says that Hegel’s overarching question which was the origin and problem of his conception of *Sittlichkeit* (especially in his Jena years), was “could *Sittlichkeit* be translated into the language of social and political theory without having its religious [Dickey here is referring to a kind of reform-Protestantism with which he associates Hegel’s position; SC] sense lost [...]?” Dickey concludes that Hegel’s answer was ‘yes,’ that this “religious sense” – which in my rendering is ethico-metaphysical in nature – is what gets “carried over” in this manner (cf. Laurence Dickey, *Hegel: Religion, Economics, and the Politics of Spirit 1770-1807* (Cambridge: Cambridge UP, 2009), p. 183).

⁵⁴ I owe the discovery of this incredible passage to my friend and peer/mentor Joshua Nichols who brought it (and its exemplary importance) to my attention, and whose own work on Hegel in particular and German Idealism in general has

helped me make sense of so much of this literature; cf. Joshua Ben David Nichols, *The End(s) of Community: History, Sovereignty and the Question of Law* (Waterloo, ON: Wilfrid Laurier UP, 2013).

⁵⁵ 'Introduction,' Enc II, pp. 3-4 Z/S. 9:12 [translation modified, my underline]

⁵⁶ Homer, *Odyssey: Book IV*, trans. A.T. Murray (Cambridge: Harvard UP, 1995), lines 415-424, p. 149 [translation modified]

⁵⁷ The *bia* is here an *external violence par excellence*, a "periphery" of means held fast by a "center" of legitimacy, of end(s), which in this case is the demand for Truth. Thus, *the same bia* is used both to holding Proteus under the force of this grip (and its attendant *bia*), and for withholding this force when Proteus has submitted and ceased his false shape transformations; to *put a hold on this hold* when the time is right.

⁵⁸ G. W. F. Hegel, 'The Critical Journal, Introduction: On the Essence of Philosophical Criticism Generally, and its Relationship to the Present State of Philosophy,' trans. H. S. Harris, in George Di Giovanni and H. S. Harris (eds.), *Between Kant and Hegel: Texts in the Development of Post-Kantian Idealism* (Indianapolis: Hackett Pub. Co., 2000), p. 338/GW 4:221.

⁵⁹ Cf. GW 4:174-187. For English cf. G. W. F. Hegel, 'How the Ordinary Human Understanding Takes Philosophy (as displayed in the works of Mr. Krug),' *Between Kant and Hegel*, pp. 294-310.

⁶⁰ H. S. Harris, 'On the Relationship of Skepticism to Philosophy, Exposition of its Different Modifications and Comparison of the Latest Form with the Ancient One,' *Between Kant and Hegel*, p. 313 n.

⁶¹ Another interesting 'antipathological tidbit' with regards to German Idealism's "sensibilities" in this context is to be found in Fichte's own response to the irritation of the skeptic, this time indeed more directly Schultze, who had written a skeptical critique in the name of the long-deceased ancient skeptic Aenesidemus (*Aenesidemus, or Concerning the Foundations of the Elementary Philosophy Propounded in Jena by Professor Reinhold, including a Defense of Skepticism against the Pretensions of the Critique of Reason*) of Fichte's *Attempt at a Critique of All Revelation* (written under the mentorship of the then most notable Kantian, Karl Leonhard Reinhold).

Daniel Breazeale's 'Fichte's Aenesidemus Review And The Transformation Of German Idealism' (*The Review of Metaphysics*, 34. 3 (1981), pp. 545-568, mentions how Fichte, despite recognizing some personal affronts in Schultze's critique of his *Critique*, meant his own response to Schultze to *not* be polemic. Yet, despite these "best intentions," Fichte's 'Aenesidemus' Review still managed to contain some acrimony and personal attacks, and that despite Fichte's own explicit refusal to be involved in a literary feud (Breazeale quotes him making statements such as: "It causes me pain-great pain-that I should be the innocent cause of a literary feud carried on in such a tone"; and "I am no literary squabbler"), this essay did indeed start such a feud. one that would, as Breazeale says, "culminat[e] in [...] hysterical polemics" (Fichte's Aenesidemus, p. 547 [my emphasis]). Eventually – and once again like Hegel (and Kant) – Fichte acknowledges that "*Aenesidemus* has shaken my system to its very foundations, and, since one cannot very well live under the open sky, I have been forced to construct a new system" (quoted in: *ibid*, p. 548). Breazeale himself notes that "[t]he effect of Schultze's book on Fichte's own intellectual development is perhaps comparable to Hume's influence upon Kant" (*ibid*, 567). Cf. also: Jules Vuillemin, *L'heritage kantienne et la revolution copernicienne* (Paris: Presses Universitaires de France, 1954), p. 17.

What I am trying to show is that the skeptic does *move* philosophy (where-to is a different matter; personally I neither accept the upward mobility of Kant's metaphysics not the all-encompassing one of Hegel's – my God is simply not, let's say, that 'approachable'), but from a drive of (a progressively denied) aversion and hatred to the skeptic's presence (her philosophical claims/interruptions), until in Hegel both this drive and this denial finally *achieve systematic proportions*; that is, are made utterly invisible as threats (but continue to sustain a hateful violence/aversion on the side of philosophical Truth's presupposed sovereignty – only this time from *within* the (metaphysical) system).

⁶² Nietzsche, *Daybreak: Thoughts on the Prejudices of Morality*, trans. R. J. Hollingdale, ed. Maudmarie Clark and Brian Leiter (New York: Cambridge UP, 1997).

⁶³ Friedrich Nietzsche, Preface §1 to *Daybreak: Thoughts on the Prejudices of Morality*, ed. Maudmarie Clark and Brian Leiter, trans. R. J. Hollingdale (New York: Cambridge UP, 1997), p. 1/ KGW 5.1:3

⁶⁴ Jacques Derrida, 'Afterword: Toward an Ethic of Discussion,' *Limited Inc.*, trans. Samuel Weber (Evanston: Northwestern UP, 1988), pp. 157-158 n. 9.

⁶⁵ Here Primo Levi, a Jewish Holocaust survivor, is recounting one of his first experiences in the 'Auschwitz' Death camp; cf. Primo Levi, *If this is a Man*, trans. Stuart Woolf (New York: Orion Press, 1959), p. 24

⁶⁶ Enc I §17, p. 41 and Enc I §23Z, p. 55, respectively

⁶⁷ Though my 'method' cannot be ex-posed in full without being allowed to perform its operation, I can state at this stage that 'antipathology' has two main aspects that I deliberately condense by using this spelling. As anti-pathology, it denotes a drive that always seeks a universalizable, 'reconciliatory' and systematic conceptualization for all the differences it encounters (here treated as ethico-metaphysical differences). As antipathology, i.e. the logos of antipathy ("hatred"), this

method brings to the surface an implication, that I intend to successively show is the hidden “engine” behind this drive, and how this drive towards reconciliation advances towards this all-embracing comprehension by means of turning difference against itself; of taking the unwieldy resistance to universalized articulation and reflecting it back upon itself. Together, as ‘antipathology,’ this expresses the ambivalence of the Hegelian System – which Hegel modeled after a metaphysical system erected out of Lutheran theology – that holds ‘Love’ and ‘Reconciliation’ as its ostensible goals but that refuses to acknowledge the hatred that it not only presupposes, but also employs. Antipathology is the making uneasy of a Hegelian system that packages a hatred of hatred as love. This account is indeed unclear at this stage, but this cannot be avoided; a methodology needs to be *performed* in order to be understood as such; and I will increasingly perform it here, most deeply and extensively in the last chapter.

⁶⁸ The well-known logical paradox named after Bertrand Russell can help illustrate this predicament. This paradox is originally stated in the question whether the group of all groups that do not contain themselves as members includes itself as a member or not. The paradox, put briefly, is that either: a) this group does contain itself, but then it has one group (itself) that *does* contain itself (which is a contradiction); or b) if this group does not contain itself, then it, itself, constitutes the one group that does not contain itself, and yet is not included, as it must, in itself as the group of *all* groups that do not contain themselves, i.e. in itself (which is another contradiction). The ‘Subject’ in the Subject-Object view of thought is prey to the same paradox: if it can think itself as such then it is already made itself into an *object* of thought (and hence no longer ‘Subject’); and if it cannot think of itself, then it surely cannot claim any philosophical grounding of its essence nor can it arrive at an ‘object’s’ coherent philosophical definition either. Cf. Bertrand Russell, *The Principles of Mathematics*, vol. 1 (Cambridge: Cambridge UP, 1903), pp. 101-102

⁶⁹ Heidegger conceives of phenomenology as primarily dealing with the method by which ‘self-evidence’ is approached and conceived. This method bases itself of a belonging together of phenomenon and logos (BT §7, pp. 49-50/SZ, pp. 27-28). According to their Greek etymologies, ‘phenomenon’ – from the Greek *phainestai* – is “that which shows itself in itself” (ibid, 51/ibid, 29); while logos is a speech that lets something be seen (ibid, p. 56/ibid, p. 32). Hence, phenomenology becomes “to let that which shows itself be seen from itself in the very way in which it shows itself from itself”, which leads us to the famous battle-cry of the first phenomenologist – Heidegger’s teacher Edmund Husserl – which declares, in the wake of Kant (and against the neo-Kantians of that time): “To the things themselves!” (ibid, p. 58/ibid, p. 34).

The ‘thing’ here, which is the phenomenon, is “that which shows itself in the Being of entities” (ibid, p. 60/ibid, p. 35); hence, “phenomenology is the science of the Being of entities – ontology” (ibid, p. 61/ibid, p. 37). Through phenomena (of ‘beings’ encountered or thought), these beings are understood – that is, interpreted – with regards to their Being: the study of phenomena follows the question of ‘What is this?’, in a way that everything hangs on the interpretation of the “is,” of Being. In every assertion, however benign, haphazard or vague, there is implied an understanding of the ‘is’ that attends it; and it is from the fact of this vague understanding that phenomenology, as a project of ‘fundamental ontology’ (i.e. dealing with the meaning of Being in general), can proceed (ibid, §2, p. 25/ibid, p. 5).

To Heidegger, this meaning has been “covered over” or “forgotten” from its Greek origin, and it is the work of the phenomenological method to construct its approach to the hidden Being (*Sein*) of each ‘being’ (*Seiend*). Heideggerian phenomenology, hence, proceeds through a kind of excavation, where that which covers over its original meaning – covered over by various philosophical discourses (that failed to understand the original thought of the Greeks) and everyday understanding (where “is” is used and presupposed but not understood in itself) – provides both the obstruction, but also the way and means to arrive at the meaning of Being.

This marks Heidegger’s departure from Husserl, whose phenomenological reduction was geared to attain a transcendental, “worldless” subject, is that, though Heidegger does maintain a suspension of the everyday sense of ‘beings,’ his result is a ‘worldly’ Being – ‘man’ as the Being that is concerned with the meaning of Being, the Being that interprets the world that it is in, a Being-there (*Dasein*). What Heidegger terms the “step back” (*Schritt zurück*) remains, in all senses of the word, grounded in Being (*Sein*) and its ‘world’ (as its ‘there’ or ‘Da’). Husserl’s ‘transcendental subject’ is hence displaced by *Da-sein* as the “Subject” of the phenomenological reduction.

What’s important for my discussion here, however, is that, as Seeburger shows, *both* conceive the task of the phenomenologist (be it as ‘*Dasein*’ or a ‘transcendental subjectivity’) as a disengagement from what, in “everyday” understanding/discourse, is called ‘reality;’ it is the latter that is suspended so as to show it in its essential truth. Cf. Francis F. Seeburger ‘Heidegger and the Phenomenological Reduction,’ *Philosophy and Phenomenological Research*, 36.2 (1975), p. 214.

Though for Husserl it was a “presentive intuition” rather than “understanding” that gave access to phenomena, the “principle of all principles” still remains true for both him and Heidegger’s methodologies: “that every originary presentive intuition is a legitimizing source of cognition, that everything originarily [...] offered to us in “intuition” is to be accepted simply as what it is presented as being, but also only within the limits in which it is presented there” (Edmund Husserl, *Ideas Pertaining to a Pure Phenomenology and to a Phenomenological Philosophy, First Book: General Introduction to a Pure*

Phenomenology, trans. F. Kresten, (The Hague: Martinus Nijhoff, 1983), §24, p. 44 [my underline]). For Heidegger, of course, these ‘limits’ are not to be found in the *transcendental* “there” (which is why Husserl saw the Heideggerian project as still “philosophically naïve”), but in the understanding of Being as/in Being-there (Da-Sein) or Being-in-the-world; Heidegger replaces “presentive intuition” with ‘Being’ – but both require the suspension (or suspicion) of the mere “presence at hand” or “reality” of (already understood, though *not phenomenologically/ontologically*) ‘beings.’

This ‘reality,’ to return to our point of departure, manifests itself in the *particularity* of ‘beings’ rather than *the ontological meaning of this particularity*. The “cardinal problem” of what Heidegger calls ‘fundamental ontology’ (*Fundamentalontologie*) is, indeed, “the question of the meaning of Being in general [*überhaupt*]” (BT, p. 61/SZ, p. 37 [my underline]). It is this “generality” which Heidegger wants to excavate, gain access to, through phenomenology; one that keeps *particular* ‘beings’ at bay: the German is instructive here, insofar as *überhaupt* suggests a kind of “comprehensive view *from above*” (*Haupt* – head, principal; *über* – above, over). As I will show in what follows, everything bears on attending to the ethico-metaphysical meaning of this very “height” (as a precondition of ontological interpretation/understanding), and especially the ‘Why’ that justifies it (and, hence, that also opens it to ethical question).

⁷⁰ All quotes from Aristotle’s *Metaphysics* are taken from this bilingual edition: Aristotle, *Aristotle in 23 Volumes*, vol. 17, *The Metaphysics: Books I-IX*, ed. G. P. Goold, trans. Hugh Tredennick (London: Harvard University Press, 1933). For simplicity’s sake, due to the numerous editions and translations available, I will only cite the classical pagination of the Greek – supplied by the vast majority of current English translations.

⁷¹ Aristotle is here repeating an earlier construction, already found in Plato’s *Theatetus* as the original philosophical *pathos*. In that dialogue, where Socrates is discussing the meaning of temporal change with the Athenian mathematician Theatetus, the latter admits: “I am lost in wonder [*θαυμάζω*] when I think of all these things, and sometimes when I regard them it really makes my head swim” (Plato, *Theatetus*, 155c). Socrates replies to this that “this feeling of wonder shows that you are a philosopher [*φιλοσόφου τοῦτο τὸ πάθος, τὸ θαυμάζειν*], since wonder is the only beginning of philosophy, and he who said that Iris [i.e. Messenger to the gods, preceding Hermes; SC] was the child of Thaumias [i.e. the Titan god of the sea, preceding Poseidon; SC] made a good genealogy” (ibid, 155d [my underline]). [Translation is taken from: Plato, *Plato in Twelve Volumes*, vol. 7, *Theatetus*; *Sophist*, trans. Harold N. Fowler (Cambridge: Harvard UP, 1967). For simplicity’s sake, as in citing Aristotle, I will here only cite the Greek pagination – again, in this case, supplied by the vast majority of current English translations.]

Though I do not have the space to discuss this here, it is interesting to note that in Aristotle’s adoption of the same term, the decidedly theological/mythological meaning of its use in Plato shifts to a more ‘political’ meaning.

⁷² What I mean by this is to examine the temporal relation and its intimate connection with the aforementioned power-dynamic differently than through ‘Marxist’ – terms like ‘exploitation.’ Just like Hegel, Karl Marx is also interested in the overcoming of difference, only in his, “materialist” system it is not the Idea that comes to disabuse itself of inner contradictions through the speculative processes of history, but the relations of production that disabuse themselves of “material contradictions” (i.e., “class difference”) through this same speculative view – i.e. the same ‘spirit’ – of ‘history.’

In particular when coming to terms with German Idealism’s various modifications (and this includes Karl Marx’s “reversal”), this avoidance of “moral prejudgment” means a suspension of teleological closure: for there is, it is my claim, an ethical decision behind such a reading, which does not avoid the problem of evil by using any – natural or spiritual or both – historical teleology. The ‘Modern,’ teleologically “backwards” conception that replaces the ‘Ancient’ “essentially evil” does not, for all that, rid itself of ethical responsibility for its presupposed – even if vindicated by Scianece and/or Truth – telos. What characterizes Marx’s strained relations to philosophy indeed also characterizes Hegel’s: both saw their ‘Science’ as finally overcoming philosophy itself. Hegel saw it as the attainment – and therefore no longer the search or “desire” (*philein*) after – philosophy, and Marx saw it as the time when philosophy will give way to a rigorous science that will have established firm foundations once and for all (and these were, of course, to be economic foundations).

Marx has not much – and Engels has even less – patience for “idealisms,” for mere “phrases” that are alienated from the “real existing world.” Marx and Engels criticize the “young Hegelian ideologists” in precisely these terms:

[...] The most recent of them have found the correct expression for their activity when they declare they are only fighting against “phrases”. They forget, however, that they themselves are opposing nothing but phrases to these phrases, and that they are in no way combating the real existing world when they are combating solely the phrases of this world.” (Karl Marx and Friedrich Engels, *The German Ideology: Including Theses on Feuerbach and Introduction to the Critique of Political Economy*, trans. Clemens Dutt, ed. C. J. Arthur (Amherst: Prometheus Books, 1998), p. 41).

Fighting against such “idealisms,” not to say “ideologies,” Marx and Engels’ “materialist” approach states, by contrast, that “The premises from which we begin are not arbitrary ones, not dogmas, but real premises from which abstraction can only be made in the imagination” (ibid, ibid).

Indeed, what Aristotle describes as the beginning of philosophy – the philosopher’s freedom from material necessities – corresponds to what Marx describes as the first appearance of the notorious “division of labor,” the breach within Man – as a

“producing animal” (which is how Marx saw ‘Man’) – between the mental and the physical, between (roughly) the production of material goods and the production of phrases, between use value and surplus value. Division of labour, according to Marx, is precisely what “[...] converts the product of labour into a ‘Commodity’” (Karl Marx, *Capital: A Critique of Political Economy: Volume 1: the Process of Capitalist Production*, trans. Samuel Moore, and Edward B. Aveling, ed. Friedrich Engels (London: Lawrence & Wishart, 2003), p. 110). This division is the quintessential “industrial pathology” that is “peculiar to manufacture” (ibid, p. 343), and it is the latter that underwrites the entire structure (by which means of production become concentrated in less and less hands while their “exploited” workers multiply).

‘Exploitation’ is, hence, a mark of both the division, and its showing itself – in “real” history/conditions – to be less and less sustainable. It is only decried “morally” by Marx insofar as it designates the incomplete movement of an inevitable force of history that – true to its Hegelian spirit – seeks to reconcile all differences, all Divisions, in the pursuit of a unified Science of life itself, on all its aspects (or, at least, all the aspects that “matter” – as per Marx’s ‘historical *materialism*’).

Words or ideas are only useful, hence, insofar as they mark the material/real breach within society, and will disappear when the telos of society’s unification is fulfilled. This includes not only philosophy, but “morality” as well – both of which are mere sublimates (read: superstructures) that express the real/material conditions (read: “base”) of the society wherein they appear:

[...] The phantoms formed in the brains of men are also, necessarily, sublimates of their material life-process, which is empirically verifiable and bound to material premises [this is where ‘Science’ is destined to supercede “philosophy;” SC]. Morality, religion, metaphysics, and all the rest of ideology as well as the forms of consciousness corresponding to these, thus no longer retain the semblance of independence. They have no history, no development; but men, developing their material production and their material intercourse, alter, along with this their actual world, also their thinking and the products of their thinking. It is not consciousness that determines life, but life that determines consciousness” (German Ideology, p. 47).

Philosophy, as such a “phantom” or “ideology,” is, like religion – i.e. in contradistinction to Marx’s ‘Science’ – *limited*. In *Theories of Surplus Value*, Marx writes: “[...] philosophy first builds itself up within the religious form of consciousness, and in so doing on the one hand destroys religion as such, while on the other hand, in its positive content, it still moves only within this religious sphere, idealised and reduced to terms of thought.” (Karl Marx, *Theories of Surplus-Value*, trans. G. A. Bonner and Emile Burns (Moscow: Progress, 1990), p. 52.)

This “idealization” is described in terms of a delusion, an ungrounded “self-flattery” that – much like Hegel’s vanity (and here the spectre of moral judgment creeps in despite Marx’s best efforts – traps consciousness in a false fantasy and keeps it from attending to the Truth of its (economic, always economic) condition.:

[...] Division of labour only becomes truly such from the moment when a division of material and mental labour appears. From this moment onwards consciousness can really flatter itself that it is something other than consciousness of existing practice, that it really represents something without representing something real; from now on consciousness is in a position to emancipate itself from the world and to proceed to the formation of “pure” theory, theology, philosophy, morality, etc”. (German Ideology, pp. 51-52)

Overcoming the division of/in “labor,” is, hence, a return to the lost paradise of which the very existence of “mental” labor is a necessary and sufficient marker. As in Hegel’s idealist-speculative philosophy – which in Marx is stood on its head in a “materialist” inflection of this same speculative system – division leads to contradictions that, when they cease, “heal” and “overcome” it. This overcoming – once the division had made an ‘appearance’ in history/consciousness – can be said to be signalled precisely in the obviation of all “mental” labor as such; the abolition of ‘philosophy’ itself, as we are following it here: “the division of labour implies the possibility, nay the fact, that intellectual and material activity, that enjoyment and labour, production and consumption, devolve on different individuals, and that the only possibility of their not coming into contradiction lies in negating in its turn the division of labour” (German Ideology, p. 52).

The exploitation of the working class, hence, is itself *only an expression of the contradiction* that appeared with the first division of labor; a contradiction that is geared, through the necessary march of history/spirit, to vanish in a higher stage of economic/spiritual development. That is when the division of labor can truly be negated; and, by extension, philosophy would cease to exist, giving way to (in Marx’s case a ‘political economy’) Science.

⁷³ Heidegger is, once again, in a basic agreement with Aristotle’s idea of “the universal [περί τούτων – “beings-comprehensive”] thinker who studies the primary reality [πρώτην οὐσίαν],” who is “a more ultimate [ἀνωτέρω] type of thinker than the natural philosopher (for nature [φύσις] is only a genus of Being [γένος τοῦ ὄντος]).” The “science” (ἐπιστήμη) of this primary reality is “to study Being qua Being [τὸ ὄν ἢ ὄν θεωρεῖν], and the attributes inherent in it qua Being” (Aristotle, *Metaphysics IV*, 1005a)

⁷⁴ In this, Heidegger is in agreement – through Aristotle – with Hegel: “[...] philosophy is in fact the very discipline that aims at liberating [befreien] man from an infinite [unendliche – this is the Hegelian ‘bad infinite;’ SC] crowd of finite purposes and

intentions and at making him indifferent [*gleichgültig*] with regard to them, so that it is all the same to him whether such matters are the case or not.” (Enc I §88, p. 141/GW 20:125). Cf. the second quote from Hegel in the epigraph to this section.

⁷⁵ ‘Being’ has a claim that is ontologically distinct from that of ‘universality,’ since it is articulated against horizons of meaning that shift according to time and place. Yet, structurally speaking, these horizons perform a similar closure to that of the ‘universal,’ which will be introduced momentarily by Lévinas’ ethico-temporal critique (of the “fundamental” claims of Heidegger’s ontology).

⁷⁶ The meaning or “essence” of this “dynamic duo” (or bastard child) will have to unfold here as a performance, and is only justifiable based on this performance; this is the only manner I saw of remaining faithful to such “living” thoughts. At this initial stage I can only offer the following by way of exposition:

The name ‘Levinatzsch,’ despite its appearance, is not wholly gratuitous or insignificant, even if this appearance does serve a crucial *methodological* purpose (first and foremost as a case of ‘vanity’). For now – for Levinatzsch will prove its mettle in performing the argumentations here; in “battle,” so to speak – let me just make a few initial comments. First, ‘Levinatzsch’ marks a particular nexus between two very different (some say antithetical) thinkers, that find themselves here joined-at-the-hip in a specific, contentious cause against Western thought.

This *questionable* kind of “joining” is why I refused to use the (academically ubiquitous) construction of the ‘Lévinas and Nietzsche’ variety, for it is my presupposition that any such ‘and’ would have to, first, qualify the separation and connection between these two, living, thoughts – and this can never be done so absolutely as to justify the neatness of this comparative ‘and.’ In short, when it concerns such absolute, metaphysical matters of thought, the stakes simply do not allow – if one has the ear to hear their complaints – an ‘and’ that is unqualified by the conditions of both its possibility (ontological “situations”), and its necessity (ethico-metaphysical demands). Second, and this follows from the first, the name ‘Levinatzsch’ itself attests to the Jewish inflection I am giving Nietzsche (and philosophy) here, offered as a kind of “kvetsch,” a Yiddish word that denotes both ‘to squeeze’ (Lévinas and Nietzsche squeezed to construe ‘Levinatzsch’), and ‘to complain’ (‘Levinatzsch’ as the witness to the violence of Western thought and metaphysics).

The third reason is a due honor given to Gilles Deleuze’s attitude (evinced explicit Nietzschean germs) towards philosophy and philosophers, particularly his recommendation to “sodomize philosophers” and produce “monstrous children;” the chimeric, not to say grating, ‘Levinatzsch’ attests somewhat to this monstrosity, and also – and this is of great importance – to the violence of my own reading/appropriating of their texts. The fourth and last reason I will mention here, and that I prefer to leave enigmatic for now, is that this “kvetsch” is an initial articulation of something left unthought in what it means, for the philosophical and ethical sensibilities I am driven by, to “be,” or become, or proceed as a ‘community.’

⁷⁷ Martin Heidegger, Nietzsche’s Word: ‘God is Dead,’ *The Question Concerning Technology and Other Essays*, trans. William Lovitt (New York: Harper and Row, 1973), p. 71.

⁷⁸ Though Lévinas does not often treat the matter in these terms, and seldom with relation to Nietzsche, the following passage from his essay ‘Ideology and Idealism’ will serve well as an initial foundation, or at least germ, for the outrageous “kvetsch” of Nietzsche and Lévinas that is promoted here. In this passage, in effect, Lévinas is defending Nietzsche’s insistence on value over-and-against the suspicion the latter evinces towards all values – a thought that has become, in its modern inflection, the “critique of ideology.”

That the question of *value* is still insisted on by Nietzsche – arguably the “father” of all “ideological critiques” (though perhaps having Hegel for a “grandfather”) – is a difficult, high-wire thought that, on the one hand, does not (contrary to popular beliefs) promote an absolute “relativism” that empties all values of any content and hence obviating ‘value’ altogether, and, on the other, never allows a given value to settle too comfortably, that is, to give itself a certain metaphysical purchase of dominion over thought (Gilles Deleuze called this Western philosophy’s “moral image of thought”). Even if a value is a lie, abandoning it for this reason will only betray a primacy given to Truth over all of thought; not that this primacy is illegitimate, Levinatzsch will say, but it evinces its own value and, when seen as absolute, makes *this* value (or what Nietzsche would call this ‘will to power’) justified in its ‘Yes’s and No’s; or, in short, wielding what Walter Benjamin called a “divine,” that is an *always already justified*, violence. Levinatzsch is offered here as the main witness for, and complainer about, this violence; a thought that puts itself, repeatedly, to the most harshly critical ethical test. Here Lévinas,

[...] A sort of neoscientism and neopositivism dominates Western thought. It extends to disciplines having man as their object, it extends to ideologies themselves, whose mechanisms one dismantles and whose structures one sets forth. The mathematical formalization practiced by structuralism constitutes the objectivism of the new method, which is so much its consequence. Never in the new science of man shall value serve as a principle of intelligibility. For it is precisely in value that the great Lie [i.e. of ideology; SC] would take refuge: impulse or instinct, a mechanical phenomenon objectively detectable in man, gives us by its spontaneity the illusion of the subject and, by its term, the appearance of an end. The end poses as a value and the impulse, consequently, garbed in practical reason, is guided by this value promoted to the rank of a universal principle (Lévinas, ‘Ideology and Idealism,’ GCM, p. 6)

⁷⁹ Constantin Fasolt's fascinating *The Limits of History* speaks to precisely such a forgetting (of Medieval Christian origins to, and the political power-struggle with modern science/thought). Cf. Constantin Fasolt, *The Limits of History* (Chicago: Chicago UP, 2004).

⁸⁰ Martin Heidegger, 'The Jewish Contamination of German Spiritual Life (Letter to Victor Schworer, 2 Oct. 1929),' *Philosophical and Political Writings*, ed. Manfred Stassen (New York: Continuum, 2003), p. 1; cf. Sieg von Ulrich, 'Die Verjudung des deutschen Geistes,' *Zeit Online*, 22 December, 1989, <http://www.zeit.de/1989/52/die-verjudung-des-deutschen-geistes/komplettansicht>, accessed 17 Oct. 2015.

⁸¹ Jacques Derrida, *Of Spirit: Heidegger and the Question*, trans. Geoffrey Bennington and Rachel Bowlby (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1989).

⁸² Cf. SZ, p. 46 (also cf. *Of Spirit*, pp. 16-17):

[...] the subject, the soul, the consciousness, the spirit, the person [...] refer to definite phenomenal domains which can be 'given form': but they are never used without a notable failure to see the need for inquiring about the Being of the entities thus designated. So we are not being terminologically arbitrary when we avoid [vermeiden] these terms – or such expressions as 'life' and 'man' – in designating those entities which we are ourselves.

⁸³ Derrida is most eloquent about this, and – though he takes a somewhat different path in this work than I will be taking here – captures the essence of my attempts here, *comme d'habitude*:

[...] I wish to begin to treat of spirit – the word and the concept, the terms *Geist*, *geistig*, *geistlich* – in Heidegger. I shall begin to follow modestly the itineraries, the functions, the formations and regulated transformations, the presuppositions and the destinations. This preliminary work has not yet been systematically undertaken – to my knowledge, perhaps not even envisaged. Such a silence is not without significance. It does not derive only from the fact that, although the lexicon of spirit is more copious in Heidegger than is thought, he never made it the title or the principal theme of an extended meditation, a book, a seminar, or even a lecture. And yet – I will attempt to show this – what thereby remains unquestioned in the invocation of *Geist* by Heidegger is, more than a *coup de force*, force itself in its most out-of-the-ordinary manifestation (*Of Spirit*, pp. 4-5 [my underline]).

When Derrida treats of this particular passage in IM (*Of Spirit*, p. 39), he relates it to its historical context when Heidegger was still affiliated with the National Socialism that swept Germany at the time (the lecture of this text was given in 1935). I wish, of course, precisely to allude to this connection, but through a methodological rather than a hermeneutic detour; to relate this denied "spirit" to its affirmation in Hegel and confront it with a concentrated resistance on the part of the Levinatzsch war-machine I am constructing here. My discussion hence will focus on where this question, and this force, come from, and what is the violence that 'spirit' has to enact in order to effect the freedom to (philosophically) question.

Through Lévinas, this will bring us back to the question of the usurped other that puts the 'I' – even as '*Dasein*' – into radical question; and through Nietzsche I will seek to affirm this state of affairs, while harping on the unease with which Christian thought (including in Heidegger) evades it (much like, as Derrida emphasizes, Heidegger sought to evade the use of '*Geist*'). This occurrence, this "likeness" to Derrida's already written and thought texts, will recur throughout this chapter, indeed throughout this entire dissertation – it might very well all be a repetition of Jacques Derrida's writing.

⁸⁴ Martin Heidegger, 'The Self-Assertion of the German University,' *Philosophical and Political Writings*, ed. Manfred Stassen (New York: Continuum, 2003), p. 2 [translation modified]/'*Die Selbstbehauptung der Deutschen Universität*,' GA 16:107.

⁸⁵ Cf. Martin Heidegger, 'Schwarte Hefte: Überlegungen VIII,' GA 95:97.

In this context, Robert Bernasconi's essay on the 1933-34 Seminar that Heidegger gave under the heading of Nature, History, State, specifically in the use/inflection Heidegger gives at these (Nazi) times to the more vulgar Nazi ideological "concepts," he nevertheless affirms: "[...] when Heidegger conceives of Blut und Boden as necessary but not sufficient conditions of the existence of the German *Volk* he still gave those considerations a significant place, even though in using this language he was attempting to distance himself from racial science narrowly defined." As Bernasconi further concludes: "Heidegger may have known better than most of his contemporaries the flaws of biologism, but he succumbed to a logic every bit as dangerous [...]" (Robert Bernasconi, 'Who Belongs? Heidegger's Philosophy of the *Volk* in 1933-4,' *Nature, History, State: 1933-1934*, eds. Gregory Fried and Richard Polt (London: Bloomsbury, 2013), p. 125)

⁸⁶ The concept of *Geschick* – German for 'skill,' used by Heidegger mainly as for 'destiny' or, at times, close to Jacques Derrida's "*envois*" in *La Carte Postale* – is too intricate to do justice to here, especially as it regards Heidegger's concept of fate and its relation to Being. And yet, I do enjoy the advantage proper to the "speculative" nature of my analysis – necessary when dealing with first philosophy/metaphysical principles – and can quote Heidegger on the 'Why?' question as it relates to this concept(ion) of *Geschick* (especially its potentially cosmological totalization in something akin to Hegel's *Weltgeschichte*).

Heidegger refers to *Geschick* precisely as that which collects and recollects *both Being and its ground* to ("be") *the same* (a "belonging-together" that constitutes the essence of *logos*): "to what extent "are" being and ground/reason [*Grund und*

Vernunft the same? The answer offered itself up to us on the path returning to the commencement of the *Geschick* of being [*Seinsgeschickes*].” (Martin Heidegger, *The Principle of Reason*, trans. Reginald Lilly (Bloomington: Indiana UP, 1991), p. 112 [my underline]/GA 10:168).

For Derrida, cf. Jacques Derrida, ‘Envois,’ in *The Post Card: From Socrates to Freud and Beyond*, trans. Alan Bass (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1987), pp. 3-256.

Thus, Heidegger provides a reading of Heraclitus’ Fragment DK52 about ‘aion’ as an ‘epoch’ or what Heidegger calls “world time” (there are two more designations of time in Ancient Greek: χρόνος – sequential time, and καιρός – the time of opportunity), and that reads: “Time [αἰών] is a child at play, moving pieces in a board game; the kingly [βασιληῖ] power is a child’s” (quoted in *ibid*, p. 113; cf. Miroslav Marcovich, *Heraclitus: Greek Text with a Short Commentary; Including Fresh Addenda, Corrigenda and a Select Bibliography (1967-2000)* (Sankt Augustin: Academia Verlag, 2001), p. 490ff.). The *Geschick* of Being thus merges with the ground of Being and can offer only a mysterious tautology for its justification. Only when it comes (back) to the ‘Why?’ question, however, is this revealed; just like Primo Levi’s experience in Auschwitz – presented as the epigraph to this chapter – in the *Geschick* “there is no why:”

The *Geschick* of being, a child that plays, shifting the pawns: the royalty of a child-that means, the archē, that which governs by instituting grounds, the being of beings. The *Geschick* of being: a child that plays.

In addition, there are also great children. By the gentleness of its play, the greatest royal child is that mystery of the play in which humans are engaged throughout their life, that play in which their essence is at stake.

Why does it play, the great child of the world-play Heraclitus brought into view in the *aion*? It plays, because it plays.

The “because” withers away in the play. The play is without “why.” It plays since it plays. It simply remains a play: the most elevated and the most profound.

But this “simply” is everything, the one, the only. (*The Principle of Reason*, p. 113 [my underline])

⁸⁷ ‘Self-Assertion,’ p. 2 [translation modified]/GA 16:108.

⁸⁸ ‘Self-Assertion,’ p. 6 [translation modified; my underline, Heidegger’s italics]/GA 16:108.

⁸⁹ Richard Donner, *Superman*, DVD, Jerry Siegel, Joe Shuster, Mario Puzo, David Newman, Leslie Newman, Robert Benton (1978; Washington: Warner Brothers, 2001), Film.

⁹⁰ I adapt here a very dangerous appellation which was, to the best of my knowledge, first coined by Gershom Scholem in his debates with Christian Gnosticism, something he called “metaphysical anti-Semitism.” This term makes its appearance on the battleground of, precisely, the question of *the knowledge of God*, which, as Scholem shows, was perceived by *Christian* gnostics as in need of reform(ation), particularly by purging it from the justice-oriented, “materialist” God with which the Jewish God had been associated:

[...] The Gnostics [...] believed that it was necessary to distinguish between a good but hidden God who alone was worthy of being worshipped by the elect, and a Demiurge or creator of the physical universe, whom they identified with the “just” God of the Old Testament. [...] they did not so much reject the Jewish Scriptures [...] [but] they denied the superiority of the Jewish God, for whom they reserved the most pejorative terms. Salvation was brought to mankind by messengers sent by the hidden God to rescue the soul from the cruel law or “justice” of the Demiurge, whose dominion over the evil material world [...] was but an indication of his lowly status. The hidden God himself was unknown, but he had entrusted Jesus and the gnostic faithful with the task of overthrowing the “God of the Jews.” [...] This kind of “metaphysical anti-Semitism,” as is well known, did not vanish from history with the disappearance of the gnostic sects, but continued to reassert itself within the Catholic Church and its heretical offshoots throughout the Middle Ages” (Gershom Scholem, ‘Redemption Through Sin,’ *The Messianic Idea in Judaism and Other Essays on Jewish Spirituality* (New York: Schocken, 1995), pp. 104-105 [my underline]).

In the following I will attempt to show – through the less racially-oriented moniker of ‘abjection’ – how this same attitude produces time and again the same hatred and the same “forgetting” of its origin. The “metaphysical abjection” of Judaism that still found uncensored echoes in the luminaries of German Idealism – over whose “anti-Semitic remarks” there was yet not so much attention and turmoil like, say, Martin Heidegger’s – is here *methodologically* chosen and posited.

Thus, my attempt is – a lesson well-learned from a long and hard reflection on Israeli violence and propaganda – to think anti-Semitism beyond associations of race or even conscious creed. To give the Jewish Idea the originary respect it deserves (at least respectful if not faithful) it is necessary to go to the uneasy heart of the matter; an unease that does not start and stop with either racial or ethnic or “cultural” predicates (whether assigned by self or others). No, the Jewish Idea is a very real threat to the way in which Western Christendom, fundamentally, understands and pursues what Hegel called the ethical life (*Sittlichkeit*) of the community *as such*. Rather than accuse and shame Christianity for the anti-Semitic “roots” that are hereby made palpable – something which Christian *guilt* accomplishes far better than I ever could – I attempt to think and affirm their animosity, if anything, trying to elicit more of it. This is the reason that my antipathology – as a descent into the belly of the Western philosophical beast (or rather, should I say, Spirit) – is indeed a danger and a wager; a *kind* of Nietzscheanism.

In his seminal *The History of Anti-Semitism*, Léon Poliakov mentions two attitudes towards the Jews in Enlightenment France, both of which agree on the radical vice that will forever stain the Jewish soul (i.e. the accusation of Deicide; that they caused the death of Jesus Christ on the Cross), except that they questioned “man’s right to substitute himself for God in order to punish the Jews” (Léon Poliakov, *The History of Anti-Semitism Volume III: From Voltaire to Wagner*, trans. Miriam Kochan (London: Routledge & Kegan Paul, 1975), p. 154). This led to a certain avenue or “hope for Judaism” in the form of what was then called their “regeneration.” “It is, in fact, significant,” Poliakov reflects, “that this culture, to express its confident hope in the Jews’ improvement, adopted the term *regeneration*, which the science of Descartes and Buffon had borrowed from the language of the Church and which had first really meant the effect of baptism (“regeneration in Jesus Christ”)” (Ibid, 156). This line of hope for the Jews – in a deep sense, an extension of their European-Christian *hospitality* – alludes to a similar track, whereby such “borrowing” is “secularized” by, or should I say *through*, ‘Science,’ thus still carrying the same metaphysical assumptions – and struggle – into a supposedly “universal” discourse without having recourse to such “embarrassing,” or ‘unscientific’ origins (that hail back to the Dark Ages or a Europe still aware of the potency of *religious difference*).

For more on “metaphysical anti-Semitism” in Poliakov, cf. *ibid*, pp. 175ff (where Poliakov mentions – but does not, understandably, provide a philosophical engagement with – the point that “the conceptual structures of men like Kant and Hegel were stained with stupendous anti-Jewish ill-feeling” vol. 3, p. 176. Also cf. Poliakov comments that, “[Kant] [...] advocated the euthanasia of Judaism in a manner which could only have been the metaphysical way of crying ‘Death to the Jews!’” (ibid, p. 179); Poliakov further remarks that because of Kant’s “optimism” that the Jews might be reformed through ridding them(selves) of the “Judaic spirit” was “Christian rather than racist” (vol 3, p. 180). Poliakov also historicizes the appearance of ‘race’ – an issue I will return to in Chapter II of this dissertation – as a “substitute” for the “religious motives of anti-Semitism,” cf. *Ibid*, pp. 129ff.).

What Emmanuel Lévinas writes of the *philosophy* of “Hitlerism” can, I propose, be read in this context as well:

The philosophy of Hitler is simplistic [*primaire*]. But the primitive powers that burn within it burst open its wretched phraseology under the pressure of an elementary force. They awaken the secret nostalgia within the German soul. Hitlerism is more than a contagion or a madness; it is an awakening of elementary feelings.

Hence, Lévinas continues,

[...] it is not enough to follow certain journalists in distinguishing between Christian universalism and racist particularism: a logical contradiction cannot judge a concrete event. The meaning of a logical contradiction that opposes two forms of ideas only shows up fully if we go back to their source, to intuition, to the original decision that makes them possible. It is in this spirit that we are going to set forth the following reflections. (Emmanuel Lévinas, ‘Reflections on the Philosophy of Hitlerism,’ trans. Séan Hand, *Critical Inquiry* 17.1 (Autumn, 1990), pp. 62-71; p. 64 [my underline])

For a good comprehensive account of Western thought as underwritten by an oftentimes hidden anti-Judaism, cf. David Nirenberg, *Anti-Judaism: The Western Tradition* (New York: W. W. Norton & Company, 2014). Also cf. Michael Mack, *German Idealism and the Jew: The Inner Anti-Semitism of Philosophy and German Jewish Responses* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2003); Nathan Rotenstreich, *The Recurring Pattern: Studies in Anti-Judaism in Modern Thought* (New York: Horizon Press, 1964).

⁹¹ Two comments are apt here: first, this “equality” that Linnaeus’ taxonomy necessitates was an inherently “modern” one; this means that, due to the need to secure an exclusive place for ‘Man’ vis-à-vis other living beings, made this monumental distinction along with another, darker one that divided this “biological family” to five ‘biological races’ (Linnaeus was the pioneer of biological race studies). Gunnar Broberg’s study of the ‘Homo Sapiens’ moniker affirms that (the Protestant) Linnaeus “tidied up nature after the barbarism and darkness of the Middle Ages. Medieval monasticism [read: Catholicism] is conveniently made to take the blame for all kinds of foolishness. He is throughout the man of the Enlightenment fighting old follies” (Gunnar Broberg, ‘Homo Sapiens: Linnaeus’ Classification of Man,’ in Tore Frängsmyr (ed.), *Linnaeus: The Man and his Work* (Berkeley, University of California Press, 1983), p. 177).

Second, Linnaeus himself wrote in one of the later editions of his famous ‘*Systema Naturae*,’ “the Earth’s creation is the glory of God, as seen from the works of Nature by Man alone.” As Janet Browne comments on Linnaeus’ religious motives in her *The Secular Ark*, that “his deep Protestant faith could be fully expressed through a careful study of the Creator’s work in nature”, noting that he identified himself as “the publisher and interpreter of the wisdom of God” (Janet E. Browne, *The Secular Ark: Studies in the History of Biogeography* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1983), p. 17).

Keeping in mind that this is a European believer that believes in a Protestant version of a Monotheist ‘God,’ I discern here a religious/theological motive, not to say force, behind this need to “order” life so that ‘Man’ is given both privilege and coherence; what underlies that which Gunnar Broberg calls a “desire for systematization” (‘Homo Sapiens,’ p. 171). Thus ‘Homo Sapiens’ – defined as such so as to place Man in a spiritual order of Being (also confirmed in its Earthly apposition of

‘natural history’) leading up to the angels themselves (not unlike the scholastic-theological system that, like Linnaeus, cites Aristotle as its sole inspiration; cf. *ibid.*, pp. 193-194) – both affirms ‘Man’s’ privilege and higher position in Nature, while at the same time putting this position in peril (implying that there is no biological fact/certainty that Man not behave like or devolve towards the other Primates – *Homo Sapiens* is Linnaeus’ only non-morphological designation, one that distinguishes by virtue of *capacity* alone).

My point here is that the *similarity* that attends the “family” class of *Homo Sapiens* in Linnaeus’ taxonomy (prefiguring Darwin’s work a decade later, and still in use today) is born both as an affirmation/appropriation of a certain Christian idea of God and Nature (the idea of “the chain of Being” that leads from solid matter, through plants and animals, to Man, Angel, and then God; cf. Sven Anders Hedin’s comments, quoted in ‘*Homo Sapiens*,’ p. 170), and as a unstable epithet that gives no assurance of this privilege, and hence already invites various techniques to control and direct, to “civilize” this animal that is *Homo Sapiens*. This fact also throws a considerable suspicion as to the ruinous effects of the “biological neutrality” of Linnaeus’ race-designations, since – if *Homo Sapiens* is indeed not biologically distinct from the apes, and is yet divided within itself (again based on non-biological distinctions) – now races can be, in principle, designated as more or less human according to the (non-observable and hence *interpretable*) capacity for speech and reason by which ‘*Homo Sapiens*’ knows itself.

This last remark denotes a curious anecdote in our context, as it seems that Linnaeus, aware that ‘Man’ displays no sufficient biological distinction from the apes, and is designated with them as a member of *Anthropomorpha*, the only distinction being supplied by a quotation that was, to Hegel, the rhyme and reason of his philosophical science in its entirety; where the generic morphological distinction of Man is replaced by Linnaeus with the Latin version of the famous Greek dictum from the Delphic Oracle’s Temple: “*Nosce te ipsum*” (Gr. γνῶθι σεαυτὸν – *know yourself*). This is but one of many indications of how western thought gave birth to modern science/knowledge and the various metaphysical assumptions – intimately related to Europe’s political actions and moral education (from Linnaeus’ time through Hegel’s to our own) – that are included in this new, decidedly modern (and hence threatened) category of the *Homo Sapiens*. One could say that *Homo Perfidus* threatens to scandalize – block the path of progress/enlightenment – *Homo Sapiens*, and the latter guards against this scandal by pains of losing the metaphysical place in the Christian cosmos (that also happens to be apposite to ‘natural science/history/theology/...’).

In short, the quality that ‘*homo*’ suggests with regards to the – more ‘spiritual’ – *sapiens* is predicated on a theological idea of Man’s relation to God, and the metaphysical assumption that God’s perfection or ‘Reason’ could be spied in the systematicity and order of His created Nature; both of which evince a teleology that remains justified solely by these “primordial” assumptions of the ‘*Homo Sapiens*.’

⁹² Hence, “[t]he interrupting force of ethics does not attest to a simple relaxing of reason, but to a placing in question the act of philosophizing, which cannot fall back into philosophy. But what a singular reversal!” Cf. Emmanuel Lévinas, ‘Ideology and Idealism,’ GCM, p. 4

⁹³ Cf., in Lévinas: “Transcendence is passing over to being’s *other*, otherwise than being. Not *to be otherwise*, but *otherwise than being*. And not to not-be; passing over is not here equivalent to dying. Being and not-being illuminate one another, and unfold a speculative dialectic which is a determination of being.” (OB, p. 3)

⁹⁴ For one such formulation, cf. “[...] no sooner has *Dasein* expressed anything about itself to itself, than it has already interpreted itself as care (*cura*) , even though it has done so only pre-ontologically” (BT, p. 227/SZ, p. 183)

⁹⁵ Cf. also the following from Lévinas:

The differing of the identical is also its manifestation. But time is also a recuperation of all divergencies, through retention, memory and history. In its temporalization, in which, thanks to retention, memory and history, nothing is lost, everything is presented or represented, everything is consigned and lends itself to inscription, or is synthesized or, as Heidegger would say, assembled, in which everything is crystallized or sclerosized into substance – in the recuperating temporalization, without time lost, without time to lose, and where the being of substance comes to pass – there must be signaled a lapse of time that does not return, a diachrony refractory to all synchronization, a transcending diachrony.

The meaning of this signalling will have to be clarified. Can it preserve a relationship across the break of the diachrony, without, however, restoring to representation this “deep formerly” as a past that had flowed on, without signifying a “modification” of the present and thus a commencement, a principle that would be thematizable, and therefore would be the origin of every historical or recallable past? Can it, on the contrary, remain foreign to every present, every representation, and thus signify a past more ancient than every representable origin, a pre-original and anarchical passed? The signalling of this pre-original past in the present would not again be an ontological relation (OB, p. 9 [my underline])

⁹⁶ This is Lévinas thinking that which is anterior to the ontological difference; he is affirming an *obsession*, prior to ‘care.’ This is why, as I show below, Heidegger’s ‘care’ always comes back to, and out of, the *Angst* that is beholden to *my* own death (indeed, in Heidegger, here lies the origin of all “calls of conscience”), while Lévinas’ “obsession” and “hostage”

conceptions affirm this ‘care’ as already a response to the other’s death, taken-hostage by another source. One is held hostage, like being forced to be awake by an inexplicable insomnia; hence:

This held-in-awakening, thought concretely and to the point of its own emphasis, is responsibility for another, the responsibility of a hostage. An awakening that never stops: one does not owe a *debt* to the other. An awakening by the infinite – but an awakening that is produced concretely in the form of an irresistible call to responsibility. [...] at no moment may I be tranquilly for-me (GDT, pp. 22-23).

This relation to the other spells, “[...] [a] relationship that obsesses, one that is an obsession, for the other besieges me, to the point where he puts in question my for-me, my in-itself [recall here Heidegger’s *Sein-zum-Tode* as my ‘*Eigenste*,’ my “ownmost,” SC] – to the point where he makes me a hostage.” (ibid, p. 138)

⁹⁷ In his Lectures from 1975-76, assembled as *Dieu, la mort, et le temps*, Lévinas teaches that,

In *Being and Time*, Heidegger considers death as certitude par excellence, as a certain possibility, and he limits its meaning to annihilation. *Gewissheit* [certainty] – that which is proper, or nonalienated in death, that which in death is *eigentlich* [proper, actual]. The *Gewissheit* of death is so much *Gewissheit* that it is the origin of all *Gewissen* [conscience] (GDT, p. 13).

Below, and with the help of Nietzsche, I will show precisely what a phenomenology thought through this “consciencious” lens comes to, and, specifically, how it is geared towards suppressing the call of the Other as the constitutive interruption of all phenomenology as an ethical act, rather than a wondrous/philosophical contemplation. We are dealing here with a different kind of “freedom.”

⁹⁸ In *Angst*, as Heidegger says, all my ties to beings in the world are suddenly interrupted or “put on hold” thereby making me “indifferent” towards them. Hence, in *Angst*, for Heidegger, “[a]ll things and we ourselves sink into indifference” (Martin Heidegger, ‘What is Metaphysics?’, *Pathmarks*, trans. William McNeill (Cambridge: Cambridge UP, 2010), p. 88). It is therefore precisely the fundamental role of *Angst* (and the ‘uncanniness’ of it as an ‘objectless fear’), as that which “unveils the nothing” (ibid, p. 89). Also cf. “[in *Angst*] *Dasein* finds itself face to face with the “nothing” of the possible impossibility [i.e. the possibility of death – where the ‘there’ (of *Da-Sein*) becomes impossible – for a mortal being] of its existence. [...] [...] Being-towards-death [*Sein-zum-Tode*] is essentially anxiety [*Angst*].” (BT, p. 310/SZ, p. 266). This “ownmost [*eigenste*] possibility” of my death is, as Heidegger insists, “non-relational” (ibid, ibid/ibid, ibid)

⁹⁹ Cf. GDT, p. 11

¹⁰⁰ *Contra* Heidegger, Lévinas conceives *Angst* as “attuned” to/through a “second-hand knowledge.”

[...] My relation with death is not limited to this secondhand knowledge. For Heidegger (see *Being and Time*), it is the certitude par excellence. There is an a priori of death. Heidegger calls death certain to the point of seeing in this certitude of death the origin of certitude itself, and he will not allow this certitude to come from the experience of the death of others. (GDT, p. 10)

¹⁰¹ Maurice Blanchot, *The Writing of the Disaster*, trans. Ann Smock (Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press, 1995), p. 1

¹⁰² Once again, and I can only mark these debts as they pass by wanting and murmuring a well-justified grudge, the question of sexual difference here is both alluded and elided – and this is all the more acute when it comes to the way my thought treats this ethical thought of the other’s death. ‘The Corpse’ is precisely threatening an utter bouleversement here, as it should, in my future endeavors, primarily concern what is still, and not (co)incidentally, the most urgently questionable in this Levinatztzschian framework – the yet-unthought ethics of the death of the other as beholden to a different priority, or (though this is a horribly inaccurate construction) a “different difference.” Whether or not, to return to Derrida, this also marks a “different différance” – again a horribly inaccurate rendering of a yet-underarticulated question – is an even harder, and personally more unsettling, thought.

¹⁰³ Lévinas writes this clearly:

In the death of another, in his face that is exposition to death, it is not the passage from one quiddity to another that is announced; in death is the very event of passing [...] with its own acuteness that is its scandal (each death is the first death). We should think of all the murder there is in death: every death is a murder, is premature, and there is the responsibility of the survivor (GDT, p. 72)

It is such a conception of thought as the ethical testimony of the *survivor*, the traces that witness, and respond to, her immemorial usurpation/death, that Blanchot so elegantly (and *accurately*) expresses, to my reading, as the “writing of the disaster,” whose first lines commence comme cela:

The disaster ruins everything, all the while leaving everything intact. It does not touch anyone in particular; “I” am not threatened by it, but spared, left aside. It is in this way that I am threatened; it is in this way that the disaster threatens in me that which is exterior to me—an other than I who passively become other. There is no reaching the disaster. Out of reach is he whom it threatens, whether from afar or close up, it is impossible to say: the infiniteness of the threat has in some way broken every limit. We are on the edge of disaster without being able to situate it in the future: it is rather always already past, and yet we are on the edge or under the threat, all formulations which would imply

the future—that which is yet to come—if the disaster were not that which does not come, that which has put a stop to every arrival. To think the disaster (if this is possible, and it is not possible inasmuch as we suspect that the disaster is thought) is to have no longer any future in which to think it. (*The Writing of the Disaster*, p. 1).

¹⁰⁴ Cf. Jacques Derrida, 'Violence and Metaphysics: An Essay on the Thought of Emmanuel Lévinas,' *Writing and Difference*, trans. Alan Bass (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1978), p. 80.

¹⁰⁵ Cf. "This [Lévinas' own obsession with the death *of the other*; SC] search for death [...] does not signify a philosophy of *Sein zum Tode*. It is thus differentiated from the thought of Heidegger; this is the case, whatever the debt of every contemporary thinker might be to Heidegger, a debt that he often owes to his regret." (GDT, p. 8)

¹⁰⁶ Cf. "Death does not just 'belong' to one's own *Dasein* in an undifferentiated way; death lays claim to it as an individual *Dasein*" (BT, p. 308/SZ, p. 263). Also cf. Lévinas, GDT, p. 13.

¹⁰⁷ Cf. the following *Being and Time* passage about my death as the limits of my *Dasein*'s projections:

Holding death for true (death is just one's own) shows another kind of certainty, and is more primordial than any certainty which relates to entities encountered within-the-world, or to formal objects ; for it is certain of Being-in-the-world. As such, holding death for true does not demand just one definite kind of behaviour in *Dasein*, but demands *Dasein* itself in the full authenticity of its existence. In anticipation [of death; SC] *Dasein* can first make certain of its ownmost [*Eigenste*] Being in its totality – a totality which is not to be outstripped. Therefore the evidential character which belongs to the immediate givenness of Experiences, of the "I", or of consciousness, must necessarily lag behind the certainty which anticipation includes. Yet this is not because the way in which these are grasped would not be a rigorous one, but because in principle such a way of grasping them cannot hold for true (disclosed) something which at bottom it insists upon 'having there' as true: namely, *Dasein* itself, which I myself am, and which, as a potentiality-for-Being, I can be authentically only by anticipation. (BT, pp. 309-310/SZ, p. 265)

¹⁰⁸ Cf. Lévinas' comments, for example, in *Otherwise than Being*:

[...] To become conscious of a being is then always for that being to be grasped across an ideality and on the basis of a said. Even an empirical, individual being is broached across the ideality of logos. Subjectivity qua consciousness can thus be interpreted as the articulation of an ontological event, as one of the mysterious ways in which its "act of being" is deployed. Being a theme, being intelligible or open, possessing oneself, the moment of *having in being* – all that is articulated in the movement of essence, losing itself and finding itself out of an ideal principle, an ἀρχή, in its thematic exposition, being thus carries on its affair of being. The detour of ideality leads to coinciding with oneself, that is, to certainty, which remains the guide and guarantee of the whole spiritual adventure of being. But this is why this adventure is no adventure. It is never dangerous; it is self-possession, sovereignty, ἀρχή. Anything unknown that can occur to it is in advance disclosed, open, manifest, is cast in the mold of the known, and cannot be complete surprise.

For the philosophical tradition of the West, all spirituality lies in consciousness, thematic exposition of being, knowing. (OB, p. 99 [my underline])

¹⁰⁹ Here Lévinas elaborates a bit on what he referred to as the "second hand" knowledge of my death: [...] [K]nowledge [of death] comes to us from the experience and observation of other men, of their behavior as dying and as mortals aware of their death [...] (GDT, pp. 8-9). And also:

[...] What do we know of death; what is death? According to experience, it is the stopping of a behavior, the stopping of expressive movements and of physiological movements or processes that are enveloped by these expressive movements and dissimulated by them; all this forming "something" that shows itself, or rather someone who shows himself, or does better than show himself: someone who expresses himself. This expression is more than monstration, more than manifestation. (ibid, p. 11)

¹¹⁰ Translated in English as the "they" or the "they self," the *das Man* is where,

[...] *Dasein*, as everyday Being-with-one-another, stands in *subjection* to Others. It itself *is* not; its Being has been taken away by the Others. *Dasein*'s everyday possibilities of Being are for the Others to dispose of as they please. These Others, moreover, are not definite Others. On the contrary, any Other can represent them. [...] [...] the neuter, the "they" (BT, p. 164, SZ, p. 126)

¹¹¹ It is crucial to note here the function of the '*agora*' with respect to philosophy, especially as conceived, and used, by Aristotle (and this concerns the key resistance to Western metaphysics that is here, *methodologically*, conceived in/as 'antipathology'). For Aristotle does indeed bring the *agora* into his philosophy, primarily in his concept of the 'category.' This concept – which owes its entire philosophical pedigree to Aristotle – underwent a revolution in this usage, and especially in the way it has been taken over by the philosophical tradition. Originally, up until Aristotle's time, the *kategorēin* was a form of speech; most notably an accusation, spoken in this public "clearing" that is the democratic *agora*. It was a public "putting-down" of someone – an appeal for justice.

With Aristotle, however, the word shifts, and shifts silently. So silently, in fact, that I could find nigh one philosopher that ever treated it with the importance I believe that it suggests. The 'category' became a mere depiction of being, or a certain

classification of predicates (recall that the first category for Aristotle was, indeed, 'being'). Hence, we here witness a similar movement to Heidegger's vis-à-vis the "pre-primordially" of the ethical in relation to the ontological: under this cover of 'ontology,' of what merely is, lies buried – by Aristotle; by philosophy at large – an accusation and an indignation, a call for justice. Heidegger, perhaps the philosopher most obsessed with Greek etymology, is one of the few philosophers to even mention this fact, though even he will gloss over this ethico-political origin that it covers over. Heidegger, true to his phenomenological ontology, will insist on it as an act of "depiction," but will utterly avoid the ethical implications of its original *accusatory* character (cf. N. 4:36-39). To give but some examples of this overarching gloss in the Western philosophical discourse; where an originary appeal to justice, an ethico-political appeal par excellence, is systematically denied or ignored:

One could start by pointing out that, as Moravcsik confirms, in the philosophical field – central to the philosophy of science/methodology – of *formal logic* (which Aristotle himself, as Hegel would confirm, has founded), no *explanation* of predication is ever given (cf. J. M. E. Moravcsik, 'Aristotle on Predication,' *The Philosophical Review*, Vol. 76. 1 (1967), pp. 80-96; p. 82). For Hegel's assessment, cf. Enc I §20A, p. 51.

Then, we can note that, in the Heidegger-Aristotle connection, this reduction is indeed in operation: Ted Sadler's book on Heidegger and Aristotle explicitly reduces the accusation to a mere depiction of the "whatness" of the accused (again, *treating the ontological as fundamental*): "The everyday meaning of *katagorein* as 'accuse' is an important clue to the philosophical meaning of the doctrine of categories. *Katagorein* occurs in, among other contexts, the law courts, where a decision is made on the what-ness of a this, e.g., whether this man is a thief." (cf. Ted Sadler, *Heidegger and Aristotle: The Question of Being* (London: The Athlone Press, 2000), p. 54.

Lastly we can turn to the only philosopher who treats this problem quasi-independently – at least *acknowledging the shift* that occurs in Aristotle (yet drawing no important conclusions from it) – the Oxford scholar of Ancient Philosophy, Michael Frede, who writes:

[...] In ordinary Greek this verb [i.e. *katagorein*; SC] means "to accuse," but it is clear that Aristotle here is using it in the unprecedented sense of "to predicate" or, one should say, in the sense of "to predicate truly." For clearly what makes something a genus of something is not that somebody happens to predicate a genus-term of that thing but that the term is true of the thing in the appropriate way. (cf. Michael Frede, 'Categories in Aristotle,' *Essays in Ancient Philosophy* (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1987), p. 32 [my underline].)

¹¹² Lévinas elaborates the non-indifference of obsession in his *Autrement qu'être* thus,

Obsession is not a notion that would be introduced here to express, according to the well-known ritual, proximity as the dialectical unity of unity and difference. Obsession, in which difference shudders as non-indifference, does not simply figure as a relation among all the reciprocal or at least reversible relations that form the system of the intelligibility of being, and in which the ego, even in its uniqueness, is a universal subsuming a multiplicity of unique egos. Consciousness is perhaps the very locus of the reverting of the facticity of individuation into a concept of an individual, and thus into consciousness of its death [i.e. Heideggerian *Angst*; SC], in which its singularity is lost in its universality. In consciousness, no supplementary specific difference, no negation of universality can extract the subject out of universality. [...] But the obsession by the neighbor is stronger than negativity. It paralyzes with the weight of its very silence [i.e. in the death of the other; SC] the power to assume this weight. (OB, pp. 83-84 [my underline])

¹¹³ Perhaps it is, again, important to clarify that Lévinas is not pursuing a moral disparagement of this origin of philosophy, but its interruption by the question that comes from its Other/others. A moral condemnation might claim that the situation needs to be "rectified," and seek to include all those excluded; but this is precisely how morality dupes us to not hear, to obviate, the ethico-metaphysical 'Why?' whose *interruption* Lévinas tries to keep. "Commonsense morality" – suspiciously close to Christian morality – will always try to short-circuit the distance between the 'I' and the Other precisely because the Other always confounds its eschatological assumptions of an eventual absolution of intention/soul – though this will be more apparent in the next chapter on Nietzsche.

¹¹⁴ The Enlightenment's idolizing the single System from which everything could be explained and derived was, for Adorno and Horkheimer, itself an irrational myth that became manifest most cynically in what they called the Western "culture industry." The "civilization" pretenses of the Enlightenment then made it into a "mass deception" for being itself a mythical belief (in this System) that annihilated all (other) beliefs as despised, barbaric "myths."

The civilizing pretenses of the Enlightenment then devolve – due to its guiding-yet-denied myth of the 'system' – a "culture industry," where 'man' is being manufactured under the only freedom and equality that a system can comprehend: the formal freedom/equality of the state and its concentration camps. Thus, Adorno and Horkheimer aver, goes the ideology that the culture industry shared with Hitler's concentration camps; in this ideology, "[...] everyone is provided for. 'No one must be hungry or cold. Anyone failing to comply goes to a concentration camp.' The joke from Hitler's Germany might well shine out as a maxim above all the portals of the culture industry." (Theodore Adorno and Max Horkheimer, *Dialectic of*

Enlightenment: Philosophical Fragments, ed. Gunzelin Schmid Noerr, trans. Edmund Jephcott (Stanford: Stanford UP, 2002), p. 120.

¹¹⁵ Cf. The following passage from Kant's *The Conflict of the Faculties*, where he prophesies – and not without satisfaction – the end of religious *difference* itself:

[...] So we can consider the proposal of Ben David, a highly intelligent Jew, to adopt publicly the religion of Jesus (presumably with its vehicle, the Gospel), a most fortunate one. Moreover it is the only plan which, if carried out, would leave the Jews a distinctive faith and yet quickly call attention to them as an educated and civilized people who are ready for all the rights of citizenship and whose faith could also be sanctioned by the government. If this were to happen, the Jews would have to be left free, in their interpretation of the Scriptures (the Torah and the Gospels), to distinguish the way in which Jesus spoke as a Jew to Jews from the way he spoke as a moral teacher to men in general. The euthanasia of Judaism is pure moral religion, freed from all the ancient statutory teachings, some of which were bound to be retained in Christianity (as a messianic faith). But this division of sects, too, must disappear in time, leading, at least in spirit, to what we call the conclusion of the great drama of religious change on earth (the restoration of all things), when there will be only one shepherd and one flock. (Immanuel Kant, *The Conflict of the Faculties*, trans. Mary J. Gregor (New York: Abaris Books, 1979), p. 95.

¹¹⁶ The essence of my argument here is not to accuse philosophy in any sort of “elitism,” nor judge it morally, following a Marxist charge of ‘exploitation,’ ‘privilege,’ or ‘virtuality.’ As a Nietzschean investigation, mine is an approach of affirmation, of *amor fati*. If this affirmation sounds like a moral rebuke, this is primarily due to Christian values having been, as Nietzsche says, ‘victorious.’ On the contrary, as we will see, it was an essentially *Christian-Protestant, metaphysical maneuver to deny nobility so as to evade the question of the Other*; so that thought could *reconcile* itself to this catastrophic betrayal that the death of the “they self” threatened its harmonized closures with. This metaphysics, this morality – owing to a suppressed, irreconciled Jewish Monotheism that pulsates within it – attacked nobility precisely *in its emergence* (through, for example the ‘moral accusations’ I have just taken a distance from). With Levinatztch, I want to both affirm the noble’s violence and look it squarely in the eye; to think its conditions (in what Lévinas proposed as) ‘ethically’ rather than (what Nietzsche vilified as) ‘morally.’

¹¹⁷ Emmanuel Lévinas, ‘Prefatory Note’ to ‘Reflections on the Philosophy of Hitlerism,’ trans. Séan Hand, *Critical Inquiry* 17.1 (1990), p. 63 [my underline].

¹¹⁸ Lévinas continues this elaboration – of the face of the Other that both commands me not to kill and yet, by the “otherworldly” power of its command (and, as Lévinas puts it, its “sovereignty”), tempts me precisely to kill – a little further, in a passage worth quoting here:

[...] The Other who can sovereignly say *no* to me is exposed to the point of the sword or the revolver's bullet, and the whole unshakeable firmness of his "for itself" with that intransigent *no* he opposes is obliterated because the sword or the bullet has touched the ventricles or auricles of his heart. In the contexture of the world he is a quasi-nothing. But he can oppose to me a struggle, that is, oppose to the force that strikes him not a force of resistance, but the very *unforeseeableness* of his reaction. He thus opposes to me not a greater force, an energy assessable and consequently presenting itself as though it were part of a whole, but the very transcendence of his being by relation to that whole; not some superlative of power, but precisely the infinity of his transcendence. This infinity, stronger than murder, already resists us in his face, is his face, is the primordial *expression*, is the first word: "you shall not commit murder." The infinite paralyzes power by its infinite resistance to murder, which, firm and insurmountable, gleams in the face of the Other, in the total nudity of his defenceless eyes, in the nudity of the absolute openness of the Transcendent. There is here a relation not with a very great resistance, but with something absolutely *other*: the resistance of what has no resistance – the ethical resistance. (TI, p. 199)

¹¹⁹ PS §540, pp. 328-329

¹²⁰ In: Kirby Dick (ed.), *Screenplay and Essays on the Film Derrida* (New York: Routledge, 2005), p. 61

¹²¹ TI, p. 21/ Emmanuel Lévinas, *Totalité et infini: Essai sur l'extériorité* (La Haye: Martinus Nijhoff, 1971), p. 5.

¹²² It is again important to emphasize that though, for Heidegger, man hearkens to the question of metaphysics through the force of spirit seen as an attack (on her everyday existence), this attack comes from Being itself, from an always already being-there. In Lévinas, and his ethical approach to the question of metaphysics, this attack comes from outside of Being (and its various projected temporalities, including the most fundamental one, that of Angst), that is, from the Other. For Lévinas, the force of this attack does not emanate from an ambiguity that is still struggling towards its arrival at/in *Truth*, but from an excessive persecution of a demand for *Justice* emanating in the Other. Consider, in this respect (and I urge you to, once again, keep Hegel's metaphysical, all-reconciling Concept [*Begriff*] in mind here), what Heidegger says in his *The Fundamental Concepts of Metaphysics* lectures:

[...] It would be a misunderstanding if we wished in the slightest to weaken this impression of the hopelessness of philosophizing [...]. [...] We must rather uphold and hold out in this terror [Schrecken]. For in it there becomes

manifest something essential about all philosophical comprehension, namely that in the philosophical concept [*Begriff*], man, and indeed man as a whole, is in the *grip of an attack* [*Angriff*] – driven out of everydayness and driven back into the ground of things. Yet the attacker is not man, the dubious subject of the everyday and of the bliss of knowledge. Rather, *in philosophizing the Da-sein in man launches the attack upon man*. Thus man in the ground of his essence is someone in the grip of an attack, attacked by the fact 'that he is what he is', and already caught up in all comprehending questioning. Yet being comprehensively included in this way is not some blissful awe, but the struggle against the insurmountable ambiguity of all questioning and being. (FCM, §7 p. 21 [Heidegger's italics; my underline])

¹²³ In the Translator's Introduction to Emmanuel Lévinas' *Otherwise than Being, or Beyond Essence*, Lévinas scholar and translator Alphonso Lingis gives a concise summary of the implications of a metaphysical approach that does not base itself (and its critique of the traditional, "onto-theological" subject), as in Heidegger, in the socio-historical makeup of the thinker's 'Da.' Here is Lingis' helpful gloss:

I am responsible for processes in which I find myself, and which have a momentum by which they go on beyond what I willed or what I can steer. Responsibility cannot be limited to the measure of what I was able to foresee and willed. In fact real action in the world is always action in which the devil has his part, in which the force of initiative has force only inasmuch as it espouses things that have a force of their own. I am responsible for processes that go beyond the limits of my foresight and intention, that carry on even when I am no longer adding my sustaining force to them – and even when I am no longer there. Serious responsibility recognizes itself to be responsible for the course of things beyond one's own death. My death will mark the limit of my force without limiting my responsibility. (Alphonso Lingis, 'Translator's Introduction,' OB, p. xiv)

¹²⁴ Heidegger's "silence" about his Nazi involvement has raised many attacks, critiques and justifications by various scholars/journalists. In accounting for his "Nazi period," Heidegger himself had always repeated his belief that it was the National Socialist movement's lack of philosophical nature/reflection that made him disillusioned with it, a movement through which he had hoped for a "spiritual [sic] renewal" of western life in general. This *locus* – where 'spirit' had suddenly been aroused from its silence – had seen, not only Heidegger's "naïveté," but also his symptomatic denial of a force he tries to consciously resist, and yet, due to a shared spirit, cannot help but be carried away by it; a "carrying away" that was rhetorically almost seamless – as shown above in the Grund-Boden connection – itself not affording Heidegger sufficient pause or resistance to this spirit, its history (of hatred) and outcome (of systematic annihilation).

That this spirit spoke through him might be suggested by the fact that Heidegger gave his "spirit" lecture quite publically (the (in)famous Rectorship address), while his, very few, "self-justifications" were limited to the medium of private letters. Just like his antisemitism – as Heidegger's recently published *Schwartzte Hefte* show – this was an aspect that was little exposed, little discussed, little authorizing an expression to any interlocutor other than himself. Heidegger's silence on this matter – hence the necessity of (this) antipathology – is characteristically un-responsible and, clearly, this irresponsibility is aggravated, not diminished, by his (very Christian) guilt.

Beholden to his own death, as a truly authentic philosopher, Heidegger could only hold this guilt where it belongs, deep as a scar on his soul, a damning – but silent and inescapable – presence that will follow him to his final judgment in death. That was Heidegger's version of "Kantian dignity": no point talking in/after death, as the 'soul' already carries the man's guilt and – as eternal and non-relational (just like "my ownmost death" for Heidegger) – does not need words. My 'antipathology' holds that Heidegger's silence was indeed his way of assuring that he remain face-to-face, *not with the Other, but with his own, guilty, soul* (there is, perhaps, a "Christian dignity" in this, one that I very much respect, yet, nevertheless, also see the grave ethical danger of). Hatred and its consequences should be said, for – if we affirm (i.e. not try to obviate or avoid) what Lévinas calls the necessary betrayal of the said in the saying – this opens up the ethical relation of responsibility; and this is basically all this dissertation is trying to do, the "spirit" that drives this, my, antipathology.

In general, it seems, whenever it was an issue of 'spirit' and Heidegger's own person – his own involvements, decisions and actions – Heidegger remains publically – which, for a philosopher, also means *philosophically* – silent. There is another example – characteristically, there aren't many – of this content and structure of Heidegger's "spirituality." In 1919, Heidegger – again in a very private context (a letter to his former, Catholic, priest, who had presided over his and Elfride's wedding) – admits that the "call to philosophy" arrives, for him, as an "inner call" that comes from, and defines, his own 'Dasein,' an "eternal vocation of the inner man" that, strikingly similar to the Christian conception of the soul, justifies him before God, and hence justifies his decision to leave Catholicism towards what he called a "free Christianity." These justifications, on top of their highly private nature, betray the same "egology" of which Lévinas speaks, and which – despite (and often thorough the closure of its good) "inner" intentions (and the 'conscience' that they afford/define) – finds a kind of "ethical repose" in this interior autonomy of the philosopher. The Lévinasian 'me' – that hear the call of the Other and not of the ground of its own being/Dasein – does not afford such inner closure, such silence. There, Heidegger's only *expressed* admission of guilt (for his Nazi engagement) – that he did what he had to in order that he and his wife remain alive (i.e. still a 'conscience' de-fined vis-à-vis Heidegger's/Dasein's own death) – shows, in Lévinasian terms, its ethical outrage. These

“private” utterances of Heidegger are presented side-by-side as what I believe to be the most appropriate epigraphs to the conclusion of this chapter.

¹²⁵ I am intentionally leaving “it” to the ambivalence of ‘silence’ and ‘spirit.’

¹²⁶ The power of this lexical choice, my concern with the other being, not ‘care’ or ‘goodness’ but *obsession*, is important to understand Lévinas as a radical ethical thinker; where ‘ethics as first philosophy’ is irreducible to the moralizing simplicities of “good intentions” (the latter, as I ceaselessly try to show in my defense of ‘antipathology,’ refuses to deal with or grasp *the unique intensities of hatred and murder*, and thus is always “surprised” by them when they occur, a “hear/see/speak no evil” kind of surprise which, as I intend to show, is a default position which already obviates *any* thinking of my responsibility for the other). ‘Obsession’ does not ask me for permission, it is inflicted on my “subjectivity” like a disease, it causes pain that my subjectivity cannot link to any justifiable cause (and, hence, resents), and it marks the only critical point in which murder (and suicide) become indistinguishable from “necessity” (and yet never exhausted in their enactments). Here is an “urgency” that only an ethics as *first* philosophy can betray, for the philosopher/ontologist any urgency could only arise from Being/Thought/Truth (and, hence, already delimited and “legitimized” in its appeal), and not, as in Lévinas, as anterior to them. Rather than from “the ground of Being,” as Heidegger’s spirit would have it, it comes, as Lévinas writes, from a “who knows where:”

[...] This incommensurability with consciousness, which becomes a trace of the *who knows where*, is not the inoffensive relationship of knowing in which everything is equalized, nor the indifference of spatial contiguity; it is an assignation of me by another, a responsibility with regard to men we do not even know. The relationship of proximity cannot be reduced to any modality of distance or geometrical contiguity, nor to the simple “representation” of a neighbor; it is already an assignation, an extremely urgent assignation— an obligation, anachronously prior to any commitment. This anteriority is “older” than the *a priori*. This formula expresses a way of being affected which can in no way be invested by spontaneity: the subject is affected without the source of the affection becoming a theme of representation. We have called this relationship irreducible to consciousness obsession. The relationship with exteriority is “prior” to the act that would effect it. (OB, pp. 100-102)

¹²⁷ Lévinas will call this a thinking of death on the basis of time, which he opposes to Heidegger’s thinking time on the basis of death. Like Heidegger, Lévinas will criticize the Husserlian understanding of time as a flux, construing it rather as a breach, an opening up to/of Being. However, while Heidegger conceives of time as an *ek-stasis*, a kind of “dynamic tension” that is always already delimited and defined by care as *becomeAngst* beholden to my own death, Lévinas will conceive of it as a true, metaphysical, breach; a kind of *contradiction in the ‘Da’ itself*. This contradiction becomes most vividly felt in the death of the other; it is neither historical nor *ekstatic* as Heidegger conceives of *Sein-zum-Tode*, but diachronic – not just an opening of time to Being (which Lévinas will call the time of the ‘Same’ [*Même*]), but an interruption of Being from beyond Being, harkening back to what Lévinas sometimes calls the an-archival diachrony of the time of the Other. It is not the time of what might still *appear* – the time of ‘truth’ as a historical concealment/unconcealment of Being – but the time of what *never* appears; cf.

To think death on the basis of time rather than time on the basis of death, as Heidegger does, [...]. [...] invites us to emphasize the question raised by death in the nearness of the neighbor, a question that paradoxically is my responsibility for his death. Death opens to the face of an Other, which expresses the command “thou shalt not kill.” We shall have to attempt to start from murder as suggesting the complete meaning of death. (GDT, p. 106)

Cf. also:

[...] Can the nonrest of time, that by which time contrasts with the identity of the Same, signify otherwise than according to the continuous mobility that the privileged metaphor of the flux suggests? To answer this question, we must ask ourselves whether the Same and the Other owe their meaning simply to a distinction of quality or of quiddity, that is, to the given in time and to the discernible? To put it differently, do the nonrest or the disquiet of time not signify, prior to any terminology or recourse to terms appealing to no images of rivers or flux, a disquieting of the Same by the Other, which takes nothing from the discernible and the qualitative? This would suggest a disquietude that would be identified as indiscernible, or that would not be identified by any quality. To be identified thus, to be identified without being identified, is to identify oneself as “me” [*moi*]; it is to identify oneself internally without thematizing oneself and without appearing. It is to be identified without appearing and prior to taking on a name. (GDT, p. 109)

¹²⁸ Jacques Derrida, *L’écriture et la différence* (Paris: Éditions du Seuil, 1967), p. 118

¹²⁹ For an overview of the Jewish idea of a “messianism without a Messiah,” particularly in its “secular” interplay with Western thought (mainly of history), cf. Christoph Schulte ‘Messianism Without Messiah: Messianism, Religion, and Secularization in Modern Jewish Thought,’ in Ari Joskowicz and Ethan B. Katz (eds.), *Secularism in Question: Jews and Judaism in Modern Times* (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 2015), pp. 79-97.

Jacques Derrida’s critical work about (the Christian Hegel in) Marx also deploys this as a critical tool, this time in terms of a “desert-like messianism (without content and without identifiable messiah);” Derrida opts for this – more philosophical-

ontological construction, so as to recall philosophy's tendency to – just like in the case of the skeptic and skeptic-ism – universalize its concepts without being critical of their metaphysical import (specifically, in this case, their impositions on, and interpretations of, *history*). That is why Derrida will prefer the “messianic without messianism,” a construction that maintains something of the particular, and that resists its universal distension. Note that this “messianic” is, for Derrida as well, “without content;” cf. Jacques Derrida, *Specters of Marx: The State of the Debt, the Work of Mourning and the New International*, trans. Peggy Kamuf (New York: Routledge, 1994), pp. 33, 70-82 passim.

¹³⁰ I will cite a couple of paragraphs to explain this difficult “conceptual” distinction that Lévinas makes, using the the more relevant passages – for this distinction repeats itself many times – to the context of ‘communication’ (and the unique responsibility it commands) presented here. Hence, first:

[...] The contact in which I approach the neighbor is not a manifestation or a knowledge, but the ethical event of communication which is presupposed by every transmission of messages, which establishes the universality in which words and propositions will be stated. This contact transcends the I to the neighbor, and is not its thematization; it is the deliverance of a sign prior to every proposition, to the statement of anything whatever. Language is a battering ram - a sign that says the very fact of saying, in which we have discerned a complicity which is a complicity “for nothing” [...]. (Language and Proximity, CPP, p. 125 [my underlines])

And, second,

[...] The correlation of the saying and the said, that is, the subordination of the saying to the said, to the linguistic system and to ontology, is the price that manifestation demands. In language qua said everything is conveyed before us, be it at the price of a betrayal. Language is ancillary and thus indispensable. At this moment language is serving a research conducted in view of disengaging the *otherwise than being* or *being's other* outside of the themes in which they already show themselves, unfaithfully, as being's essence – but in which they do show themselves. Language permits us to utter, be it by betrayal, this *outside of being*, this *ex-ception* to being, as though being's other were an event of being. Being, its cognition and the said in which it shows itself signify in a saying which, relative to being, forms an exception; but it is in the said that both this exception and the birth of cognition [*la naissance de la connaissance*] show themselves. (OB, p. 6)

¹³¹ Cf. Heidegger's *Being and Time*:

[...] Ontologically, every idea of a 'subject'-unless refined by a previous ontological determination of its basic character-still posits the subjectum along with it, no matter how vigorous one's ontical protestations against the 'soul substance' or the 'reification of consciousness'. The Thinghood itself which such reification implies must have its ontological origin demonstrated if we are to be in a position to ask what we are to understand positively when we think of the unreified Being of the subject, the soul, the consciousness, the spirit, the person. (SZ, p. 46)

¹³² For a choice sample of such allegations against Heidegger, cf. Richard Rorty, ‘Taking Philosophy Seriously,’ *The New Republic*, April 11, 1988; Haim Gordon, *Dwelling Poetically: Educational Challenges in Heidegger's Thinking on Poetry* (Amsterdam: Editions Rodopi B.V., 2000), p. 2; Richard Polt, *Heidegger: An Introduction* (Ithaca: Cornell UP, 1999), p. 159; Helga Zepp-LaRouche, ‘Why the Renaissance Must Prevail Over the Conservative Revolution: The Case of Martin Heidegger,’ *Fidelio* 4.1 (1995), p. 9.

¹³³ EI, p. 116.

¹³⁴ Carly Simon, ‘You're so Vain,’ in *No Secrets*, Elektra Records, 1972

¹³⁵ Shortly after WWI, British court-martials tried and convicted 306 soldiers for what then deemed as “cowardice in the face of the enemy.” This has led their families, living under the shadow of this moral shame, to continue seeking the exoneration of these soldiers, arguing both wrongful proceedings, and what is now known – but not then (1914-18) as “shell shock” or PTSD. Though the “wrongful proceedings” appeal was denied these families – members of the Shot at Dawn group erected specifically for this purpose – in the year 2000 their appeal was denied. It was only in 2006 that the British Defence Minister, Des Browne, had decided to pardon them, though not on the basis of the legal proceedings, but on the possibility that some of them might have been, “in fact” suffering from PTSD, and “not cowards.” By this, as Des Browne pointed out, a great moral injustice will be rectified.

Of course, this “moral” issue could be resolved with the addition of “new psychological knowledge” of the PTSD phenomenon, internalizing the more central issue – sturturel and ethical – of, first, contesting the justice of the procedure/law itself, and, furthermore, the taboo concerning the justice of refusing to kill and be killed for one's country. I bring this as one small example of how “internalizing the transcendent” can provide one with a moral solace but – indeed “duped by morality” – leave the question of the greater crime/violence untouched and unquestioned. Cf. Ben Fenton, ‘Pardoned: the 306 soldiers shot at dawn for 'cowardice',’ *Telegraph* (London), Aug. 16, 2006, <http://www.telegraph.co.uk/news/1526437/Pardoned-the-306-soldiers-shot-at-dawn-for-cowardice.html>.

¹³⁶ Cf. Raul Hilberg, *The Destruction of European Jews*, vol. 3 (London: Holmes & Meier, 1985), 342, 344.

¹³⁷ This construction, offered by Karl Marx in his 18th Brumaire of Louis Bonaparte – an essay that wields the motifs of death and life with regards to History following its Hegelian, metaphysical reading – was taken to task, once more, by

Jacques Derrida; cf. Jacques Derrida, *Specters of Marx: The State of the Debt, the Work of Mourning, and the New International*, trans. by Peggy Kamuf (New York: Routledge, 1994), pp. 142-145.

Not incidentally, Derrida ends this book with what I conceive to be an appeal to the responsibility – ethical and political – of the *scholar* (vis-à-vis this metaphysical *tour de force*); cf. *ibid.*, pp. 213-221.

¹³⁸ A classic joke of Wilhelminian origin goes something like the following: ‘A young, keen lieutenant in the Prussian army is conducting a civics class for his platoon. “Grenadier Cohen!” he asks, “why should a German soldier gladly sacrifice his life for His Imperial Majesty the Kaiser, His Royal Majesty the King of Prussia and the beloved Fatherland? The Jewish soldier replies: “With respect, Sir; lieutenant, Sir; you are absolutely right, Sit. Why should he, indeed?!”’ Adapted with some changes from: Theodor Reik, *Jewish Wit* (New York: Gamut Press, 1962).

¹³⁹ A good initial study of this silence – though from a, less phenomenological, more historical-narrative perspective – is to be found in: Marlène Zarader, *The Unthought Debt: Heidegger and the Hebraic Heritage*, trans. Bettina Bergo (Stanford: Stanford UP, 2006)

¹⁴⁰ In *A Thousand Plateaus*, Gilles Deleuze and Felix Guattari speak of a “nomad science” as the exteriority of what they call “State science.” Levinatzsch’s relevance here cannot be neatly summarized, but suffice to say that, lodged in arguably *the* discipline of ‘state science’ (i.e. ‘political science’), my Levinatzschean antipathology aims to harass its host discipline (and its host institution), with a “metaphysics of nomadism” (as an inter-disciplinary critique of both the discipline and the institution to which it takes exception).

Of the various ways Deleuze & Guattari depict this difference, Levinatzsch fits most neatly into what they call the “*Dispar*” (contrasting with State-science’s “*Compars*”):

[...] The *compars* is the legal or legalist model employed by royal science. The search for laws consists in extracting constants, even if those constants are only relations between variables (equations). An invariable form for variables, a variable matter of the invariant: such is the foundation of the hylomorphic schema. But for the *dispar* as an element of nomad science the relevant distinction is material-forces rather than matter-form. Here, it is not exactly a question of extracting constants from variables but of placing the variables themselves in a state of continuous variation. If there are still equations, they are adequations, inequations, differential equations irreducible to the algebraic form and inseparable from a sensible intuition of variation. They seize or determine singularities in the matter, instead of constituting a general form. (Gilles Deleuze and Félix Guattari, *A Thousand Plateaus: Capitalism and Schizophrenia*, trans. Brian Massumi (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1987), p. 369).

One can (and should) compare these comments to Gilles Deleuze’s analysis of Nietzsche’s philosophy as a kind of “nomadism of thought,” and as the only thought that stays true to *difference* (rather than conceiving it on the basis of a presupposed homogeneous identity). As a contestation of the stability and coherence of any and all discourse or logos, Levinatzchean antipathology is a war-machine insofar as it, conceitedly, challenges the given codes through challenging the very methodology which – in Western Science – is said to guarantee their veracity or reality/workability (what Hegel termed *wirklichkeit*). It is a contestation at the point where the sovereign, to recall Schmitt’s famous construction, decides on the exception (and thus, negatively, also decides the “rule”). As Deleuze says, a war-machine contests “State science” precisely at this level of “encoding” reality, precisely where, in my terminology here, the metaphysical “touches” the ontological:

[...] In terms of what he writes and thinks, Nietzsche’s enterprise is an attempt at uncoding, not in the sense of a relative uncoding which would be the decoding of codes past, present, or future, but an absolute encoding—to get something through which is not encodable, to mix up all the codes. It is not so easy to mix up all the codes, even at the level of the simplest writing, and language. The similarity I see here is with Kafka, what Kafka does with German, in accordance with the linguistic situation of the Jews in Prague: he builds a war-machine in German against German; through sheer indetermination and sobriety, he gets something through in the German code which had never been heard before. Nietzsche, for his part, wants to be or sees himself as Polish with respect to German. He seizes on German to build a war-machine which will get something through that will be uncodable in German. That’s what style as politics means. More generally, how do we characterize such thought, which claims to get its flows through, underneath the laws by challenging them, and underneath contractual relations by contradicting them, and underneath institutions by parodying them? (Gilles Deleuze, ‘Nomadic Thought,’ *Desert Islands and Other Texts, 1953-1974*, trans. Michael Taormina, ed. David Lapoujade (Los Angeles: Semiotext(e), 2004), p. 254)

¹⁴¹ Though Lévinas will write a considerable amount in favor of the relation to the Other as the only peaceful, non-violent relation, this ethico-metaphysical ‘peace’ needs to be sharply distinguished from what is habitually understood by that phrase. Lévinas’ speaks of peace vis-à-vis justice, and not the Western-philosophical (appropriation of) the Greek peace “on the basis of truth.” The latter peace is only allowed or sustained on the basis of a presupposition of an ideal ‘Man’ of human essence, abiding by an assumed reciprocity in a shared ideal goal. When this goal – however “high” it might be claimed to be – is flouted by the other, this peace quickly crumbles to reveal the war/violence upon which it had been, in an almost “amnesiac fashion” (at least with regards to political liberalism, but a fortiori with regards to totalitarian or fascist outlooks), erected.

The Lévinasian “peace” will show no such “tranquility.” Considering ‘peace’ from his, *asymmetrical* metaphysical framework, where difference, rather than identity, is taken to be primary, reveals the violence of these “peaceful” discourses – not least in Academic settings, perhaps the most “peaceful” settings of all in this regard (i.e. a “community in search of truth”) – and their self-serving (even if this is a ‘spiritual’ self) ethico-metaphysical assumptions. In *Alterity and Transcendence*, he writes the following of this “peace as tranquility:”

The problem of Europe and peace is precisely the one posed by the contradiction of our European consciences. It is the problem of humanity in us, of the centrality the Europe whose ‘vital forces’ - those in which the brutal perseverance of beings in their being - are already seduced by peace, by peace preferred to violence, and, more precisely still, by the peace of a humanity that, European in us, has already decided in favor of the Greek wisdom, which is to await human peace on the basis of Truth. Peace on the basis of truth, which (marvel of marvels) commands men without forcing or combating them, which governs or assembles them without making them subservient, which can convince [*convaincre*] them with words without conquering [*vaincre*] them, and which masters nature’s hostile elements by the calculations and practical knowledge of technology. Peace on the basis of the State, which is the gathering together of men participating in the same ideal truths. A peace that is enjoyed therein as tranquility assured by solidarity - the exact measure of reciprocity in services rendered between counterparts: the unity of a Whole in which each finds his or her rest, place or basis. Peace as tranquility or rest! The peace of rest between beings having a firm footing or resting on the underlying solidity of their substance, self-sufficient in their identity or capable of satisfying themselves seeking satisfaction” (AT, pp. 131-132 [my underline])

¹⁴² In a 1985 conversation with Angelo Bianchi, for example, Lévinas says the following:

Greek is a language of impartial thought, of the universality of pure knowledge. All meaning, all intelligibility, all spirit is not knowledge, but all can be translated into Greek. With periphrases it is possible to give an account of a spirituality resistant to the forms of knowledge. [...] [...] There are ideas that have their original meaning in biblical thought and that must be related differently in Greek. But Greek is a language of impartial thought, of the universality of pure knowledge. All meaning, all intelligibility, all spirit is not knowledge, but all can be translated into Greek. With periphrases it is possible to give an account of a spirituality resistant to the forms of knowledge. (Emmanuel Lévinas, ‘Violence of the Face,’ AT, pp. 177-178)

The aforementioned “spirituality resistant to the forms of knowledge” is precisely what Lévinas sees in Jewish thought. Though never meaning to “conciliate” these, incommensurable, traditions (EI, p. 24), Lévinas still maintains the importance of this “translation.” Seeing Jewish and Greek wisdom as two “spiritual adventures” (this notion of ‘spirit’ is not reducible to the Hegelian one), Lévinas tries for a certain “cross-dissemination” between them, a mutual opening of both “spiritual approaches” to what Lévinas calls transcendence. Greek language is the language of a particular kind of openness – that of a radical egalitarianism and “universality,” of categories and definitions, of objective knowledge and truth. Lévinas has no problem with these per se. He is, however, concerned about this form or approach to ‘knowledge’ claims to be total, appropriating all of what Lévinas, after the Talmudic notion, calls ‘wisdom’ (“*hochmah*”).

Greek knowledge is dangerous when this language (which is the language of Western philosophy) is seen to be primary and encompassing for thought, forgetting, “[...] that the rationality of [Greek; SC] discourse is already borne by the previous signifying of dialogue or proximity” (IRB, p. 247). Wisdom, as the aforementioned cross-dissemination between the Jewish and the Hellenic approaches to transcendence (Greek – immanent universality; Jewish – transcendent singularity), recalls thought back to an originary demand for justice. Here it is Greek wisdom – which, for Lévinas, was always rooted in their politics – that demands institutions of justice as a justice for all, but it is Jewish wisdom that recalls this political Justice (institutional, impartial and objective, but also generalizing), to an ethical obligation to the other person that always threatens to break-open these closed structures, refusing their repose in closure as if the latter assured that “justice has been served.”

Singular justice of the face-to-face relation is not enough for Lévinas, since a “third” already approaches and necessitates comparison and economic decision, indeed an administration or economy of justice; yet institutional justice can become blinded by the “impartiality” of its systematic understanding of Justice, and deny the other person her appeal beyond any closure, an appeal that reopens justice as a question, as radical accusation. That is how I understand Lévinas’ formulation of wisdom as “the moment of objectivity [Greece; SC] motivated by justice [Jewish; SC]” (ibid, p. 246). This insistence on the “third” by Lévinas is as ethical as Hegel’s own appeal to the third, but conceives of it as an ethical questioning whose ‘Why’ is not, or at least not necessarily, that of ‘reconciliation’ (as “the third” – the mediation that dissolves two oppositions – was for Hegel).

The Greek wisdom is also, in turn, important for Judaism: Lévinas recounts in this context a Talmudic story where Rabbi Ishmael advises Ben damah when the latter asks him if he should study Greek wisdom, and R. Ishmael says to him “find a time that is neither day nor night and study then Greek wisdom.” Lévinas interprets this verse, not as an interdiction, but precisely as a way to deal with uncertainties within the harshness of Jewish wisdom, “[...] the hours where Israel is either master of its difficult wisdom, or blindly subjected to its tradition” (BV, p. 26). In those moments a conceptual deliberation is

important, a way of opening the paths of interpretation of the Law to traces of “universal understanding,” the Greek wisdom of objectivity which, in itself, is indispensable, yet, by itself, is dangerous and totalitarian.

Jewish thought is, in a way, “forewarned” by an an-archival command that differs interpretations of the Law thus also deferring the fulfillment of God’s Law on Earth; Greek thought proceeds with the more naïve (and therefore more free) approach of the “all things being equal” – and both these approaches are necessary to think about ‘social justice’. The following passage summarises the stakes and promises of this translation in these terms::

[...] between Hebrew and Greek, the problem of the “Otherwise said” is not the simple effect of a discordance of vocabulary and semantics, but the very test of the spirit unfolding itself in two adventures the Scriptures run in their reading, two adventures which are equally necessary. Within the Jewish reading, that which is intelligible is sketched out on the basis of a spiritual experience or of a word always already past, on the basis of a tradition in which transmission and renewal go hand in hand. A reading on the part of a spirit which is never not forewarned. Without this essential forewarning being confused with the sterile partiality of dogmatism. It remains the secret of a creativity and of an eternal beginning again of newness which is probably the ineffaceable trace of a thought marked by revelation. And on the other hand, the Greek reading – of books and of things – intelligence of a mind marvellously not forewarned, thanks to which symbols are an attempt to be decoded, to be said in clarity, which has become our university language. Two inseparable adventures! (IRB, p. 275)

¹⁴³ I write “suicide” in quotation marks here for, when articulated as the extreme end of the desire to obviate the accusation of the Other’s death towards me, this “suicide” elevates itself to the metaphysical register, by which it is the “sui,” the ‘self’ “in itself,” that is destroyed; and this would amount to the annihilation of all thought, a total self-annihilation of consciousness, whether in ‘me’ or in ‘others,’ the mad logic – of reciprocal mass-destruction – that political theory refers to as MAD (Mutually Assured Destruction).

As I will show, a similar logic – which, in a Hegelian vein, one could also say a similar *metaphysics* – operates in discourses that evince some form of (always reciprocal) “recognition” as the guarantor of “social” or “political” justice. Deontology, as I keep trying to show through Kant’s “spirit,” will not oppose this metaphysics radically, will *keep its direction* (via its ‘regulative ideal’) while only denying its consummation (this is what teased and angered Hegel so much in Kant). It is akin to what Sartre said about the “democrat’s” relation to the Jew: it is a passionless defense, complicit in that it will stand helpless by when the deontological-transcendental interdiction is breached – for it is a breach that still follows the same direction, the same “spirit” – and so cannot, by definition, resist it in a kind of an “(evil prevails when) when good men do nothing” logic.

¹⁴⁴ Cf. Robert Bernasconi’s ‘Foreword’ in, EE, p. xv

¹⁴⁵ For Heidegger, it is “profound boredom” that – coupled with *Dasein*’s authentic/existential freedom – awakens philosophical thought. This freedom has already been discussed above, as that following the philosopher’s “leap:” in Aristotle, to recall, it was a place where everyday, utilitarian/“economical” concerns no longer preoccupy the philosopher; in Heidegger it was the ability to arrive at an authentic state of Angst in which *Dasein* can contemplate, separated from the “chatter” (Gerede) of the “they-self” (‘das Man’) and their fallen state of preoccupation with “everyday concerns.” This latter state, which Heidegger also dubs as ‘existential freedom,’ is the first ingredient for the philosopher’s awakening – like in Aristotle, it is the lack of any encroaching “need” on the philosopher’s person. In relation to boredom – which will provide the second and final “ingredient” for such an “awakening,” Heidegger writes the following of this freedom as a “lack of oppression:”

[...] The deepest, essential need in *Dasein* is not that a particular actual need oppresses us, but that an essential oppressiveness refuses itself, that we scarcely apprehend and are scarcely able to apprehend this telling refusal of any oppressiveness as a whole. And this for the reason that what announces and tells of itself in such telling refusal remains inaudible. (FCM, p. 164).

In other words, as everyday concerns and preoccupations of fallen, inauthentic *Dasein* melt away, “things” of ‘beings’ begin to lose their distinction and achieve a kind of transparency or blurring of distinctions, no longer “announcing themselves” to authentic *Dasein*, betraying the ‘Nothing’ that *Dasein* – as authentic – is now in a position (a ‘Da’) to face (cf. *ibid.*, pp. 165-166).

Yet, in order for *Dasein* to perceive something, to perceive this emptiness of meaning and the Nothing against which it is always de-fined, it needs some kind of oppressive content, some sort of encroaching, only not the encroaching of beings – which, even in their felt absence, is still “fallen” insofar as they evince a *lack of other ‘beings’* (this marks the “emptiness” of “boredom” of inauthentic *das Man*) – but the encroachment of ‘Nothing.’ It is only in the latter moment – where time itself is emptied and experienced as a vast and pointless expanse that cannot be gotten away from (the aforementioned “encroachment” – that *Dasein* truly achieves “profound boredom.”

The Nothing faced makes the need for something – not as “some” thing, but need as need, the need for *any* “thing” (i.e. for beings comprehended by Being) – stand out, as it were, leading *Dasein* finally (though Heidegger knows this moment is

very treacherous and slippery to achieve in total purity) to what Heidegger calls “that *extremity of the most incisive moment of vision*” (ibid, p. 166). That extremity is what Heidegger calls “profound boredom” (ibid, ibid).

I mention this here at some – though far from the necessary of just – length since this is where Heidegger’s definition of ‘conscience’ and ‘care’ – the ontological conditions that pre-define any ethics that could follow his “fundamental ontology” – reveal their character with regards to what Heidegger calls the “humanity” of *Dasein*. So, he writes of profound boredom, that, “[...] this fundamental attunement [means] [...] to liberate the humanity in man, to liberate the humanity of man, i.e., the essence of man, to let the *Dasein* in him become essential” (ibid, ibid).

It is over and against this “egological” conception of ‘humanity’ – where ‘existential freedom’ is posited as the highest ideal to be “awakened” towards, a freedom, an “egology” that states that, “[o]nly those who can truly give themselves a burden are free” (ibid, ibid [my underline]) – that Lévinas interjects “insomnia” as an ethico-metaphysical critique of this definition of ‘humanity’ and the “egological” ontology upon which it rests.

For all of Heidegger’s denials and battles against being called a ‘humanist’ (most famous is his *Letter Concerning Humanism*, addressed to Jean-Paul Sartre following Sartre’s famous ‘Existentialism is a Humanism’), he keeps and maintains the “spirit” of this humanism which consists precisely in this “egological” assumption or ideal of existential freedom; and it is this ideal, an ethico-metaphysical ideal that underwrites the ontological project (however ‘fundamental’ it is claimed to be), that Lévinas seeks, here, to displace to the Other and the other person. It is not the “giving oneself a burden” that enables the relation to the other person, the other ‘human,’ it is what Lévinas calls “humanism of the Other,” following the “difficult” freedom described above, a state of an unexplained, ‘exterior’ encroachment that comes, not from *Dasein* to *Dasein* (i.e. does not remain enclosed within the Self-Same), but from the Other, from “beyond Being.”

Cf. Martin Heidegger, ‘Letter Concerning Humanism,’ in BW, pp. 141-182; Jean-Paul Sartre, *Existentialism is a Humanism*, trans. Carol Macomber (New Haven: Yale UP, 2007); Emmanuel Lévinas, *Humanism of the Other*, trans. Nidra Poller (Urbana: University of Illinois Press, 2003).

For Heidegger’s phenomenology of despair – which is brief and contains all of the above elements (but in a far more abbreviated form), cf. IM, pp. 1-2. Though giving ‘despair’ the the first and primary mood in IM, in FCW Heidegger grants it merely the status of being “associated” with the – more fundamental – “boredom” (though both texts are taken from lectures Heidegger gave at about the same time, 1929-1930); cf. FCW, p. 140.

¹⁴⁶ *The Writing of the Disaster*, p. 25

¹⁴⁷ Once again, I am thinking – with Lévinas who is, literally, obsessed with it – the horror of the Holocaust and the necessity of revising the way that modern philosophy thinks about freedom, about thought, about reason, in its wake (a project still not taken up, more often than not replaced or covered-over with the silencing and paralyzing structures of “guilt” or repression). In the Holocaust, western thought had encountered, for the first time (at least in its ‘modern’ iteration), something stronger than the supposedly “fundamental” freedom that Heidegger wanted to retain “fundamental” rights to. There, and then, there was something stronger than (one’s own) death that appeared to be able to break the “human spirit.” Lévinas writes the following of the Metz-held trial of the SS officers that ran and maintained the only concentration camp that existed on French soil, the notorious ‘Struthof’ camp:

[...] Struthof’s trial reminds us, in the face of overproud metaphysical systems, that man’s freedom succumbs to physical suffering and mysticism. Provided that he accepted his death, every man in the past could call himself free. But now physical torture, cold and hunger or discipline, things stronger than death, can break this freedom. Even in its final hiding-place, where freedom consoles itself for its powerlessness to act, and remains a free thought, the strange will penetrates and enslaves it. Human freedom is thus reduced to the possibility of foreseeing the danger of its own decay and to protecting itself against such a decline. (DF, pp. 149-150)

As an ethico-metaphysical horror, the Nazi phenomenon suggests a complete philosophical revision of our ideas of freedom and justice, of ‘humanity’ and ‘spirit,’ ideas that – even with Heidegger – are still very much in power. Responsibility for the Other means accepting – at the metaphysical level – this essential susceptibility of man’s freedom, something which broaches the ethical necessity of rethinking our approach to thought in general, and to political thought in particular. Insofar as the latter is still, for the most part, beholden to the same metaphysical presuppositions of freedom – the same “democratic prejudices,” the same “overproud metaphysical systems” – this is yet to be achieved. The fact that nowadays political thought sees itself moving further and further away from ethico-metaphysical concerns – instead devolving to become state-advisors, a variety of “management” and “policy” specialists (i.e. fundamentally what Nietzsche would call a “reactive” thought) – is particularly deplorable in this sense.

Foucault once said that in political philosophy the task of “chopping off the king’s head” is yet to be done; I am speaking to a situation that is much, much worse, a situation where defeating Nazism, or the Nazi spirit, is becoming less and less feasible after their, so-called, “defeat.” It is as if philosophy refused to accept that its old metaphysical notions have been proven wrong/monstrously murderous, and hence cannot recognize the urgency of, indeed, “foreseeing the danger of its own decay and protecting itself against such a decline.” Merely positing ‘Hitler’ as the nominal evil perhaps only exposes us more

radically to his, far more substantial (i.e. “stronger than death”) menace. I will further discuss ‘Hitler’ as a symbol of evil – and its ethico-metaphysical implications – in the first section of the next chapter.

¹⁴⁸ In Jacques Derrida’s ‘Force of Law,’ the problem of justice is precisely what constitutes “the urgency that obstructs the horizon of knowledge” (WD, p. 255)

¹⁴⁹ Jean-Paul Sartre, *Anti-Semite and Jew: An Exploration of the Etiology of Hate*, trans. George G. Becker (New York: Schocken, 1976).

¹⁵⁰ Cf. “The beyond being, being’s other or the otherwise than being, here situated in diachrony, here expressed as infinity, has been recognized as the Good by Plato. It matters little that Plato made of it an idea and a light source” (OB, p. 19). Cf. Plato, *The Republic: Book VI*, trans. Paul Shorey (Cambridge, Mass: Harvard University Press, 1994), 509b8-10.

¹⁵¹ For example, the main figure of scholastic theology, Saint Thomas Aquinas, writes the following in the First Part of his *Summa Theologica*: “Evil is distant both from simple being and from simple “not-being,” because it is neither a habit nor a pure negation, but a privation” (ST, 1.49.2) [*all citations from Aquinas’ Summa hereinafter will follow the Chicago citation form of [part no.][question no.][article no.].*]

Of course, the most famous, and arguably just as influential, theologian that maintained this position concerning evil, arguing, in his *Confessions*, the evil cannot have any real “substance” at all – since God is Good and Being – hence it can only be a lack or withholding, a privation, of Being/Good, which is the only “true infinite” and true “substance”:

[...] when they asked me, “whence is evil?” “is God bounded by a bodily shape, and has hairs and nails?” “are they to be esteemed righteous who had many wives at once, and did kill men, and sacrifice living creatures?” At which I, in my ignorance, was much troubled, and departing from the truth, seemed to myself to be making towards it; because as yet I knew not that evil was nothing but a privation of good, until at last a thing ceases altogether to be; which how should I see, the sight of whose eyes reached only to bodies, and of my mind to a phantasm? And I knew not God to be a Spirit, not one who hath parts extended in length and breadth, or whose being was bulk; for every bulk is less in a part than in the whole: and if it be infinite, it must be less in such part as is defined by a certain space, than in its infinitude; and so is not wholly every where, as Spirit, as God” (Saint Augustine, *The Confessions of St. Augustine, Bishop of Hippo, Book III*, trans. Edward Bouverie Pusey (New York: Collier, 1961), pp. 22-23 [my underline]).

¹⁵² Cf. Jacques Derrida, ‘Structure, Sign and Play in the Discourse of the Human Sciences,’ WD, p. 352.

¹⁵³ Cf. *Anti-Semite and Jew*, p. 39 [my underline].

Sartre explicitly maintains that the Jewish “unease” – never being sure of position or possession – should be treated politically and historically, and not metaphysically (ibid, pp. 132-133). I, however, owing to my insistence of asking the metaphysical question, or at least approaching it responsibly, believe that the metaphysical question is essential here, precisely in order to bear witness to the deep, often unexplored and shied-away from (particularly in the political and ideological wake of WWII and the Holocaust in the West), roots of this long-lasting, trans-historical hatred. This “strange freedom,” seen as an irrational (and hence ‘evil’) resistance to ‘the (incarnate) Good,’ is what Hegel and Luther hated most about the Jews: their absolute self-distinction, their stubbornness, their vanity. It is important to follow the metaphysical anti-Semites so as to affirm these statements in the contexts within which they were (still allowed to be) made (back when ‘metaphysics’ was not a dirty word and antisemitism had still not met the “moral shock” of the Holocaust). For a discussion of the Jew as Devil, which Sartre considers as an expression of Manichaeism (without probing into – presumably to avoid the “metaphysical” aspect of it – the Christian inflection Manichaeism receives in an antisemitism that was, almost exclusively, European), cf. ibid, pp. 39-41.

¹⁵⁴ I am referring here to Leo Strauss’ famous formulation, according to which, “[...] being a Jew and a philosopher are mutually exclusive” (Leo Strauss, *Persecution and the Art of Writing* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1988), p. 19.

¹⁵⁵ Cf. in Leo Strauss, ‘Jerusalem and Athens,’ *Jewish Philosophy and the Crisis of Modernity*, ed. Kenneth Hart Green (Albany: SUNY Press, 1997), p. 399. There, Strauss makes the distinction between the prophets and Socrates, both of which shared, as he says, a “mission” – sent by their respective God (via Abraham)/Apollo (via the Delphic Pythia). As Strauss points out:

[...] The philosopher is the man who dedicates his life to the quest for knowledge of the good, of the idea of the good; what we would call moral virtue is only the condition or by-product of that quest. According to the prophets, however, there is no need for the quest for knowledge of the good [...]. [...] In accordance with this the prophets as a rule address the people and sometimes even all the peoples, whereas Socrates as a rule addresses only one man (ibid, pp. 403-404).

Strauss, who is known to have somewhat opted for the side of ‘science’ – promoting what he calls a ‘sociology of philosophy’ (‘Introduction to Persecution and the Art of Writing,’ *Jewish Philosophy*, p. 417) – here betrays the crucial difference from my ‘Levinatzschean’ approach. His interpretation of Jerusalem via the Prophets – who came much later than Moses’ Torah (and already constituted a historically-contingent political solution to the monarchical power-structure of these times) – already inflects “Jerusalem” in a political inflection that replaces Lévinas’ ideas of Judaism with their historical register. For Lévinas, the Mosaic Law was to be the interruptive element that keeps totalizing structures (ontological, that is,

historical and political totalities) open, risked by the “beyond Being” that addresses, always, ‘me.’ The prophets, addressing “sometimes all of the peoples,” are already a certain incarnation of the Judaic Law, and their mission is a particular reading (of the Law, of History) that in no ways can (nor should be allowed to) replace the eternal obsession with the Law of Lévinas’ ethics as first philosophy.

Thus, for example, Nietzsche would offer a psychology of philosophy (and not a sociology), in a singular address of a singular call, the only metaphysical guard that assures that totalitarianism never rest comfortably behind its purported “all.” For Lévinas it is Abraham and Moses – rather than the prophets – that hold the overriding, ethico-metaphysical meaning of “Jerusalem” with respect to “Athens” philosophy. As with the Nietzschean “psychology,” this non-totalizing (i.e. non-synthetic) thinking through radical *difference* (in a philosophy that is always already understood through its Christian, “universal” appropriation) required the intervention of the singular in the universal discourse of the sciences, “sociology” included.

While Strauss inflects this difference starting with the thinking of ‘community’ (as ‘sociology’ is wont to do), the singular ‘me’ of Levinas conceives of an overriding concern with justice that cannot be reducible to the communal goals of the prophets or the sociologists. This is the fundamental meaning of Lévinas’ insistence on separation and election – as well as Nietzsche’s insistence on nobility and *Distanz* – as the difference suppressed by modern philosophical thought, and as that which holds its utmost *futurity of its future*, what Derrida calls the “to come” (*à venir*) of the future (*avenir*). It is not the choice between pursuit of the knowledge of the good (“Socrates”) and an infusion of this knowledge unto Man (“Prophets”), but an obsession with the Law as a singular appeal, made to ‘me’ over and above the knowledge of the sciences and/or the mission of the Ancient prophets. Not a need for knowledge but an ethical command to obsess over the question of knowledge’s underpinnings, the question of Justice that had not yet become disseminated and recommended to “all the peoples,” but an election and example that edifies from afar, from beyond the totalities of the “universal” or the “community,” from beyond the “truth” of “Sociology.”

An interesting and important (and rare) book in this regard – which addresses this highly important topic in a way I fundamentally disagree with (particularly with its *reduction* of Lévinas’ idea of ‘ethics as first philosophy’), - can be found in: Leora Batnitzky, *Leo Strauss and Emmanuel Lévinas: Philosophy and the Politics of Revelation*, (Cambridge: Cambridge UP, 2006).

¹⁵⁶ In EE, Lévinas writes, for example:

[...] *There is* an impersonal form, like in it rains, or it is warm. Its anonymity is essential. The mind does not find itself faced with an apprehended exterior. The exterior — if one insists on the term — remains uncorrelated with an interior. It is no longer given. It is no longer a world. What we call the I is itself submerged by the night, invaded, depersonalized, stifled by it. The disappearance of all things and of the I leaves what cannot disappear, the sheer fact of being in which one *participates* whether one wants to or not, without having taken the initiative, anonymously. Being remains, like a field of forces, like a heavy atmosphere belonging to no one, universal, returning in the midst of the negation which put it aside, and in all the powers to which that negation may be multiplied. (EE, p. 53 [my underline])

¹⁵⁷ Cf. Martin Heidegger, ‘Letter to Englebert Krebs on His Philosophical Conversion,’ trans. Thomas Sheehan, in *Becoming Heidegger: On the Trail of his Early Occasional Writings, 1910-1927*, eds. Theodore Kisiel and Thoman Sheehan (Evanston, IL: Northwestern UP, 2007), p. 96. For the (relatively easier to find) German original of this letter, cf. Alfred Denker, Hans-Helmuth Gander, and Holger Zaborowski (eds.), *Heidegger-Jahrbuch vol. 1: Heidegger und die Anfänge seines Denkens* (Freiburg: Verlag Karl Alber, 2004), pp. 67-68.

¹⁵⁸ Quote taken from: Robert Bernasconi, ‘Who Belongs? Heidegger’s Philosophy of the Volk in 1933–4,’ in Martin Heidegger, *Nature, History, State*, trans. and ed. Gregory Fried and Richard Polt (London: Bloomsbury, 2013), p. 113. Cf. GA 16: 401.

¹⁵⁹ For a bilingual – English-German – text of this letter, cf. Harold Marcuse, ‘Herbert Marcuse: Correspondence with Martin Heidegger, 1947-48,’ accessed 27 June, 2016,

<http://www.marcuse.org/herbert/pubs/40spubs/47MarcuseHeidegger.htm>

¹⁶⁰ In passing, one could mention the highly-compromisable (and compromised) relationship between the university and the state, the way that the former routinely capitulates to the latter, both in “political” matters (e.g. the little-resisted expulsion of Jewish Academics from German universities during WWII), as well as in “Academic/Scientific” ones. Here the list of examples is long and painful, and yet to a very large extent still relatively *silent*. To name one example: researching the *history* of genetics, specifically how medical science – not just the medical “profession” – has been complicit with the Nazi state’s attempt to ensconce is “racial” ideology, Benno Müller-Hill comments, not only on the complicity of the scientific community in Germany with this ideological “inf(lection),” but specifically on the silence that surrounded it once WWII was over (Benno Müller-Hill, ‘The Silence of the Scholars,’ in *Dark Medicine: Rationalizing Unethical Medical Research*, ed. William R. Lafleur, Gernot Böhme and Susumu Shimazono (Bloomington, Indiana UP, 2007), p. 57.

Other examples of the “compromising” nature of the state-university relations are, only recently (i.e. in the last 20 years or so) beginning to surface, and already contain a lot of incriminating material. As Nancy Odoover notes, the ‘science’ of eugenics, that both supported, and was supported by, state ideology (and its attendant racism, sexism – euphemized as “biologism”), had been quite prominent in “liberal” North America, making an appeal that liberalism could hardly resist, since it put an absolute faith in scientific-biological – rather than “social” or “political” – cures (i.e. all cures that, like science itself, tend to overlook systemic social dynamics that only a critical account of history can provide); cf. Nancy Odoover, *American Eugenics: Race, Queer Anatomy, and the Science of Nationalism* (Minneapolis: Minnesota UP, 2003).

The heinous effects of what had come to be known, and not without justified cause, “Social Darwinism” has also, as the name suggested, infiltrated the science of sociology, as cogently shown and argued by Robert Bannister (Robert C. Bannister, *Sociology and Scientism: The American Quest for Objectivity, 1880-1940* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1987).

In Psychology, as is quite widely known by now, the first two issues of the Diagnostic and Statistical Manual of mental disorders (commonly known as the ‘DSM’), published in 1952 and then in 1968, had classified Homosexuality as a mental disorder, and only removed this classification in 1973. As Robert Carson notes, even the new and improved DSM (the most recent one is DSM-V), does not solve the core problematic behind it, which he describes precisely in terms of ‘spirit’: “The monothetic category model – deriving from [...] a medical disease metaphor in the domain of aberrant behavior – remains very much with us in spirit despite the many compromises it has sustained in recent versions of the DSM” (Robert C. Carson, ‘Can the Big Five Help Salvage the DSM?’, *Psychological Inquiry*, Vol. 4, No. 2 (1993), pp. 98 [my underline]).

Even on philosophical/ethical matters, these assumptions carry their violence/force. This “philosophical” matter deserves an example, which has become most influential in my personal life, with regards the philosophical justification of the way the state of Israel is handling the conflict with the Palestinians that dwell in the occupied territories. It is particularly important in showing how even the purported epitome of “political detachment,” i.e. modern philosophical scholarship, capitulates to, not to say enables, state ideology and violence as some sort of “universal truth.” I bring the example of Professor Asa Kasher of Tel Aviv University, a laureate of the Israel Prize for Philosophy, who had articulated the ethical code of the Israeli Defence Force (IDF) in the 1990s, and also the more recent justifications/guidelines for its “war against terror.” I quote a section of an interview he gave to the Haaretz newspaper, for I believe that – especially in the context of the Lévinasian ethics I have been elaborating here – his logic will echo the violence of that particular set of assumptions I am warning against, specifically, the assumption of a symmetry between myself and the Other (who Lévinas sometimes calls, as already cited above, “the neighbor”). Israel is a key example here since it is, after all, a “Jewish state” that is using these assumptions, and the violence they authorize, with no ethical compunction. Here is an excerpt of an interview he gave Amos Harel of Haaretz newspaper in 2009:

When asked whether the IDF should be guided in its operations in Gaza by the concept that there should be zero tolerance for endangering the lives of soldiers, Kasher responds, “The soldiers’ lives are endangered by virtue of their very presence in Gaza, by virtue of the fact that we send them to an area where there are enemy snipers and explosives set to go off in areas where the IDF is present. Sending a soldier there to fight terrorists is justified, but why should I force him to endanger himself much more than that so that the terrorist’s neighbor isn’t killed? I don’t have an answer for that. From the standpoint of the state of Israel, the neighbor is much less important. I owe the soldier more. If it’s between the soldier and the terrorist’s neighbor, the priority is the soldier. Any country would do the same.” (Amos Harel, ‘The Philosopher Who Gave the IDF Moral Justification in Gaza,’ *Haaretz*, 6 Feb. 2009, <http://www.haaretz.com/the-philosopher-who-gave-the-idf-moral-justification-in-gaza-1.269527> [my underline]).

Cf. also: Asa Kasher and Yigal Yidlin, ‘Military Ethics of Fighting Terror: An Israeli Perspective,’ *Journal of Military Ethics*, 4.1 (2005), accessed August 25, 2016, <http://www.tandfonline.com/doi/abs/10.1080/15027570510014642>.

¹⁶¹ This is specifically true with regards to – the now often “backtracked from” or belittled Heideggerian project of – “fundamental ontology” (which was so fundamental for the Lévinasian critique of Heidegger); as Heidegger writes, he interpreted Kant’s First Critique, “[...] as a laying of the ground for metaphysics and thus of placing the problem of metaphysics before us as a fundamental ontology” (Martin Heidegger, *Kant and the Problem of Metaphysics*, trans. Richard Taft (Bloomington: Indiana UP, 1997), p. 1.

Heidegger’s critique of Kant is that the latter had accepted Descartes’ “subjective” position – the primacy of the ‘I think’ – too dogmatically, thus failing to precisely articulate the problem of his philosophy as an ontological problematic, reverting to the “Subject” position of the Cartesian philosophy:

[...] In taking over Descartes’ ontological position Kant made an essential omission: he failed to provide an ontology of Dasein. This omission was a decisive one in the spirit of Descartes’ ownmost tendencies. With the ‘*cogito sum*’ Descartes had claimed that he was putting philosophy on a new and firm footing. But what he left undetermined when he began in this ‘radical’ way, was the kind of Being which belongs to the *res cogitans*, or – more precisely – the meaning of the Being of the ‘*sum*’. (BT. p. 46/SZ, p. 24 [my underline]).

And also, more concretely:

Kant's analysis has two positive aspects. For one thing, he sees the impossibility of ontically reducing the "I" to a substance ; for another thing, he holds fast to the "I" as 'I think'. Nevertheless, he takes this "I" as subject again, and he does so in a sense which is ontologically inappropriate. For the ontological concept of the subject *characterizes not the Self-hood of the "I" qua Self, but the selfsameness and steadiness of something that is always present-at-hand*. (ibid, p. 367/ibid, pp. 319-320 [my underline])

Hence Heidegger's phenomenological critique of Kant – owing to what is arguably the most basic insight of Husserlian phenomenology: "The 'I' is not just an 'I think', but an 'I think something'" (ibid, pp. 320-321).

¹⁶² Cf. Parmenides, 'Fragment 3,' *The Fragments of Parmenides: A Critical Text with Introduction and Translation, the Ancient Testimonia and a Commentary*, ed. A. H. Coxon, trans. Richard McKirahan (Las Vegas: Parmenides Publishing, 2009 [1986]), p. 56.

Though Heidegger will always speak of the relation between Being and truth in terms of 'clearing' and 'unconcealment,' it is important to understand that what is 'concealed' is not some *other* to Being, but its very essence and 'ground' as a process of thinking the truth of beings: the 'concealed' is *part-and-parcel* of the unconcealed, and still within the ambit of Being; not the 'nothing' that Parmenides outlawed from being, but a kind of an opacity or "shadow" of beings (a good analogy would be that one needs some resistance to light in the object in order to see, yet this resistance is what enables the seeing itself, what enables the *appearance* of the being). This play of shadows denotes the small, yet essential, ontological role that Heraclitus performs for Heidegger's fundamental ontology: concealment and/in un-concealment – the meaning of (Greek) truth as *aletheia* (unconcealment) – is the "conflict" that belongs to the primordial *essence* of truth: "un-concealedness indicates that truth is wrenched from concealment and is in conflict with it. The primordial essence of truth is conflictual" (Martin Heidegger, *Parmenides*, trans. André Schuwer and Richard Rojewicz (Bloomington: Indiana UP, 1992), p. 26). This 'conflict' – internal to the Truth of Being (and *only* of Being) – has, literally, *nothing* to do with the Lévinasian Other.

That is why Heidegger claims that when 'man' is in contradiction "he displaces himself from his essence into nonessence;" and, hence, "he dissolves his relation to beings as such" (N. 3:112 [my emphasis]). Subsequently, contradiction is *not* the "shadow of (a) being" – part of the (un-)concealment that is the essence of Being in Heidegger's fundamental ontology ('The Restriction of Being,' IM, p. 107), but could perhaps be described as the night of Being: this is where nothing *appears*, the experience of a strange wakefulness in the anonymous absence of beings, as a darkness met with eyes open and before or without all knowledge and all appearance (which, to Heidegger, is the very substance of knowledge). That is why, ontologically, contradiction obviates the truth (of beings) altogether, like an 'is not' that has been allowed to infiltrate Parmenides' 'is.'

Lévinas expresses the "phosphorescence" of this philosophy of vision and light thus:

[...] An existent is comprehended in the measure that thought transcends it, measuring it against the horizon whereupon it is profiled. Since Husserl the whole of phenomenology is the promotion of the idea of horizon, which for it plays a role equivalent to that of the concept in classical idealism; an existent arises upon a ground that extends beyond it, as an individual arises from a concept. But what commands the non-coinciding of thought with the existent – the Being of the existent, which guarantees the independence and the extraneity of the existent – is a phosphorescence, a luminosity, a generous effulgence. The existing of an existent is converted into intelligibility; its independence is a surrender in radiation. To broach an existent from Being is simultaneously to let it be and to comprehend it. Reason seizes upon an existent through the void and nothingness of existing-wholly light and phosphorescence. (TI, pp. 44-45).

¹⁶³ As I discuss in the next chapter, following Avital Ronell's insight into Nietzsche, this "skeptic" is *commanded* to do as much by an unrelenting "test drive" – which is also a kind of 'betrayal drive.' If, for Heidegger, all time rests on *Dasein*'s hermeneutic *pro*-jections, the skeptic's *inter*-jection will forever accuse this (thought of) 'time,' forever be, as Nietzsche says, 'untimely' (*unzeitgemässe*), recalling that which had always already been evacuated from *Dasein*'s projections, specifically in the immemorial past of what Nietzsche calls, in his "vain" critique of *Dasein*, the 'will to power' (*Wille zur Macht*).

¹⁶⁴ Hence, in the words of Lévinas, who precisely rejects the idea of God as an essence, as a *being* beyond Being:

[...] To state the problem of the *existence* of God, despite *signification*, despite the-one-for-the-other, which derogates from the finality of the interestedness of man inhabiting the world, is to hold to the unity of being and the univocity of its *esse*, which, despite the multiplicity of its modalities, would be. verified in efficacy, in action and in the resistance to action, would "enter into account," figure in the calculation that accompanies projects.

Then there sinks away, as illusion or luxurious subtleties of satisfied consciousness, all the differences of dignity, height and distance; there are filled all the abysses of transcendence, all the intervals that cut across "analogical unity."

This philosophy of success is itself ensured of success. (OB, p. 94)

¹⁶⁵ Cf. EI, p. 48/Emmanuel Lévinas et Philippe Nemo, *Ethique et infini: dialogues avec Philippe Nemo* (Paris : Fayard, 1982), p. 47.

Also consider Lévinas' position concerning the law of (non-)contradiction, which, in philosophy, is known as the law of the 'excluded middle' (i.e. it either *is* (true) or *is not* (true); there is no "middle" between Being and Nothing). In his *Autrement qu'être*, Lévinas conceives of this 'middle' – like the *il y a* that gives Being its opacity, that brings it to the necessity of its appearance – is found in the approach, in *the relation as fundamental* (rather than 'truth'); a relation that can never be 'present' for it is assumed by any 'presence' for it to "come to light" so to speak:

[...] An approach is not a representation, however detheoreticized its intentionality would be, of a being beyond being. Its diachrony is not an insufficiency of an intuition. The trace of a past in a face is not the absence of a yet non-revealed, but the anarchy of what has never been present, of an infinite which commands in the face of the other, and which, like an excluded middle, could not be aimed at (OB, p. 97 [my underline]).

The "absence" signalled by the skeptic – which, since it interrupts it from the outside (as what Lévinas calls 'exteriority'), is not reducible to the presence-absence dialectic – was pinpointed by Jacques Derrida as the locus of Lévinas' most serious contention, phenomenological in essence, against the presupposed/absolute authority of the law of non-contradiction. In his 'Violence and Metaphysics,' Derrida writes of this "other light:"

[...] Without intermediary and without communion, absolute proximity and absolute distance [...]. [...] A light before neutral light, before the truth which arrives as a third party, the truth "which we look toward together," the judgmental arbitrator's truth. Only the other, the totally other, can be manifested as what it is before the shared truth, within a certain nonmanifestation and a certain absence. It can be said only of the other that its phenomenon is a certain nonphenomenon, its presence (*à*) a writing and difference certain absence. Not pure and simple absence, for there logic could make its claim, but a *certain* absence. Such a formulation shows clearly that within this experience of the other the logic of noncontradiction, that is, everything which Lévinas designates as "formal logic," is contested in its root. This root would be not only the root of our language, but the root of all of Western philosophy, particularly phenomenology and ontology." ('Violence and Metaphysics,' WD, pp. 90-91)

¹⁶⁶ The question of height here rejoins the question of value in the Levinatzschean resistance to Heidegger's fundamental ontology. A case in point is the what Heidegger interprets Nietzsche's concept of 'will to power:' following an aphorism from Nietzsche's *Nachlass*, where Nietzsche posits value as "the preservation-enhancement conditions in regard to complex structures that have relatively lasting life within becoming" (LN, p. 212/KGW 8.2:278 [translation modified]), Heidegger infers that "Every mere preservation of life is thus already a decline in life. Power is the command to more power. However, in order that will to power as overpowering be able to advance a stage, that stage must not only be reached but also established and secured. Only from such certainty of power can achieved power be heightened." (N. 3:196-197).

However, as regards the reversed regard to height/enhancement that Levinatzsche is following here, height is expressed as the constitutive intervention of the Other (read: Nietzsche's "condition") as both *giving rise* to the ontological totality (Being/being) and putting it in a precarious, *temporally vulnerable* (indeed indefensible) position; and thus "height" does not mean any *necessary* "augmentation," but rather, "equiprimordially" (as Heidegger likes to say), an exposure and risk of a possible demise. This is what Nietzsche means by thinking thought as a throw of the dice: a "will to power" that is just as much an exposure to nothingness as it is an opportunity to attain "truth" and "presence." Hence, Nietzsche is not talking about "stages" that build upon one another, for which the preservation of a previous stage would be necessary for the attaining of height, but it is rather height, "enhancement" itself, that puts this 'security' – of any given 'state,' of any assumed 'value' – in radical question, at extreme *risk*.

The preservation-enhancement condition is not, as Heidegger is fully aware, ontological, but metaphysical; and yet, since Heidegger can only see 'height' (and 'transcendence' for that matter) as starting from the ontological totality of Being's "there," he can only conceive of it in the vector of an aspiration/projection (while, with Levinatzsche, one conceives of it as a vector of interruption – enhancement interrupts the security of preservation, is what Blanchot would call the "disaster" of preservation). In short, no "stage" of Being or Life could ever be "secured" by virtue of will to power's condition of "preservation-enhancement," but precisely the other way around.

¹⁶⁷ Friedrich Nietzsche, 'Joke, Cunning, and Revenge: Prelude in German Rhymes,' GS §61, p. 67

¹⁶⁸ Indeed, the inner contradiction of the skeptic is – *like in Hegel* – the motor for the *movement* of thought (via the eternal return of a revaluation of value(s)). But this "moment" of demand and response will – and here is Nietzsche's metaphysical gigantomachia against Hegel – eternally return. Yes, the kind of 'eternity' that Hegel called the 'bad infinite;' that whose end had been evacuated from it by the Other. As Lévinas writes in *Totality and Infinity*:

[...] Nous reconnaissons dans la finitude à laquelle s'oppose, pour l'englober, l'infini hegelien, la finitude de l'homme devant les éléments, la finitude de l'homme envahi par l'*il y a*, à tout instant traversé par des dieux sans visage et contre lesquels s'exerce le travail pour réaliser la sécurité où l'« autre » des éléments se révélerait comme Même. Mais l'Autre, absolument autre Autrui ne limite pas la liberté du Même. En l'appelant à la responsabilité, il l'instaure et la justifie. (*Totalité et infini*, p. 171/TI, p. 197)

Having to answer the skeptic's excessive demands (call it 'super-ego' if you like) maintains the 'Spirit' stuck at what Hegel would call an essentially 'reflective' level. This is where Spirit is taken hostage by the/its Other, and because of this insistence – on "retarding" the Spirit, bogging it down with 'sophistries' and eternal arguments around the letter of the Law (which is the 'genius' that the skeptic demands on me) – it is also the only 'metaphysics' that treats the skeptic ethically. Unlike Hegel's appropriation of skepticism – a process of the "accreditation of knowledge," a metaphysics of 'credit' that Spirit achieves with *and after* every *Aufhebung* and *towards* the Absolute – Nietzsche's 'faith' needs this "stage of the dialectic" to remain open as its very consummation; its highest state. It is the genius of the "seeking on" – always directed to an other(wise) – that wrests the skeptic from Hegel's grip:

Faith in oneself. – Few people have faith in themselves. Of these few, some are endowed with it as with a useful blindness or a partial eclipse of their spirit (what would they behold if they could see to the bottom of themselves!), while the rest have to acquire it. Everything good, fine, or great they do is first of all an argument against the skeptic inside them. They have to convince or persuade *him*, and that almost requires genius. These are the great self-dissatisfied people. (GS §284, p. 229).

Since this "faith in oneself" is the mere 'vanity' of a 'natural consciousness' that refuses to let go of its 'self' in order to allow its Concept (*Begriff*) of knowledge to become actual, making this consciousness, in Hegel's terms, an "unreal consciousness." And yet, it is the of the essence of the Hegelian spirit and faith that through the skeptic's negations/resistances, as Hegel writes in the Introduction to his *Phenomenology of Spirit*, "the progress through the complete series of forms comes about of itself" (PS §79, p. 51), and aims, finds its *telos* in "the point where knowledge no longer needs to go beyond itself" (*ibid.*, §80, p. 51).

Here, Nietzsche's insistence on (metaphysical) singularity becomes strikingly contrasting: no Hegelian 'progress' is permitted for its *telos* will precisely be judged by Nietzsche as a quintessence of nihilism. Here the individual conscience is not the – always prepared with its credit systems; always already guilty – 'soul,' but a 'me' that is the locus of a 'Why?' question, a 'me' of expression and address that does not presuppose any ontological totality or unity (like 'soul,' 'being,' 'spirit,' 'apperception') behind it: this is also the 'me' as 'will to power.'

There will be an eternally repetitive demand, in the form of this 'Why?' It inaugurates a new 'me,' for it inaugurates a new *value* every time it compels 'me' to respond to the Other; the beyond that the 'Why' – as *ethical address* (rather than metaphysical 'spirit,' or ontological ground, or the inference/deductions of a causality) – brings forth, to interrupt the totality of Being or cut Spirit's narrative-line of what Hegel calls its "serial progression." As Hegel admits in his Encyclopaedia: "the movement of man's spirit" is "from the *thought* of God to the certainty that God *is*" (Enc I §51Z, p. 100 [my underline]). This small sentence also holds, *in nuce*, the reason that Heidegger calls Hegel's thought onto-theo-logical: *ontos* (certainty of the "is"); *theos* (God as the *telos* of ontological thought); *logos* (movement of spirit).

¹⁶⁹ Avital Ronell's *The Test Drive* devotes almost half of its pages to Nietzsche's *Gay Science*, to which I offer my analyses here of the Genealogy (and its phenomenology) as a rejoinder. This link between skepticism and the 'test drive' is, perhaps, either an addition or imposition of the skeptical *theme* on Ronell's text, for it figures most prominently in it in a decidedly more Nietzschean way than here; there, it appears as a point of difference or contention around a certain original excess of the skeptic's "negative" interruption *in a self-enacted "conversation" that Ronell holds with herself through (hijacking) Husserl.* S/he writes:

[...] This is why I introduced my work as a test of which I am the subject. I actually wrote it down his way for everyone to see that I put myself on the line: "In the following I shall attempt to show the paths that I myself have taken, the practicability and soundness of which I have tested for decades. From now on we proceed together, then, armed with the most skeptical, though of course not prematurely negativistic, frame of mind" (Crisis, 18). This is what I add to Avital's theory. I worry that her ardent skepticism has introduced an excessive negativistic force to the field. I do not as such quarrel with what she's doing. It's a matter of timing; I don't think that the destructive edge of skepticism should be introduced prematurely. (TD, pp. 259-260 [my underline]). For Husserl's original quote, cf. Edmund Husserl, *The Crisis of European Sciences and Transcendental Phenomenology: An Introduction to a Phenomenological Philosophy*, trans. David Carr (Evanston: Northwestern UP, 1970), p. 18.

And yet, for Nietzsche, this 'prematurely' figures precisely as what Lévinas called diachrony: it is a "negative force" that is constitutive (in its interruption) of time and Being as the response I address to the other (an other that, here, is philosophically thematized as a skeptic). The fact that in my text the skeptical interruption is made both *thematic*, and *systematic* – as a kind of systematic-counter-system through which I resist Hegel's (and philosophy's more generally) metaphysical closures – reiterates, hence, the limit, the difference, between Ronell's treatment and mine.

I believe that Nietzsche's own disdain towards the skeptical position is only insisted-on where it is, indeed, a *position*, and does not come at 'me' as an interruption and question (from an Other of radical, non-projectable futurity). The repetition of this difference/response is generative of a 'position,' but does not emanate from it. It is this skepticism, the skeptic's interruption *as position*, that Nietzsche believes to counter his 'test drive,' leading up to the nihilism of a "what's the point?"

that is stated against all testing (a kind of ‘foreclosure’ on the test-drive); hence: “*Truthfulness* – I favor any *skepsis* to which I may reply: “Let us try it!” But I no longer wish to hear anything of all those things and questions that do not permit any experiment.” (GS Book I §51, p. 115).

¹⁷⁰ This is what Heidegger could not understand about Nietzsche when he ascribed to him the (albeit radical) “individualism” of traditional Western-Christian metaphysics (a reading of Nietzsche that many of Aristotle’s followers – as will be shown below in the example of Alasdair MacIntyre – often share).

¹⁷¹ LN 2[13], pp. 67-68

¹⁷² John M. Martin, ‘Winston Churchill’s Cold War: Kissinger Scholar Discusses New Book,’ *The Library of Congress*, <https://www.loc.gov/loc/lcib/0301/churchill.html>, accessed 12 January 2017.

¹⁷³ GM II §11, p. 73

¹⁷⁴ Adolf Hitler, *Mein Kampf*, trans. Ralph Manheim (Boston: Houghton Mifflin, 1999), p. xv. Why does Foxman – himself born Jewish, long-time director of the Anti-Defamation League and ‘knight’ of the *Ordre national de la Légion d’honneur* in France – not mention, in this context, also the Holocaust targeting of Gypsies, queers/LGBT and the ‘disabled’ (LGBT were uniquely persecuted, since they are the only group whose persecution continued – under legal sanction – after the end of WWII; add to this the fact that the disabled were among the *first* to be exterminated in the Holocaust)? ‘Jewish ethics’ – as Lévinas will claim – *fundamentally* cares for the socially and politically weak, the persecuted and disenfranchised, and so alluding only to Judaism as the target of the Holocaust is already something this ethics opposes: neither the ‘Gypsies,’ nor the LGBT, nor the ‘disabled’ can be considered as a religious or ethnic group; does Foxman mean to say that, when it comes to *their* extermination, this “instinct” no longer operates? If so – following the Lévinasian views on Jewish ethics – could this be said to be a “non-Jewish” *instinct*? Jewish ethics, as I am “Levinatztzscheanly” conceiving it here, would never bespeak a relation to the Other that obviates its own unique elevation (as Jewish), its own ethico-metaphysical mission and responsibility. The language of “human rights” will never be adequate – but only gloss and cover over – the nobility and self-differentiation that subtends these “rights,” in much the same way that – as I will show – “natural law” usurps the bulk of Jewish laws to flatten their distinction and “protract” it, both in time (history), and in place (geography), to a metaphysically humbled conception like ‘humanity.’

This curious “forgetting” with regards to the Holocaust’s long shadow is evident not only in political or social institutions, like the one headed by Foxman, but also in Academic scholarship. For example, noted Holocaust expert and scholar Robert Solomon Wistrich, in his introduction to an edited volume (ironically) titled *Holocaust Denial: The Politics of Perfidy*, identifies ‘Holocaust denial’ as “a postwar phenomenon at whose core lies the rejection of the historical fact that six million Jews were murdered by the Nazis during World War II” – evincing the indirect, but still logically potent, link that articulates an implicit ‘X=Y’ statement with a ‘not-X=not-Y’ one: ‘Holocaust,’ then, becomes, “at its core,” about the Nazi murder of Jews. Since, however, Holocaust deniers contest the very existence of the Nazi death-camps as such, this definition betrays a preference to Jews as the sole or defining victims of the Holocaust. In terms of Jewish ethics, once again, this would itself constitute a gross, non-Jewish violence towards they who have been charged as the witnesses to God’s law and the world’s victims (not only to their own victimization); cf. Robert Solomon Wistrich, ‘Introduction: Lying About the Holocaust,’ in Robert S. Wistrich (ed.), *Holocaust Denial: The Politics of Perfidy* (Berlin: De Gruyter; Jerusalem: Magnes Press, 2012), p. 1.

Here are some other, brief, examples: In their introduction to *Sociology Confronts the Holocaust*, Judith Gerson and Diane Wolf note that the fact that “[c]ontemporary sociological research [this book was published in 2007; SC] is marked by a profound silence in relation to the Holocaust,” making it appear “as if sociology might [...] have a “Jewish problem.”” Cf. (Judith M. Gerson and Diane L. Wolf (eds.), *Sociology Confronts the Holocaust: Memories and Identities in Jewish Diasporas* (Durham: Duke UP, 2007), p. 3; *Throughout* their Introduction to *The Oxford Handbook of Holocaust Studies*, Peter Hayes and John K. Roth refer to the Holocaust as synonymous with (in one construction) “the persecution and murder of the European Jews and its aftereffects” (p. 2). Further on in this volume, the one chapter dedicated to the Holocaust’s other victims – “Gypsies, Homosexuals, and Slavs” – were “not targeted in the major tracts of Nazi ideology” (p. 274), though, as stateless and segregated communities, they were already not part of the Nation (*Volk*), much less evincing the racial purity that was very much ensconced in Nazi ideology. The disabled are, again, mentioned very briefly under the heading of ‘Science’ (part of ‘The Eugenics Movement), in 3 pages from this 740 page volume (pp. 45-47); cf. Peter Hayes and John K. Roth (eds.), *The Oxford Handbook of Holocaust Studies* (New York: Oxford UP, 2010); Even Jonathan Friedman, who – in his Introduction to *The Routledge History of the Holocaust* – astutely notes that “Hitler’s variant of fascism had no room for any group that stood in the way of his desire to re-engineer European society”, reduces this desire to “principles of race and heredity,” passing in silence over the *theological* scandal – literally a trap or obstacle that lurks on one’s path (and, hence, “stands in the way”) – that the Jews were the most explicit *symbol* (yet not the sole *members*) of the “group that stands in the way” to a certain promised salvation. Cf. Jonathan C. Friedman, ‘Introduction,’ in Jonathan C. Friedman (ed.), *The Routledge History of the Holocaust* (New York and Milton: Routledge, 2011), p. 1; The identification of the Holocaust as a kind of

“subset” or “example” of ‘genocide’ is perhaps most emphasized – because most unquestioned and total – in: Leonard S. Newman and Ralph Erber (eds.), *Understanding Genocide: The Social Psychology of the Holocaust* (New York: Oxford UP, 2002).

In all of these scholarships, a couple of motifs recur which are relevant in this context: the first is the ubiquitous language of “genocide” to the Nazi mass-murder (a term which, even if not always claimed as coeval, is always the standard concept that this murder is measured against); the second is how, for a long time, Academic disciplines other than History have refrained from “touching” this topic. Both of these facts suggest, I believe, a single metaphysical “instinct” which I am trying to ex-pose and question, using the Jewish ethics of the Other (rather than, say, a Jewish “identity politics”). Furthermore, the second fact (of an Academic reluctance to “touch” the subject) is taken to be merely a lacuna of research, and *justified only as a deepening of knowledge with regards to it* (thus, not taking any distance from what drove Western Academia to this “curious omission”), never addressing the causes of this lacuna. What I call here the ‘will to truth/knowledge’ also finds its confirmation here.

¹⁷⁵ What is even more troubling in this context is that Foxman omits the (well known, even if not well-discussed) fact that *it is the Old Testament God of the Jews that had first introduced ‘genocide’ to history and thought*. The people of ‘Amalek,’ whose historical enmity towards the Jews dates back to the time of their Exodus from Egypt, are the object of God’s genocidal decree: “Now go and attack Amalek, and utterly destroy all that they have; do not spare them, but kill both man and woman, child and infant, ox and sheep, camel and donkey.” (1 Samuel 15:3). Why enact such a “suspension” of this famous fact when attending to a genocide directed against the Jews themselves? Is not the scope and ferocity, indeed the totality of this hatred already been with us for millennia and already there is what Nietzsche will call “Jewish hatred”?

This, I think, is precisely a (Christian) suppression/appropriation of (Jewish) hatred: it cannot even address this fact even where it is most relevant, even at the price of distorting history. I do not claim that this distortion of history – which is always already violent – is avoidable in principle; but I do maintain that it is only through antipathology, which can “see through” the Christian “moral image of thought,” that it could be approached and communicated with, for it is in this very communication that I situate the Levinatzschian understanding and enactment of justice. And justice is ever more acute, ever more interruptively accusing, after the (*modern* phenomenon of) Holocaust. One cannot “trust” this ‘moral image of thought’ to sustain these historical distortions or suppressions, which, if and when the violence they ignore resurfaces – since no discourse has been allowed to interrogate them responsibly –, there is no longer anything that could stand in the way of the most destructive, “divine” violence imaginable, precisely in the name of this ‘morality.’ Foxman’s ‘instinct’ to “turn away” is hereby accused by antipathology as irresponsible, or anti-responsible; as an *unjust morality*.

Let me make but one last comment here: the above is not an accusation leveled at the “biological” or “state” register: for one, Foxman himself was born Jewish, and yet showed exemplary Christian morality with all its attendant violence; second, the Amalek story is currently being used by many right wing Jews (that, moreover, consider themselves ‘religious’) to justify the oppression and hatred of Islam in general and of the Palestinian people under Israeli occupation in particular (it is possible that Judaism, the way Levinatzsch tries to (re)envision it, is most “precarious” in the State of Israel itself). When hatred is morally suppressed – something which Christian-Western morality most excelled in – its nobility is denied, and its height, from which new values and new understandings of (past) values might emerge, is buried; until, of course, it cannot help but, violently (and, alas, all-too-often “righteously”), erupt.

¹⁷⁶ Though I suspect that *misogyny* is a hatred that is even older (the absence of an antipathology of ‘The Corpse,’ that *other* ‘traitor,’ here raises its accusing head), noted Holocaust and anti-Semitism historian Robert Wistrich terms anti-Semitism “the longest hatred;” cf. Robert S. Wistrich, *Antisemitism: The Longest Hatred* (London: Thames Methuen, 1991).

¹⁷⁷ The issue, by and large, has to do with the historical and political myopia in the Western world (Europe and the United States, though the kernel is doubtless British) towards the extent of Christian influence on the Colonial enterprise in the modern world. In this dissertation I am trying to show precisely why and how this myopia perpetuates itself, and what are its ideological aiding factors.

The most recent outburst of violence towards the West, which had been, by and large, framed as an Islamic world-dominating power that seeks to kill or convert the Western “infidel,” is a particularly poignant example of how the occident consistently avoids treating the problem of its own religious violence, however that violence might have been framed by Christianity’s “good intentions” of bringing light and salvation – or, in short, ‘civilization’ – to the rest of the globe. The “natural theology” moniker befits both the secular aspirations of the occident’s colonial violence, and its blindness to the “incidentally” compatible theology, of a Christian-Protestant variety, that followed along in its shade.

Contemporary US “imperialism,” then, is only the violent outburst to a hatred that colonialism had been breeding, with passive aggression, for decades before; and, of course, this purported passivity seems to authorize the aforementioned myopia that can cling to this passivity and claim, without even blinking, either a fight for the “liberation from oppression” (betraying an eschatological global project of “global freedom”), or a fight “in self defense” against forces that, to quote US president

George W. Bush, form an “axis of evil.” In more than merely political ways – that is, in ideological, theological, and metaphysical ways – this ‘evil’ is a Western, not to say Christian, creation.

For some scholarly examples: The colonial project, examining the relation between religion and colonialism in the British Empire – and noting, moreover, how much contemporary Britain is “sensitive” of the “empire” moniker/reminder – Hilary Carey finds that “The churches were essential to the creation of a Christian consensus which supported the expansion of the British world through the planting of religious institutions in every conceivable corner of the empire” (Hilary M. Carey, *God’s Empire: Religion and Colonialism in the British World, c.1801–1908* (Cambridge: Cambridge UP, 2011), p. xiv).

The European colonial project could very well be said to continue – with what is now called the “global market” – a neo-liberal Capitalist ideology that, following Max Weber, betrays itself as the continuation of the “Protestant spirit” by other – more pervasive/protracted, and hence less visible/external – means. In addition, following the (more contemporary) Paul Oslington, of the theology of Capitalism’s main ideological figure, Adam Smith, and his conception of market capitalism as God’s – but, alas, it was a very Christian God – *invisible* hand (cf. Max Weber, *The Protestant Ethic and the Spirit of Capitalism* (New York: Scribner, 1958); Paul Oslington, ‘Divine Action, Providence and Adam Smith’s Invisible Hand,’ *Adam Smith as Theologian*, ed. Paul Oslington (Florence, US: Routledge, 2011), pp. 61-74).

For a good overview of what is now popularly referred to as “Islamophobia” – tracing a hatred towards Islam that dates back at least to the Catholic Church’s relation to the “Turk” (dating back to Pope Urban II’s First Crusade too “liberate” the Holy Land from the hands of the Seljuk Turks), cf. Todd H. Green, *The Fear of Islam: An Introduction to Islamophobia in the West* (Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 2015).

To this general line of critical argument towards occidental treatments of Islam, one can also add the works that follow in the wake of Edward Said (as well as forge new breakthroughs from it), of which my limited knowledge will allow me to mention only two contributions (that I nonetheless feel are noteworthy): Talal Asad, *Formations of the Secular: Christianity, Islam, Modernity* (Stanford: Stanford UP, 2003); Gil Anidjar, *The Jew, the Arab: A History of the Enemy* (Stanford: Stanford UP, 2003).

¹⁷⁸ The recent radicalization of Western countries’s relation to Islam (Europe, the United States, even Canada), what had been dubbed nowadays as “Islamophobia,” can be seen, in this context, as an outburst of a violence that had, also, a very long lineage in Christianity. That ‘Islam’ had become almost synonymous with an “international terrorist threat” only seems like a novelty due to Western secularism’s (re-)writing of history as a move away from the “darkness” of a superstitiously religious Middle-Ages and into the Enlightenment of ‘human rights’ and religious ‘tolerance.’ As early as 1997, prominent scholar Talal Asad had noted that “Western public opinion is more alarmed about violent and authoritarian tendencies that appear to be generated by “Islam” than by those attributable to other religions” (Talal Asad, ‘Europe Against Islam: Islam in Europe,’ *The Muslim World* vol. 87 (1997), p. 185).

The “toleration” of religious difference, as he also notes, is precisely based on *an internalization* of religious difference – the creation of an ‘individual’ in whose “innards” alone is religious identity/difference tolerated – into something like a “private belief.” Indeed, as he goes on to argue, it is upon this presupposed “tolerated form of religion” upon that the entire edifice of modern ‘freedom of religion,’ as a “human right,” is based (ibid, p. 195).

Indeed, in a comparative study of 5 countries in “Western Europe,” Engy Abdelkader comments about “the gap between legal protections in theory versus what is extended to the Muslim minority community in practice.” “In theory,” she notes, “each of the countries referenced above have enacted laws that protect the freedom of religion. In practice, however, competing interests sometimes supersede these laws” (Engy Abdelkader, ‘A Comparative Analysis of European Islamophobia: France, Uk, Germany, Netherlands And Sweden,’ August 2016). *UCLA Journal of Islamic and Near Eastern Law*, vol. 16 (2016), p. 32).

My antipathology, specifically with regards to its metaphysical focus, aims both to narrate the genealogy of this “gap,” and interrogate its violence precisely from within this – now all but “debunked” as “non political” or “non applicable” – metaphysical focus.

In fact, looking at the matter historically, the Muslim threat had already been very much a problem in Medieval Europe, a “Europe” whose theological effects I am tracing in this dissertation with regards to Judaism. The very first organised and global/“international” acts of military aggression sanctioned by the Holy Church – the Crusades – were directed against the Islamic rise in the East (encapsulated in the hateful figure of “the Turk”) that loomed over all of Christendom as the conquering Muslims refused to give Christian pilgrims access to their Holy Sites (especially Jerusalem). For example, in Dante Alighieri’s *Inferno*, written in the beginning of the 14th Century (towards the end of the “Dark Ages”), upon approaching the “city of Dis” (the Devil’s city), Dante clearly discerns *Mosques* that can be seen peppering lower Hell’s last three Circles. In addition, when arriving at the border of the 9th Circle – a realm devoted to consolors of violence – ‘Mäometto’ (Muhammed) makes a particularly abject appearance as sliced open “from the chin to the farting place” (cf. Dante Alighieri, *Divine Comedy of Dante Alighieri: Volume 1: Inferno*, trans. and ed. Robert M. Durling (Oxford and New York:

Oxford UP, 1996), XXVIII.23-24, p. 433); also cf. XXVIII.25-36, pp. 433-435 [all references to Dante's *Inferno* will follow the format: [Canto number (in Roman numeral)][.][line numbers in the original Italian text]]

The fact that this "Islamophobia" was carried, *hidden and yet perfectly preserved*, to the present days (and the 'secular' democracies), is perhaps most evident in recent development in the United States, where the new President, Donald Trump, signed an executive order that bans those born in several Muslim countries from entering the United States, with no particular threat cited (present or past); a retroactive move that also annulled the validity of existing travel/work VISAS that so many of these "Muslims" – students, workers and other professionals – relied upon. In the aftermath of this order, several lawsuits were issued against Trump on the basis of its unconstitutionality. Cf. Alan Yuhas and Mazin Sidahmed, 'Is this a Muslim ban? Trump's executive order explained,' *The Guardian*, 31 January 2017, <https://www.theguardian.com/us-news/2017/jan/28/trump-immigration-ban-syria-muslims-reaction-lawsuits>, accessed 19 February, 2017.

Olivier Roy, who analyzed the Western "anti-Islam" sentiment in France, notes the importance of the creation of the "modern state" in this respect, and how this had its roots in the institution of the Christian Church and the latter's own "affair" with political power. Roy argues, hence, that, "[t]he political space of the West was born out of a Christian religious matrix, the new autonomy of which was theorized against the church as an institution, but by thinkers and agents who were themselves Christians." Roy reasons that it was "the patterning of the earthly kingdom on the heavenly kingdom [i.e., in/as the 'secular state,' SC] that made it, in turn, possible to marginalize the religious sphere, because what was secularized was in fact the divine itself" (Olivier Roy, *Secularism Confronts Islam*, trans. George Holloch (New York: Columbia UP, 1007), pp. 40-41 [my underline]).

In the context of this, my 'antipathological' argument, it is particularly refreshing to note, as Roy does in the Preface to his book, that, when it comes to the question of Islam – once the assimilation of the Jews, the famous *Jüdensfrage*, had been put to (some) rest with the establishment of the State of Israel – it is, in fact, *animosity towards Islam that bridges both "right" and "left" in the West*, a locus where both seem to agree (which, in turn, points precisely to their shared Christian origins, as I will show in further detail in this chapter and throughout):

[...] the critique of Islam is today a rallying point for two intellectual families that have been opposed to each other so far: those who think that the West is first and foremost Christian (and who, not that long ago, considered that the Jews could hardly be assimilated) and those who think that the West is primarily secular and democratic. In other words, the Christian Right and the secular Left are today united in their criticism of Islam." (ibid, p. viii)

I will give but one other example, which will be taken up with more detail in the last 'example' I use to introduce this chapter, and which concerns the treatment and relation of the people of the United States towards the 'African-Americans' in its midst. This issue/problem, I maintain, is done a severe (though common) injustice when conceived as a mere case of 'racism.' Many other race groups arrived in America and have not, and are not, treated remotely the same. It would be more beneficial in this regard to look at the specific history, and the specific 'metaphysics of morals' that underwrites it, rather than use this generalized concept the way it's being used today: to hide under a seemingly 'natural' or 'common' phenomenon (as 'evil' as it may be ostensibly regarded), a very serious historical, not to say metaphysical, accusation towards 'the West' and the theological elements that continue to stir it up.

Police killings of African Americans, to take the most glaring example, cannot keep gliding under the radar as mere 'social problems' or relegated to an individualized accusation against this or that police officer. In the Ferguson, Missouri, August 9th, 2014 shooting of 18 year old unarmed Michael Brown, it was not police officer Darren Wilson that had shot this teen 12 times in "self-defense," it was not even 'white' establishing superiority over and oppressing the 'black,' but – as Darren Wilson's testimony of the 'demon' that he saw in Brown and the subsequent fear (which exceeds 'mortal fear,' or is its very excess) that necessitated his repeated use of deadly force (demons are supernaturally strong) – a struggle between 'good' and 'evil,' between the righteous and the eternally damned, between a loving benevolence and the stumbling block (*skandalon*) that resists its love (with – seemingly gratuitous, 'unreasonable,' *demonic* – hatred). I would offer to think of this, perhaps (and this is a much less popular approach) as the result of decades of a process whereby a suppression-via-individuation of a *Protestant-Christian guilt* was underway, a guilt – which is understandable considering the history of a "land of the free" that built itself through abducted African slave-labor –, "gone wild" for lack (not to say prohibition) of debate and exposure (which, it is important to note – I am far from being sarcastic here – is a policing done with *good intentions*). I will discuss this matter further below in analyzing the Black Lives Matter movement in the United States.

With regards to the previous comments on Islam, perhaps it might be less surprising that the adoption of Islam by African-American slaves (and their descendents), was not so much a return to actual, *de facto* "roots," but an adoptive move that seeks to install in the new American slaves a sense of purpose and a tradition neither of which associable with Europeans and their descendants. Timothy Drew, who established the first Islamic gathering center in 1913 in New Jersey, did so, as Herbert Berg remarks, "to capitalize on Islam's reputation as a non-European religion with a rich history" (Herbert Berg, 'Black Muslims,' *Routledge Handbook of Islam in the West*, ed. Roberto Tottoli (London and New York: Routledge, 2015), p. 124).

It is here also that the difference between the more generally palatable and acceptable proponent of African American rights in the United States, Martin Luther King, had always been a devout Christian, while their other, far less palatable proponent, was Malcolm X (formerly Malcolm Little): both born to Baptist Minister fathers, Martin Luther King Jr. spent his life in relative insulation from overt manifestations of “racism,” while Malcolm X had his father brutally murdered, saw his home set in flames, and went to prison, where he met with the “Black Muslims” who took him under their wing and taught him the new Islam of Elijah Mohammed. Malcolm X writes in his “autobiography” (written in collaboration with Alex Haley), that “Christianity is the white man’s religion. [...] the greatest single ideological weapon for enslaving millions of non-white human beings” (Malcolm X and Alex Haley, *The Autobiography of Malcolm X* (New York: Ballantine Books, 1964), pp. 241-242), and, indirectly addressing Martin Luther King Jr., compared the latter’s role in the 1960’s ‘civil rights’ endeavor to what was then called a “house nigger,” the few slaves that the white man chose to elevate over the other slaves (yet not to the white man’s level); cf. *ibid.*, p. 239, 243); he eventually came to call the pro-Christian black leaders “black bodies with white heads” (*ibid.*, p. 244).

Not surprisingly, the militant character of Malcolm X’s protest against the inequities and violence that African Americans have suffered in the United States was received by “white America” as an ‘*anti-Christian*’ message of ‘*hate*’ (*ibid.*, pp. 239-240). Compare Malcolm X’s statements and reception with MLK’s “We aren’t engaged in any negative protest and in any negative arguments with anybody”, begins to tell something of how the protests against racism in the United States are received in a curiously Christian manner. In this same speech for example (as in others), King continued preaching a “non-violence” with clearly Christian motifs: “We are masters in our nonviolent movement in disarming police forces; they don’t know what to do” (Martin Luther King Jr., ‘I See the Promised Land,’ *Stanford University: The Martin Luther King, Jr. Research and Education Institute*, <http://www.seto.org/king3.html>, accessed 19 January 2016 [my underline]).

My general argument here, with the help of Nietzsche, will be that denying an irreconcilable hatred – by individualizing or ‘privatizing’ it; by ‘generalizing’ it – only converts its explosions to implosions; instead of violent words and uncomfortable debates one gets a blind, massively destructive force that can no longer be contained: a noisy and visible explosive that’s been turned on itself so as to become implosive, like the Atom Bomb was to the Dynamite that preceded it. The advantage of the former is that, much like Gas Chambers, it tends to destroy all witnesses of its violence, thus “solving” the problem of justice by precisely circumventing what Lévinas calls ‘responsibility.’ This is the violence that resides in what Jean-François Lyotard calls a ‘*différend*,’ which it constantly denies; much like the denials of ‘metaphysics’ by Western science and many branches of its philosophical institutions.

¹⁷⁹ Lars von Trier, interviewed at a Press Conference at the Cannes Film Festival, 2011. For the full video documentation of this part of the interview, cf. Hammid, ‘Lars von Trier -- “I understand Hitler...”’, *YouTube*, May 18, 2011, <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=QpUqpLh0iRw>, accessed 9 July 2016. The many ellipses here are meant to designate moments of pause and hesitation in von Trier’s speech.

¹⁸⁰ From the official press release by the Festival’s administrators. Cf. Scott Roxborough and Stuart Kemp, ‘Lars von Trier Named Persona Non Grata in Cannes After Hitler Remarks,’ *The Hollywood Reporter*, May 19, 2011, <http://www.hollywoodreporter.com/news/lars-von-trier-named-persona-190227> (accessed January 16, 2014).

¹⁸¹ Of course, this is not easy in a world that has been already, as Lévinas alludes, “duped by morality”, or, as Nietzsche laments, where *ressentiment* had become victorious. It requires a methodological “*Destruktion*” that is far closer to the Derridian “deconstruction” than the Heideggerian original. Perhaps the fate of Jacques Derrida’s thought can also illustrate how difficult (and professionally risky/suicidal) such an endeavor is today, specifically within the Academic domain. While Derrida speaks primarily to the discipline of Philosophy – indeed where he is met with the utmost rejection/ignorance/animosity – a similar methodological critique that pertains to the ‘Social Sciences’ remains necessary (however professionally risky/suicidal it turns out to be).

¹⁸² Here one should recall that Israel’s foreign policy has been increasingly treating international criticism of its actions in the occupied territories as ‘anti-Semitism,’ thus managing to ward off this criticism – by using Europe’s historical guilt for WWII and the Nazi atrocities against the European Jews in the Holocaust – and, what’s more important, its possible international implications. Also important in this context is to keep in mind that since the great extermination and expulsion of European Jews in WWII (aided and abetted by many European countries), had made the very existence of the State of Israel (erected but three years after the end of the War) is a sign and a reminder of that expulsion, a kind of “down payment” for this moral debt of Christian Europe. Germany’s international relation to Israel has been, ever since, quite obsequious and forgiving. Details can be found in, of the many sources available: Lily Gardner Feldman, ‘Germany’s Relations with Israel: From Abyss to Miracle,’ *Germany’s Foreign Policy of Reconciliation: From Enmity to Amity* (Lanham: Rowman & Littlefield, 2012), p. 133-199; Michael Wolffsohn, ‘Israel and Germany: From Former Foes to Distant Friends,’ in Colin Shindler (ed.), *Israel and the World Powers* (London: I. B. Tauris, 2014), pp. 289-296

¹⁸³ Hegel, of course, would not ascribe to making any one historical individual into a world-historical symbol, with one or two exceptions: Socrates, and Jesus. Indeed, as positive examples, they are awarded a certain “immortality” as concerning world spirit, for – unlike historical “heroes” admired by Hegel (e.g. Napoleon) – they do in fact symbolize turning points of world spirit itself. Hegel’s ethico-metaphysical view of negativity and vanity should already clue one to the fact that no negative symbols are allowed to be registered as such within the Hegelian system – for this would mean absolving vanity itself, insofar as the good is the true and the true is the whole. Any ‘evil’ must only be temporary, cannot become a true spiritual player, for its negation still awaits its positive reconciliation/*aufhebung*.

It is important to understand here that symbolization is not only the harvesting of an historical “essence:” the symbol is already beyond history, and so is essentially ‘spiritual;’ it *animates history* rather than being only a piece in its narrative. The power to shape the discourse – as von Trier’s example serves to illustrate – is also a way to direct the historical research/narratives that come out of this discourse; a way of “moralizing ontology.”

The point I am trying to make here is that ‘evil’ – because of the “positive” examples that ‘*Weltgeist*’ allows in principle (like Socrates and/or Jesus) – is first approached, in the Hegelian system, as a symbol to be incarnated with temporary place-holders; then the work of guilt/spirit commences in extracting an “essence” of these incarnations and adding them to a higher, more spiritual, knowledge. Yet, is this process of symbolization necessary? And does it not proceed from an already presupposed direction of history, of thought, of time itself? The final, methodological question – for which, I believe, Levinatsh is required – is how, even assuming this were a necessity, to articulate an ethical responsibility towards this procedure or mechanism.

¹⁸⁴ In Christianity, they are the twin symbols of Jesus/God and Judas/Devil, ‘good’ and ‘evil,’ that define this economic system of moral culpability, giving it both a ceiling and a floor (though, much like capitalism, these are virtual and given to infinite extension): the former, passively subjected to ultimate suffering out of gratuitous and infinite love, symbolizes the ultimate moral victory (absolution); the latter, actively causing this suffering out of an almost equally gratuitous hatred (irreconciled to the ‘will of God’ or the ‘absolute good’), symbolizes the ultimate moral bankruptcy.

¹⁸⁵ I will soon show how – specifically with regards to Martin Luther – this difference played itself out in the way Christian theology treated the Jewish Old Testament and its Jewish scholars, the Rabbis of the “Talmud.” In the Talmud, not only is there not a single narrative, but every passage of scripture is beset on all sides by numerous interpretations and interpretative polemics about the meaning of the text, which is, for the Jews, the meaning of God’s Law. That, my friends, if how Jews bear witness to (in)justice; they never stop emitting testimonies, and *argue to the bitter end* about what God’s Law/Justice *might* mean. Hence, also, what I call here the Jewish “metaphysical cowardice” – they never “go all the way.”

Having designated Jesus as the ultimate symbol of God – for or towards which all other Biblical signs are merely prefigurations – the Christian reading of the Bible would forever clash with what Luther, and many Christian scholars like him, see as the Jewish “stubbornness:” for, despite being offered a single cohesive interpretation of the Bible that conforms to the Christian narrative, the “Talmudists” remain intransigent with their “pharisaic” activity of producing more and more interpretations and sub-interpretations of the Holy Writ, as if they were not even interested in the ‘spirit’ or the “essence” of the Divine Word itself; they just refuse – out of a seemingly sheer gratuity and hatred – to accept Jesus as God’s Messiah and the bearer of Divine Truth, keeping to their old ways of Biblical inner-polemics, accompanied with their self-separating, “hateful” relation to their surrounding world. Martin Luther is a case in point here – as I will show in the next chapter – since his extensive writing and their explicit nature (this was well-before the era of “political correctness”) document not only his attempts to convince the “talmudists,” but also the spirit/hope with which Luther set out on this mission, and the unparalleled violence he recommends against Jews once this spirit/hope was refused by this “stubborn people.”

¹⁸⁶ Hegel’s philosophy of world history – which offers a systematic methodology for thinking of history ‘scientifically,’ in accordance with the principles of ‘reason’ – betrays, in this context, a fundamentally Christian core: “[...] the Spirit leads into truth, knows all things, and penetrates even into the depths of divinity.” This encapsulates, I believe, Hegel’s metaphysical justification – again, via a ‘Spirit’ ordained by ‘Truth’ – to his approach to history (and hence to thought/time), especially with regards to the final stage (i.e. ‘philosophy’) that will lead to its proper Concept(ualization). Let me cite here a slightly longer, but immediately adjacent passage to the one above, for it also alludes to that which, for Hegel, is – just like Judaism – no longer compelling or “relevant;” and this particularly from the point of view of the totalized “all” of history, that is, of “humanity:”

[...] In the Christian religion God [...] has given it to humanity to know what God is, so that God is no longer something hidden and concealed. With the possibility [*Möglichkeit*] of knowing God, the duty [*Pflicht*] to do so is laid upon us. The development of the thinking spirit [*Geist*], which starts out from and is based on [*Grundlage*] the revelation of the divine being, must eventually [*muß endlich*] increase to the point that what initially was set before spirit in feeling and representational modes is also grasped by thought. The time [*Zeit*] must finally [*muß endlich*] come when this rich production of creative reason [*Vernunft*] – which is what world history [*Weltgeschichte*] is – will be comprehended [*begreifen*]. (LWH, p. 85/GW 18:149 [my underline]).

The ethico-metaphysical implication for this procedure can perhaps most succinctly be expressed, in the words of Sarah Silverman, as “Hitler goes to heaven;” for even ‘Hitler’ is only looking for its proper place, there where its ‘soul’ will finally find peace in the Absolute Knowledge of God’s *Geist*. Indeed, it is by the dialectical necessities of ‘spirit’ that ‘Hitler’ can – indeed *through his becoming-symbol* – go to “Heaven;” and it is precisely ‘spirit’ that is *active* in this mechanism. Nietzsche, as I will show below, found a way – a method, a ‘science’ – with which to “catch the spirit in the act,” or, put in my terms, to make it speak of the force/violence – of this hidden or disavowed activity – *in turn*, which means, as mentioned above, putting spirit in question in a “manner free of moralic acid.” Cf. ‘Sarah Silverman on the Holocaust,’ *YouTube Video*, 04:00, Sarah Silverman monologue about the Holocaust, from the movie “Jesus Is Magic” 13 February 2009, posted by “Dieguez000”, 11 January 2017, <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=y6E9sJ6B-u8>

¹⁸⁷ The sign/symbol distinction I am making is far from consensual in modern linguistics, yet it is not without precedent. The chief contrast I am focusing on here conforms with what the Swiss linguist Ferdinand de Saussure wrote about the sign/symbol distinction. In his *Course in General Linguistics*, Saussure explains that the sign and the symbol are, indeed, separated precisely on the point of the ‘Why?’ question: the symbol, allows the linguist to perceive a certain “motivation” (one could perhaps say “inspiration”) behind it, while the sign is, for the linguist, completely arbitrary – it’s ‘Why?’ cannot, in principle, be established:

The word *symbol* has been used to designate the linguistic sign, or more specifically, what is here called the signifier. Principle 1 [“the linguistic sign is arbitrary” (p. 67)] in particular weighs against the use of this term. One characteristic of the symbol is that it is never wholly arbitrary; it is not empty, for there is the rudiment of a natural bond between the signifier and the signified. The symbol of justice, a pair of scales, could not be replaced by just any other symbol, such as a chariot.

The word *arbitrary* also calls for comment. The term should not imply that the choice of the signifier is left entirely to the speaker (we shall see below that the individual does not have the power to change a sign in any way once it has become established in the linguistic community); I mean that it is unmotivated, i.e. arbitrary in that it actually has no natural connection with the signified. (Ferdinand de Saussure, *Course in General Linguistics*, trans. Roy Harris, ed. Charles Bally and Albert Sechehaye (Chicago and LaSalle: Open Court, 1986), pp. 68-69 [my underline]).

¹⁸⁸ The question of the “all,” of humanity and its totality, also reveals how this Judaic relation to the One God is not reducible or substitutable by Kant’s “Thing in itself.” For one, in Kant it was *not an ethical imperative*, but a transcendental-epistemological one; and second, relatedly, this non-knowledge was placed on reason itself, the reason that *all humanity* (“transcendentally”) shares, not just the singled-out people of the Jews. Taking what was Jewish-specific and transforming it to natural or universal is a theme that keeps repeating itself in this antipathological study – also explaining to what extent Hegel was following, as he said, in the “spirit” of Kant – and will be interrogated further with Martin Luther and the post-Reformation’s ideas of “natural law.”

¹⁸⁹ As per the famous prophecy in the Book of Isaiah:

It shall come to pass in the end of days that the mountain of the house of the Lord shall be established as the highest of the mountains, and shall be lifted up above the hills; and all the nations shall flow to it | and many peoples shall come, and say: “Come, let us go up to the mountain of the Lord, to the house of the God of Jacob, that he may teach us his ways and that we may walk in his paths.” For out of Zion shall go forth the law, and the word of the Lord from Jerusalem. (Isaiah 2:2-3 [my underline, translation modified])

¹⁹⁰ In Judaism, no knowledge of God, especially God’s manner of controlling the ‘world’ in time (what Hegel calls “God’s providential plan,” the necessary/divine or ‘spiritual’ in world-historical events/people), is allowed; the *terms* in which the Creator is related to the creature/created – a relation that implies the latter’s absolution or redemption (i.e. a relation ordained by the One Absolute God) – *must* remain unknown to God’s (Jewish) believers). The ‘Why’ of God’s commandments is said to arrive only at the end of days, that is, only *after* Justice has been achieved on earth.

¹⁹¹ In short, the Christian maneuver consisted in a symbolic mechanism designed to, slowly but surely, “Judaize” the entire world; but it is important to keep in mind that this seemingly peaceful “reconciliation” with Judaism constitutes a veritable *metaphysical attack* on its essential, indeed *holy* principle of separation; an attack that grows more and more “quiet,” more and more naturalized or spiritualized as some (whether divine or natural) ‘necessity.’ With this maneuver what used to be *an elected and separated people* is transformed to be *an egalitarian, all-reconciling symbol*. It is, hence, through this symbolization that the aforementioned ‘distance’ – that was still *speaking* from its Jewish exponentialization as an infinite ‘beyond,’ their *principled* separation – is finally *denied in principle*. It is here that this distance stops vainly announcing itself as absolute (as Law), and, as Hegel would say, gets to *work* (as Spirit).

¹⁹² The ‘evil’ symbol can always be incarnated ad hoc, in anticipation of its eventual release and redemption; when ‘evil’ is already incorporated in the ‘good,’ finds its ‘proper place,’ and ceases being hated or despised, ceases to create negative affects in the believer. It is, indeed as Nietzsche says, “in effigy” that everything associated with the evil symbol is *charged* – a little like one “pays into” one’s credit – with an unbridled, and uncritical, hatred; but *only to, then, be recuperated* (by

‘knowledge’) through an equally unbridled and uncritical (for it knows no bounds/limits) ‘love.’ In short, the love commanded by the positive symbol authorizes the hatred *invested* in the negative symbol; for this hatred, it is promised, will be put to work and, thereby, “play itself out” in the end.

This is also how, to anticipate a bit, the priest’s affective intervention can short-circuit or bypass the will to power which utilizes/selects certain affects in order to express itself in acts/thought. Once the negative affects – that is, the selective/valuative affects – are all declared and treated as dangerous (if not ‘evil’), the ‘genus’ of all moral valuation, what Nietzsche called pathos of distance, can no longer be affirmed without guilt. It is clear that to such a trained sensibility, such an internalization of all ethical consideration, it matters little whether the world is rid of power-differences, or that all individual ‘subjects’ can no longer see these differences.

¹⁹³ The entire scene of Jesus’ arraignment before Pilate and Herode is exemplary in this sense of how repeated accusations are met by Jesus with a consistent passivity; cf. Luke 23:1-25.

¹⁹⁴ In the famous Sermon on the Mount, Jesus teaches, “Do not resist an evildoer. But if anyone strikes you on the right cheek, turn the other also” (Matthew 5:39)

¹⁹⁵ I will make it a point to show below that this passivity, as an “inspiring” symbol of moral conduct/interpretation, is not the same as what Lévinas called, in the previous chapter, the “passivity more passive than any passivity.” The latter, I maintain, cannot be willfully or conscientiously assumed, and its “peace” cannot be commanded as reconciliation of affects. Lévinasian passivity *responds only* to a difference in power, and does so by issuing forth a new moral valuation, a new sign that does not seek to eliminate this difference between ‘I’ and the ‘other,’ but *affirms it* as the ethical asymmetry that constitutes what Lévinas calls the I’s “glory.” It is a passivity of *signification*, and not significance. What this means is that this passivity is the passivity of the letter, which – like the Saussurean ‘sign’ – is “unmotivated,” essentially and radically open to different meanings/interpretations, a gift that, literally, *keeps on giving*.

¹⁹⁶ An interesting note about Gandhi here, in the context of these “see/speak/hear no evil” sections. It is known that, foregoing all dispensable earthly possessions, Gandhi stuck only to the necessary minimum, or almost: round glasses, worn leather sandals, pocket watch, plate, bowl, spoon... He had one more item in his possession that served no immediate practical purpose, and yet Gandhi kept it with him and carried it wherever he went: it was a small figurine of the “three wise monkeys,” one covering its ears (Kikazaru), the other covering its mouth (Iwazaru), and the third covering its eyes (Mizaru). That this great believer in non-possession should choose to add this of all things to his stoic collection, does not, in fact, contradict this stoicism, but – as I am trying to show below with Nietzsche’s “ascetic priest” – a symbol of the ethical principles of this stoicism.

¹⁹⁷ Cf. Nietzsche, ‘The Problem of Socrates,’ *Twilight of the Idols*, AC §§6-7, pp. 41-42.

¹⁹⁸ For some examples, cf. WTP §295, p. 166; *ibid*, §116, p. 71, ‘Why I am a Destiny,’ EH ‘§6, p. 331

¹⁹⁹ This focus on *effects* is not only what accounts for the fundamental reactivity of resentment, but, importantly, that the temporality of value’s becoming is slandered, left to wallow in the obscurity of a “pre-ontological” will to power, and instead defined as per its Being, in the stable temporality of either ‘history’ or ‘eternity.’ Nietzsche’s *Genealogy*, as I show below, addresses precisely this ethico-metaphysical bias, trying to offer methodological tools to counter it – already existing, invisible, and coercive – presence in Western thought. Bringing the ‘Why?’ question back to the fore, as “first philosophy,” means allowing the an-archic temporality of value’s becoming (of which only a small part ever solidifies as Being) to keep asking the radical questions that “keep on giving” despite any and all claims to either ‘Being,’ or ‘Truth.’

²⁰⁰ One of the more sustained critiques in contemporary political thought concerning tolerance in this context is Wendy Brown’s *Regulating Aversion*, a book geared specifically “to track the complex involvement of tolerance with power” (Wendy Brown, *Regulating Aversion: Tolerance in the Age of Identity and Empire* (Princeton: Princeton UP, 2006), p. 9).

The glaring difference between our critiques is perhaps due to her approach being closer to Foucault’s than to Nietzsche’s, opting to treat tolerance on the “moral-political” level of “governmentality” (*ibid*, *ibid*), while I, with Nietzsche, am dealing with the, perhaps apposite, ethico-metaphysical conditions and implications of the formation of value itself. In his tracing the history of the concept, Istvan Bejczy concludes that, although possessing three different “stages” of meaning (in Antiquity, Early Christendom, and the Middle Ages), “[t]he common ground between the three meanings of *tolerantia* is the implication of a passive attitude of the good and the just towards evil forces” (Istvan Bejczy, ‘*Tolerantia: A Medieval Concept*,’ *Journal of the History of Ideas* 58.3 (1997), p. 368). It is only in the Middle Ages that this concept become political, due to the fact of its wielder – the Christian Sovereign – now having *grown in power* (as Christianity conquers Europe) to include whole multitudes rather than one individual ‘soul’: “no longer a powerless individual but a powerful collectivity that could destroy the tolerated people if it wanted to but ought not to do so” (*ibid*, *ibid*).

By looking at the political meaning of tolerance, Brown already distances herself from the metaphysical genealogy of this concept, as well as its overall theological role. The theological meaning of *tolerantia* can always be justified in its being a mere “middle state” on the way to absolute ‘caritas’ (“love”); and here Levinatztch is needed to precisely offer an ethical

critique of this teleological promise/demand. What Brown calls the “de-politicization” of the objects of ‘tolerance’ can then be referred back to the way that Christian metaphysics treats of Otherness: it is always geared to convert it to Sameness, a conversion rooted deeply in the Christian evangelical (i.e. proselytizing) imperative. This imperative rests on the metaphysical principle that the symbol of Jesus Christ depicts: the reconciliation of “all” – a single “humanity” under a single ‘God.’ But this outward-bound “depoliticization” is only the visible half of the story; the violence of the Christian activity, its actual “politics” (to follow Brown’s term), is effected within the coils of *ressentiment*, targeting *internal*, rather than external, enemies (they are only the external “unbelievers” that get “depoliticized”). As Bejczy notes:

[...] It is in order to define its own attitude towards those who did not conform to the absolute truth that the Church developed and adopted the idea of *tolerantia*. Heretics (the enemies from within) were persecuted, but unbelievers, especially Jews (the enemies from without) were granted a right of existence, as were most social elements who offended the moral code which the absolute religious truth legitimized and sanctified” (ibid, p. 382 [my underline]).

Though Bejczy associates the Jews with the “unbelievers,” a long history of specifically antisemitic Christian pogroms – crowned by WWII and the Holocaust – complicates this status in a way that I, following Nietzsche, am trying to follow here. Understanding the “moral” implications of the “inside/outside” conundrum that Judaism constitutes for Christian theology was precisely where Nietzsche set the trailblazing path in his *Genealogy*.

Catherine Holland’s take on the shift that Lockean tolerance must undergo for a truly plural liberalism to become viable is also relevant here, specifically since Holland identifies the same logical structure that I am tracing in the metaphysical (Holland, however, does not proceed to provide a theological context for Locke’s concept): “Extending Locke’s doctrine of toleration from its moorings in religious debate to encompass the much larger domain of social diversity suggests, first of all, that we transplant the fact of difference to the conceptual place occupied in Locke’s schema by the figure of God” (Holland, C. A. ‘Giving Reasons: Rethinking Toleration for a Plural World,’ *Theory & Event*, 4.4 (2000), *Project MUSE*, muse.jhu.edu/article/32604, accessed 20 Nov. 2016). It is the “fact of difference” that I am trying, through Levinatztch, to accommodate methodologically; which is why I start by showing that appealing to the “facts” will never take one out of the metaphysical trappings of modern thought, that “making ontology fundamental” itself has a problematic hierarchy of ‘fact’ and ‘value’ (a problem compounded, as I showed in the previous chapter, by the added dimension of time/history).

For another noteworthy source on this topic see the three texts compiled in: Robert P. Wolff, Barrington Moore, and Herbert Marcuse, *A Critique of Pure Tolerance* (Boston: Beacon Press, 1965).

²⁰¹ I will show below that, for all his animosity towards reactivity and passivity, Nietzsche, too, speaks of a passivity that, like Lévinas’, transcends the will and the understanding, and, also like Lévinas’, is an ethical precondition of value creation. Eventually, this point will help me, throughout this chapter, to show a deeper link between Nietzsche and Lévinas by pointing out the fact that this passivity is regarded by both in terms of height and separation – what Lévinas calls ‘election’ and Nietzsche calls ‘nobility’ – and that Lévinas’ passivity more passive than any passivity is precisely what comes out of understanding passivity through the Nietzschean ‘will to power.’

²⁰² A Catholic convert to Protestantism, Heidegger knows that guilt is a process of internalization, and this means that the explicit or “external” signifiers of a (Catholic) “confession” already ‘pathologize’ and kill, or betray the very “spirit” of this guilt (for “the letter kills”). Merging with the signified in this manner – not protesting against the injustice implied in merging Heidegger with the newly-symbolized ‘Nazi’ sign – was Heidegger’s consistent ethico-metaphysical position or gesture: the *question* was only ever asked of the Truth, rather than Justice, of Being (the “spiritual” signified rather than the signifier’s “letter”), thus pre-absolving the ‘stasis’ that kept the ‘ek’ in check (within the closure of Being as within those of philosophical legitimacy). Heidegger’s silence here, unlike von Trier’s speech, reveals the intimacy with which he encountered the truth of Nazism, perhaps even the Truth of antisemitism; he did not try to “make it easy on himself,” but, rather, chose to “shut up and take it.” It is the silent assumption of guilt in the service of Love/Truth over the noisy statements of “letters” in the service of Law/Justice. Heidegger, in short, is “too guilty” to argue against the violence that threatens to consume him as a result of his, *unapologetic*, silence.

²⁰³ For Heidegger’s notion of ‘facticity’ as a being-thrown in(to) the world, cf. BT, p. 174/SZ, p. 135.

²⁰⁴ Hence I am taking here a psychoanalytic insight – though applied to *metaphysics* (which means it is no longer, *pace* a certain Freud, wholly ‘scientific’) – marking this incident as a symptom of a repression that finds its limits, fails, or goes awry. Freud writes the following:

[...] [a] symptom arises from an instinctual impulse [in this case – Jewish hatred; SC] which has been detrimentally affected by repression [i.e. the “hatred of hatred;” SC]. If the ego, by making use of the signal of unpleasure, attains its object of completely suppressing the instinctual impulse, we learn nothing of how this has happened [i.e. *ressentiment* manages to *stay silent*; SC]. We can only find out about it from those cases in which repression must be described as having to a greater or less extent failed [I will show this in its beginnings (Luther) and in its limit cases (like the Nazi enactment of the ‘*Endlösung der Judenfrage*’); SC] (SE 20: pp. 94-95)

²⁰⁵ This marks the basic insight that Michel Foucault adopted from Nietzsche's Genealogical method, but also where he missed (part of) Nietzsche's point: knowledge is a modern way/*dispositif* that exerts power as/through control, what Foucault calls "surveillance." In his *Surveiller et punir*, Foucault analyzes the transition from a legal code whose transgression was met with a Sovereign's punishment (external, spectacular, localizable), to one whose transgression is "preempted" by a sovereign control (internal, hidden, diffuse). The latter – whose best spatial model remains Bentham's 'Panopticon' Prison – individualizes the criminal by making her internalize the sovereign's law: instead of taking the *chance* of being caught committing a crime (and being ruthlessly made an example of by a punishing Sovereign), the 'individual' becomes her own "sovereign" and monitors herself incessantly (always "catching herself in the act," so to speak). This function – of leaving nothing to chance – is the essence of control. What Foucault did not pay heed to – and this was quite conscious on his part – was the metaphysical gesture that such an internalization entailed: internalizing the law was more than a way to more efficiently regulate a community, but also a metaphysical attack on the distance – still too manifest, too visible, in regimes of sovereign punishment – between the ruler and the ruled, what Nietzsche called the 'noble' ("master") and the 'plebeian' ("slave"). Slave morality, as it is treated here, is precisely the mechanism by which this distance is radically denied, so much so that it becomes a nihilistic force that attacks all value differences (and, in the end, all value).

²⁰⁶ I will explicate these implications further and further the more I progress with my methodological critique. Some casual references to other works that support my general direction/argument at this stage, I can bring the following: For a discussion of the Westphalian accord's "[t]hat there shall be a Christian and Universal peace" (the opening words in the very first section of this famous document, marking Europe's transition from a period of religious wars to the "modern" international system of nation-states), cf. Derek Croxton, *Westphalia: The Last Christian Peace* (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2013); for the theological facets of a *uniquely consistent* Christian antisemitism, cf. Robert Michael, *Holy Hatred: Christianity, Antisemitism and the Holocaust* (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2006); for the connection between Secularism and the Enlightenment, particularly in the wake of what was called "naturalism" or "natural law" (and its coincidental compatibility with Christian, especially Protestant metaphysics), cf. Ronald L. Numbers, *Science Without God: Natural Laws and Christian Beliefs*, in David C. Lindberg and Ronald L. Numbers (eds.), *When Science and Christianity Meet*, (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2008), pp. 265-285.

²⁰⁷ Another such example is the case of Julian Assange, the founder of the multi-national media organization known as 'WikiLeaks,' which is defined by their website as, "specializ[ing] in the analysis and publication of large datasets of censored or otherwise restricted official materials involving war, spying and corruption" (WikiLeaks, 'What is WikiLeaks,' WikiLeaks, 3 Nov. 2015, <https://wikileaks.org/What-is-Wikileaks.html>, accessed 22 Oct. 2016). A hub that collects and verifies leaked confidential documents from various (and rigorously undisclosed) sources from around the world, WikiLeaks had made front-page news with regards to the American wars in Iraq and Afghanistan, as well as the realities of the US military's Guantanamo Bay detention facility, exposing many lies and illegal activities therein. WikiLeaks' Australian-born head founder, Julian Assange, is still in hiding as a refugee in London's Ecuador's Embassy, seeking political asylum from allegations of rape and sexual assault in Sweden. The Swedish case against him is based on the testimonies of two women, and comprise the illegal actions Assange had allegedly performed on their person in a period of one week in August 2010. Whether the fact that, 2010 had been the year that WikiLeaks had made (before August) an unprecedented impact on the international scene – releasing highly compromising documents and videos that expose many questionable, sometimes unlawful, practices on the US military in Iraq and Afghanistan – is related to these charges, is open to speculation, especially since Assange's avoiding the trial in his political asylum.

For Julian Assange's sexual assault and rape allegations, cf. BBC News, 'Julian Assange sex assault allegations: Timeline,' *BBC News*, 5 Feb. 2016, accessed 22 Oct. 2016. For some general accounts concerning Julian Assange and the Wikileaks story, see: David Leigh, Luke Harding, Edward Pilkington, Robert Booth, and Charles Arthur, *Wikileaks: Inside Julian Assange's War on Secrecy* (New York: Public Affairs, 2011); Benedetta Brevini, Arne Hintz, And Patrick Mccurdy (eds.), *Beyond Wikileaks: Implications For The Future Of Communications, Journalism And Society* (London: Palgrave Macmillan, 2013).

²⁰⁸ The Israeli activist group *B'Tzelem* faces a similar critique, not to say outright hatred, by the Israeli government – not unlike Israel's "ur-traitor," Mordechai Va'anunu – for "snitching" on the state of Israel's "internal affairs" to the outside world (which includes, amongst others, the state's explicit and implicit enemies).

After the NGO *B'Tzelem* had testified in front of the UN Security Council with regards to the realities of the Israeli occupation and illegal settlement policies in the West Bank and East Jerusalem, dispossessing thousands of Palestinians from their homes and/or disconnecting them from their sources of livelihoods and allowing right-wing Messianic Jews to settle there, effectively usurping "the Palestinian place under the Israeli sun." In response to this testimony, Israel's Prime Minister, Benjamin Netanyahu, has said, predictably, "what these organizations cannot achieve through democratic elections in Israel, they try to achieve by international coercion." The head of the coalition in Israel's Parliament, David Bitan, has also said in an

interview that these things relayed to the UN by B'Tzelem's chair, Hagai El-Ad, are an "explicit breach of trust by an Israeli citizen against the state, and as such he should find himself another citizenship." Cf. Jonathan Lis, 'Coalition Chairman Threatens to Strip Citizenship of Israeli Activist Who Criticized Occupation at UN,' *Haaretz* 12 Oct. 2016, <http://www.haaretz.com/israel-news/1.748609>, accessed 22 Oct. 2016.

Mordechai Va'anunu, whose name is synonymous in the state of Israel with 'traitor' – to this day police have to handle cases of sporadic beatings of Israeli citizens that look like him – has been indicted on treason charges for having exposed the extent of the state of Israel's nuclear program by leaking photos and information to the UK newspaper *The Sunday Times*. Not affiliated with any government, Va'anunu – a physicist who worked in the State of Israel's top secret nuclear facility in Dimona – consistently claimed to have released this footage for his concern for human life and the danger of this "powder keg" that was being developed in the Middle East. Attacked by the same logic, he is vilified for having "told on the state of Israel" to foreign press, while, in a larger perspective, so many other countries also hold nuclear weapons and so have no moral privilege over the Israeli government. That this fact was used to delegitimize Va'anunu's actions from an ethical perspective shows precisely the logic of the "all" – and its violence – that I am addressing here.

The coward – unlike the hero – can never be justified from the position of the "all," for their essentially limited or finite freedom to testify, and are refused any moral sympathies for having "lived to tell" rather than having the "courage" to either keep silent and having faith, working through internal channels (though Va'anunu's treatment by the state, which was in many ways illegal, had proved exactly to what extent these "internal channels" were committed to any kind of justice in this matter), and/or becoming the sign of the telling by performing some kind of self-sacrifice in the name of his testimony. The illegality of his treatment includes his being kept in solitary confinement for 11 out of the 18 years of prison he has served, and even once out, his phone conversations are all monitored, his living conditions severely limited and monitored, his internet access also very restricted, and his passport suspended by the government, effectively keeping him in a "state lockdown." For more on Va'anunu's story, cf. Avner Cohen, 'Nuclear Whistle-blower Vanunu Is Israel's Edward Snowden,' *Haaretz*, 17 Sep. 2015, <http://www.haaretz.com/opinion/premium-1.676206>, accessed 22 Oct. 2016; Jonathan Cook, 'Why Israel is still afraid of Mordechai Vanunu,' *The Electronic Intifada*, 28 Jun. 2004, <https://electronicintifada.net/content/why-israel-still-afraid-mordechai-vanunu/5134>, accessed 22 Oct. 2016; Yoel Cohen, *Whistleblowers and the Bomb: Vanunu, Israel & Nuclear Secrecy* (London: Pluto Press, 2005).

²⁰⁹ Jonathan Topaz, 'Kerry: Snowden a 'coward ... traitor',' *Politico*, 28 May 2014, <http://www.politico.com/story/2014/05/edward-snowden-coward-john-kerry-msnbc-interview-nsa-107157>, accessed 17 Oct. 2016 [my underline].

It is interesting to note that in the same interview, John Kerry compares Edward Snowden to Daniel Ellsberg, the first American "whistleblower" that revealed to the public classified documents concerning the way the governments of Lyndon Johnson and even John Kennedy consistently lied to the public, and often to Congress, in order to maintain a war they knew was almost certainly unwinnable. In an interview given after these above remarks by John Kerry, Ellsberg refers to Kerry's comparison (designed to vilify Snowden) that, "there are many a patriot – you can go back to the Pentagon Papers with Dan Ellsberg and others who stood and went to the court system of America and made their case." In response to this – possibly ignorant, arguably disingenuous – comparison, Ellsberg says the following about just what sort of justice system Snowden would "man up" to, by recalling the following from his own trial:

[...] when I finally heard my lawyer ask the prearranged question in direct examination – *Why did you copy the Pentagon Papers?* – I was silenced before I could begin to answer. The government prosecutor objected – *irrelevant* – and the judge sustained. My lawyer, exasperated, said he "had never heard of a case where a defendant was not permitted to tell the jury why he did what he did." The judge responded: *well, you're hearing one now*.

This incident perhaps furthers my point concerning the hatred – and its attending, absolute moral judgment – that is covered-over-while-still-operating even within so-called "impartial systems" of justice. Just like in cases of police excessive force – to which I will turn momentarily in analyzing the Black Lives Matter movement in the U.S. – there is an amount of discretion that any system must allow, and can, implicitly rely on while explicitly denying this reliance. The hatred towards traitors – as Ellsberg's case shows (he was only acquitted once it was revealed that the government had pursued illegal means in building the case against him) – is common and assumed, perpetrated and relied-upon, and yet remains inaccessible to critique from within this system. That this hatred can penetrate even the most "impartial" systems of justice does not, in my view, show that these systems are not sufficiently "just," but that their definition and approach to questions of justice are already implicated in a denied violence that they must assume, and cannot see, and surely cannot change even with the "best" of intentions. Indeed, these issues will continuously be perpetrated unseen and unknown unless a betrayal brings them – and not always successfully – to the surface. Cf. Daniel Ellsberg, 'Daniel Ellsberg: Snowden Would Not Get a Fair Trial – and Kerry is Wrong,' *The Guardian*, 30 May 2014, <https://www.theguardian.com/commentisfree/2014/may/30/daniel-ellsberg-snowden-fair-trial-kerry-espionage-act>, accessed 17 Oct. 2016.

²¹⁰ Friedrich Nietzsche, 'On Truth and Lie in an Extra-Moral Sense,' *The Portable Nietzsche*, ed. and trans. Walter Kaufman (New York: Penguin Books, 1982), pp. 43-44

²¹¹ A short list might be in order here; for brevity sake, I am listing only the police killings that targeted *unarmed* African-american individuals. In the vast majority of these cases, either the officers involved were not brought to trial, or exonerated for various reasons; only in one case was the officer involved charged with murder: Trayvon Martin shot and killed by Security Guard George Zimmerman (Florida, February 2012); Dontre Hamilton shot and killed by Officer Christopher Manney (Milwaukee, April 2014); Eric Garner strangled to death (while yelling he cannot breathe) by Officer Daniel Pantaleo (New York, July 2014); John Crawford III shot and killed by Sean Williams and David Darkow (Ohio, August 2014); Michael Brown Jr. shot and killed by Officer Darren Wilson (Missouri, August 2014); Ezell Ford shot and killed by Officers Sharlton Wampler and Antonio Villegas (California, August 2014); Dante Parker repeatedly electrocuted (via Taser) to death while in police custody (California, August 2014); Tanisha Anderson's head was slammed against the pavement by Officers Scott Aldridge and Bryan Myers (Ohio, November 2014); Akai Gurley was shot and killed by Officer Peter Liang (New York, November 2014); 12 year-old Tamir Rice was shot and killed by Officers Timothy Loehmann and Frank Garmback (Ohio, November 2014); Rumain Brisson was shot and killed by Officer Mark Rine (Arizona, December 2014); Jerame Reid was shot and killed by Officers Braheme Days and Roger Worley (New Jersey, December 2014); Tony Terrell Robinson Jr. shot and killed by Officer Matthew Kenny (Wisconsin, March 2015); Phillip White wrestled to the ground and then had a police attack dog assault him by Officers Rich Janasiak and Louis Platania – the names of the officers involved had to be released by the "hacktivist" group Anonymous after their names were kept from publication (New Jersey, March 2015); Eric Harris shot and killed by Officer Robert Bates (Oklahoma, April 2015); Walter Scott shot and killed by Officer Michael Slager (South Carolina, April 2015); Freddie Gray beaten and placed unsecured in the back of a van by officers Caesar Goodson, William Porter, Brian Rice, Edward Nero, Garrett Miller, and Alicia White, leading to a spinal injury that resulted in a Coma, and then led to his death (Maryland, April 2015); Philando Castille shot and killed by Jeronimo Yanex (Minnesota, July 2016); Alton Sterling shot and killed – while on the ground in point blank range – by officers Howie Lake and Blane Salamoni (Louisiana, July 2016). (...)

²¹² Patrisse Cullors, Opal Tometi and Alicia Garza, 'About the Black Lives Matter Network,' *Black Lives Matter*, accessed 20 July 2016, <http://blacklivesmatter.com/about/>.

²¹³ For example, see the case of Ramsey Orta, who filmed the choking to death of Eric Garner by Police in 2014; cf. 'Two Years After Eric Garner's Death, Ramsey Orta, Who Filmed Police, Is Only One Heading to Jail,' *Democracy Now!*, 13 July 2016, http://www.democracynow.org/2016/7/13/two_years_after_eric_garner_s (accessed 20 July 2016). Another example is the officer who shot and killed Walter Scott; cf. Jeet Heer, 'The Killing of Walter Scott Sheds Light on the Problem of Police Lying,' *New Republic*, 8 April 2015, <https://newrepublic.com/article/121486/walter-scott-killing-video-sheds-light-police-lying> (accessed 20 July 2016).

²¹⁴ Sarah Stein, 'Butler Talks Philosophy of Nonviolence,' *Yale News*, 31 March, 2016, <http://yaledailynews.com/blog/2016/03/31/butler-talks-philosophy-of-nonviolence/>, accessed 24 July, 2016.

²¹⁵ George Yancy and Judith Butler, 'What's Wrong with 'All Lives Matter'?', *The New York Times: The Opinion Pages*, 12 January 2015, <http://opinionator.blogs.nytimes.com/2015/01/12/whats-wrong-with-all-lives-matter/> (accessed 20 July 2016).

²¹⁶ Judith Butler, 'Endangered/Endangering: Schematic Racism and White Paranoia,' in Robert Gooding-Williams (ed.), *Reading Rodney King/reading Urban Uprising* (New York: Routledge, 1993), p. 17.

²¹⁷ 'What's Wrong with All Lives Matter'?

²¹⁸ Unfortunately, I cannot do justice to the contemporary issue of mass-immigration from second/third world countries to the West, and how the latter treats of this issue. I can only point out a structural similarity by using this "valve" figure, and offer a possible narrative that would have to be far more thoroughly researched. My narrative seen the expansion/dissemination of Christianity – via/as liberal democracy or capitalism, it matters little here – as extending the operation of this valve on a global scale. What happens? The "west" reaches out to places of "incivility" and "injustice" (George W. Bush went the extra mile and called this animal by its name – 'evil'), and establishes, let's be naïve here, the rule of law and civilization. The country itself, then, experiences tremendous turmoils and bloodshed, a near catastrophic destruction of its infrastructure, and then left to its own devices. What this does is, effectively, place on the entire country that which the Christian individual places upon himself: regardless of what's "going on *inside* there," an external ideal (of, again being naïve, 'equality' and 'freedom') is being imposed through various "sanctions" (economic, military, etc.). Now the "newly liberated" individuals of this country are left in the same position that guilt puts the various "affects" of a Christian believer in: they need to reconcile themselves to this ideal, or die trying. Conceived as a "valve," hence, this new Western-imposed "national guilt" cannot tolerate its various 'individuals' to simply – indeed *cowardly* – leave it behind, any more than the humble Christian can allow her hatred and irreconciliation to leave the all-reconciling constraints of guilt. Hence, it is perhaps not a surprise that – despite the monstrous irony of the situation – the West will resist refuges and immigrants

from the same places that it “civilized” (or destroyed), and consider this resistance, on a deep level, *moral*: they should have stayed and reconciled themselves to the “new order,” just as, within me, I reconcile myself to the Christian ideal. The fact that immigrants and refugees come to Europe wearing their ‘socio-economic’ (and political) destitution “on their sleeves,” only makes them more remarkable and, hence, more upsetting to that which tries to make all marks disappear; it is, perhaps, not unlike the occasional “nigger” (or “cunt”) that “habitually decent” folk blurt out in times of great stress or passion, or like allowing one’s fart to be released while others are there to smell it. How dare these immigrants be so weak – so vain an unself-sacrificing – so as to assail “us” with their abject existence, and “after all we did for them”.. It is crucial to understand the real psychological tension here, since it is through this ressentimental-engine – that allows one to sacrifice others in what is (purportedly) the same violence that she applies on herself – that ‘humanity’ betrays both its violence and its justification for it.

In a nut-shell, this is a logic similar to what Hanoch Levine, an Israeli playwright, wrote in his Israel-Palestinian parable called *Malkat Ha’ambatia* (the Queen of the Bathroom), where a woman takes over the bathroom of a shared house, and proceeds to not let the “cousin” (this moniker specifically alludes to the Israeli-Arab or the Palestinian), who is both “too uncivilized” in using the bathroom and “too dirty,” from entering it (of course, the “cousin” might have been cleaner had he been able to use the bathroom in the first place; also, of course, he gets “dirtier” in time). I do wish to stress here, however, that this issue speaks a lot less of some “moral cynicism” on the part of the “queen” and a lot more on the limitations that her “comfort zone” places upon her ability to self-criticize, to see the “death/dirt of the other” as *her responsibility*. For the text in Hebrew, cf. Hanoch Levin, “Malkat Ambatia,” *Hanoch Levin*, ed. Neora Shem Shaul <http://www.hanochlevin.com/sketches1-03/p93>, accessed 24 January 2017.

²¹⁹ As far as morality is concerned, one the most crucial unknowns is this: what was the “inner process” of thought that lead police officers in North America, time and again, to make that split-second decision – that their lives are threatened and that, therefore – that they must use lethal force. And this remains the case even in “cathartic” moments when they feel – as might be said of the Rodney King incident – that they finally have the upper hand, taking revenge for this constant threat that is still, that is always, in the “background” so-to-speak. Is in an “intentional” racism that is being tactically denied, or what Butler calls a “racist episteme” that is *strategically* denied? Is it an unintentional racism that is being suppressed? There are even harder questions to be asked: is this decision the commonsensical response deriving directly from the experience – of course always mediated by community – of a police officer in the US? The American society/government’s (official and unofficial) policies concerning crime and poverty are *undergone* by the police officer, who has to solve or at least subdue these problems (when they flare-up and become “a police matter”), and yet wields no authority to change them. What if these very policies – as well as the definition of justice they appeal to – are already evincing a racism, an injustice? In that case, picking (on) police officers (or ‘police culture’) as solely responsible for these killings, might be scapegoating an easy target, the (visible) sign/symptom, while a larger issue remains unaddressed (and unaffected). The police officer, in short, becomes the vanity that takes the blame – a blame in which antipathology can certainly identify an injustice, sympathizing with these police officers’ feelings of indignation.

²²⁰ Franz Fanon, *Black Skin, White Masks*, trans. Charles Lam Markmann (London: Pluto Press, 2008 [1967]), p. 84. Cited in *Endangered/Endangering: Schematic Racism and White Paranoia*, p. 17.

²²¹ Historian Peter Kolchin indeed claims that “[t]he initial demand for labor [in the early British colonies of North America] was precisely that – for labor – and was largely color-blind” (Peter Kolchin, *American Slavery 1619-1877* (New York: Hill and Wang, 1993), p. 7).

²²² For some works that argue in this direction, cf. Travis Glasson, *Mastering Christianity: Missionary Anglicanism and Slavery in the Atlantic World* (Oxford: Oxford UP, 2011); Jennifer Glancy’s *Slavery in Early Christianity* puts slavery – and particularly (and this is addressed particularly to Butler) to the slave’s body – as the unofficial pivot in/of early Christianity, going as far back as the Lord and Savior Himself, cf. Jennifer A. Glancy, *Slavery in Early Christianity* (New York: Oxford UP, 2002); Donald G. Mathews, ‘The Methodist Mission to the Slaves, 1829-1844,’ Paul Finkelman (ed.), *Religion and Slavery* (New York: Garland Publishing, 1989), pp. 511-527; Also instructive here is the chapter titled ‘The Moral Philosophy of Slavery’ in: William Sumner Jenkins, *Pro-Slavery Thought in the Old South* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1935), pp. 200-241.

²²³ J. Kameron Carter, *Race: A Theological Account* (New York: Oxford UP, 2008), p. 3 [my underline]

²²⁴ I would hazard saying that the difference between my investigation and Carter’s bears less on the materials we are, respectively, looking at, and more on the ‘Why?’ question that underwrites our investigations. With Carter, the focus is, indeed like mine, on establishing a methodology to handle this “lacuna” (*Race*, p. 3), but this methodology is geared towards a reformulation of Christianity itself, “executing a new theological imagination for the twenty first century” (*ibid*, p. 4). For me, as a Jewish antipathologist, the issue is less to “save Christianity” from these threats, and more to interject something into it that might help “catch it in the act,” not giving it new ideals to pursue, but exposing the violence with which it pursues them, and to question this violence responsibly.

²²⁵ Carter hardly ever discusses Nietzsche directly, and never addresses the Genealogy, with which I am here primarily concerned. Indeed, the “self risk” with which, after the example of Paul Tillich, Carter associates with Nietzsche, results in Carter identifying Nietzsche as a “Christian [rather than anti-Christian] thinker.” Carter associates this “self-risk” with Jesus Christ, hence concluding that “Nietzsche indicates a retrieval of the meaning of the divinity of Christ [...] insofar as Christ’s divinity is his courage” (ibid, p. 185).

But what kind of courage and self-risk could Christ be said to possess when he is, in fact, Divine, when he is assured a place at the side of God, as God’s Son, in the Kingdom of Heaven once he had exhausted His sacrificial gift to the world? I would submit that there is a strong, indeed ethico-metaphysical difference here between self-sacrifice in view of Divine Absolution, and self-risk in view of, well, pure “becoming” as Nietzsche would have it. This point also relates to Nietzsche’s approach to time, which is decidedly not Christian, since it refuses any convergence or coherence to time that would revoke the primacy of chance, of the “dice-throw” of thought with regards to an (unknown and inaccessible) “fate.” Jesus’ “courage” to self-sacrifice himself is not the Nietzschean courage for the simple reason that the former had been always already absolved of all ethical responsibility, of all *true* risk, and, hence, sports a courage that is far more fitting that of a diligent worker on an established path rather than that of a true path-breaker. And, of course, Nietzsche, including his Zarathustra, are not evangelical in any way; the abhor followers, and their “message” culminates in a singular divergence rather than a universal convergence.

²²⁶ Steering clear of metaphysics – but, of course, risking by that an uncritical acceptance of the Hegelian dialectic (and the antisemitism that, to paraphrase Heidegger, gives “force” to its ‘spirit’) – Butler considers the “epistemic” problem as a historical-knowledge problem, rather than, as Carter puts it, a “theological” problem of whiteness” (ibid, ibid [my underline]).

²²⁷ In a similar way to Jesus Christ leaving his Jewish/Oriental “body” behind as he ascends through a Christian/Occidental ‘spirit’ (ibid, p. 6), these obstacles also need to find their proper place, to be left behind. Sadly, neither ‘Jew’ in the world nor ‘Black’ in America seem to be willing to simply equalize themselves, and, subsequently, vanish from the historical scene, that is, from the Western “*episteme*.”

²²⁸ I allude here specifically to James Yerkes’ famous book/dissertation on the subject, particularly what he calls “the incarnation principle” as the means or motor – which to Hegel means ground, telos and ‘spirit’ – of “reason” in and of itself. Cf. James Yerkes, *The Christology of Hegel* (Albany: SUNY Press, 1983).

²²⁹ The term “moral ontology” is used by Charles Taylor’s own “genealogy” of the Western Subject/Self. To Taylor, moral ontology is treated vis-à-vis “the ‘background picture’ lying behind our moral and spiritual intuitions”; which, to Taylor, means “the moral ontology which articulates these intuitions” (*Sources of the Self*, p. 8). Content to stay at this – internalized, affective – level of “intuitions, Taylor further admits that what lies at bottom of “our moral ontology” is common to most all of “us moderns.” Taylor, hence, betrays a complete reconciliation with what Nietzsche complains of as “the victory of resentment,” saying,

[...] The moral world of moderns is significantly different from that of previous civilizations. This becomes clear, among other places, when we look at the sense that human beings command our respect. In one form or another, this seems to be a human universal; that is, in every society, there seems to be some such sense. The boundary around those beings worthy of respect may be drawn parochially in earlier cultures, but there always is such a class. And among what we recognize as higher civilizations, this always includes the whole human species. (ibid, p. 11 [my underline]).

Thus, in Taylor’s (predominately Hegelian) view, or “genealogical method”, “respect” has remained the same throughout all times and places, with the advantage of modernity being having made it a universal principle. My argument takes issue with this genealogy – or, more precisely, with the ‘Why?’ that attends it – not only for its rampant use of “we” and “our” in its, supposedly temporal-historical arguments; but primarily due to this mere “difference in coverage” that Taylor assumes (much like he assumes the universality of the ‘human’) to constitute the historico-moral difference. With Nietzsche’s genealogy, a true difference – on an ethico-metaphysical scale – comes to upset this narrative background “*picture*” (remember Hegel’s *Bild-ung*), a difference that puts the “modern” universal respect for ‘Man’ devolves on the category of ‘Man,’ itself not one of “coverage” (of already existing “humans”) but, just as much, one of power in constituting and defining the “human” in accordance with a particular theology (with which Taylor – as he, *admirably*, makes no secret of – is in general agreement; ibid, p. 13).

It is even clearer how “modernity’s moral ontology” treats of signs of difference, in another Hegelian-sounding assertion that Taylor makes when he writes that “moral ontology” remains implicit until “some challenge forces it to the fore” (ibid, p. 9). First, the “internal,” hence, rarely shows itself unless in the face of an external difference, against which it “asserts itself.” The challenge must, then, come with a force that – on the political/state level – can only ever express itself in a non-state-sanctioned violence; but then, of course, always has recourse to violently suppressing this violence without ever coming to terms with its claims and causes. Second, if Taylor himself is, as he says, about to challenge the modern “moral ontology,” I

wonder how exactly does he believe he can force it to come out of hiding; what kind of power does Taylor himself possess to effect this “recognition”?

In this sense, the famous American “policy” – repeated in so many Hollywood products – that states that “the US government does not negotiate with terrorists” proves particularly instructive (Yonah Alexander and Michael B. Kraft, *Evolution of U.S. Counterterrorism Policy, Vol. 1* (Westport: Praeger Security International, 2008), p. 1076). If the state had already found a “solution” to this exacting eruption of difference – a defensive argument ready to justify all difference-suppression as “peace keeping” or “homeland security” – how in the world would its own “moral ontology” (not to mention the ethico-metaphysical “theology” that it is based on) ever attend its others, its “differents”, if not by a self-sacrificial violence that would give this same administration the moral right to “self-defend” or “stand its ground” and annihilate the source of the “challenge”? It would seem that every such difference-wielding entity (individual or group, though the real violence was always already done to the affects here) *would have to sacrifice itself*, or be reconciled to this sacrificial structure, in advance; which of course is also ironic considering a protest whose name is “black lives matter.”

²³⁰ Cf. Max Weber, *The Protestant Ethic and the Spirit of Capitalism*, trans. Talcott Parsons (London and New York: Routledge, 1992), pp. 107, 118.

²³¹ Written in a letter to Lavater, quoted and translated by Hannah Arendt in: ‘The Tradition of Political Thought,’ *The Promise of Politics* (New York: Schocken Books, 2013), p. 41.

²³² Perhaps the most famous and influential figure that can be brought to give an example of such a structural blindness is Alasdair MacIntyre. In his influential *After Virtue*, he stages a “stand-off” between Nietzsche and Aristotle; or rather, he is staging a tactical defense against a Nietzschean attack that threatens the “rejection and refutation of modern moralities” (cf. Alasdair MacIntyre, *After Virtue* (Notre Dame: University of Notre Dame Press, 1984), p. 257). Indeed he conceives of Nietzsche merely negatively, and not without a certain hint of indignation at this fact: in this battle, “[o]thers may have to succeed by virtue of the rational power of their positive arguments; but if Nietzsche wins, he wins by default” (ibid, ibid).

This wholly negative conception of Nietzsche’s philosophy – whose *antichristian* character is precisely what, as I try to show, marks it as (excessively) positive – betrays its Christian metaphysics in MacIntyre’s interpretation of Nietzsche: “Nietzschean man, the *Übermensch*, the man who transcends, finds his good nowhere in the social world to date, but only in that in himself which dictates his own new law and his own new table of virtues” (ibid, ibid [my emphasis]). Hence, MacIntyre cannot see Nietzsche in any other way than as an instance of “the conceptual scheme of liberal individualist modernity” (ibid, p. 259) where Nietzsche’s *übermensch* “represents individualism’s final attempt to escape from its own consequences” (ibid, ibid).

The metaphysical framework from which MacIntyre proceeds is, though never admitted as such, betrayed from the very beginning in his attempt to reinstate the lost unity and comprehension of moral thought (ibid, p. 2). Since this comprehension the cohering of “our moral concepts,” MacIntyre never supplies a reason why such unity should be sought in the first place, unless it be the absolute value of finding a “rational way of securing moral agreement in our culture” (ibid, p. 6). The problem is that “moral disagreements” abound, producing “debates [...] that [...] can find no terminus” (ibid, ibid). Not only that, but the historical narrative that MacIntyre is presupposing soul (which, still not saying ‘metaphysics,’ he himself likens to Hegel’s; ibid, p. 3) looks very much like the Christian narrative of the. Thus, for one, the reason for this interminable moral discord in (the “fallen” state of) modernity is that, “the language of morality passed from a state of order to a state of disorder” (ibid, p. 11); and, second, the ‘I’ is seen as a kind of ‘subject’ of a (‘historical’) narrative: “[Man] becomes through his history, a teller of stories that aspire to truth” (ibid, p. 216).

This ‘narrative definition’ of ‘man’ is, indeed, the great ethical equalizer in MacIntyre’s unstated metaphysics; not only is it the narrative that makes him [sic] accountable to the ‘truth’ of his own story, but is also “one who can always ask others for an account, who can put other to question” (ibid, p. 218). Without this narrative “interlocking” and “continuity,” “accountability” ceases to be reasonable, or “intelligible” (ibid, ibid).

Nietzsche, however, would not conceive of the matter of justice (and value) in these metaphysical terms: there is no ‘unity’ to the *übermensch* since it is no longer in unity or (metaphysical) closure that s/he finds justification. It is, rather, something other that speaks a transformation “in” the *übermensch*, but not so as to express his/her real subjectivity or truth, but as a redeployment or dissolution of this very unity, an opening to difference which Nietzsche conceived of as a “throw of the dice.” This is not the refusal of values nor of justice, but the articulation of a justice that appeals to something beyond closure, whether it be the closure of ‘narrative’ (Hegel; MacIntyre), or that of the “individual.” Nietzsche’s critique of modernity’s moral conceptions was not, as MacIntyre alludes time and again, that they were untenable or untrue; Nietzsche was the last to reject the necessity of masks. His critique was precisely that, in following from a metaphysical position of *ressentiment*, it seeks to cohere justice – whether via ‘God’, ‘Spirit’, ‘Narrative’ or ‘social consensus’ – in reaction to the “unintelligible” threat that inevitable underwrites its own justification. To read Nietzsche as an “individualist” is precisely to deploy the metaphysics of reconciliation so as to efface the beyond towards which the *über* was always beholden.

Unsurprisingly, MacIntyre's reading of Nietzsche recalls that of Heidegger – another Christian metaphysician without his knowledge...

Let me add just one more comment: *after* writing the above, I came across the third edition of MacIntyre's *After Virtue*, which included a new Prologue where he reflects back on his ideas then and now. I was surprised (but also not) to find out that, from an Aristotelianism that completely avoids the questions of metaphysics, MacIntyre had "become" a Thomist, who, as MacIntyre says (still not aware of the irony of his deeply Christian "image of thought") "in some respects a better Aristotelian than Aristotle." Now, as MacIntyre says, taking Thomas Aquinas' lead (Christian; Systematic; *Theological*), he has a deeper understanding of his former Aristotelianism by understanding (Thomas Aquinas' Christian interpretation of) Aristotle's metaphysics: "I had now learned from Aquinas that my attempt to provide an account of the human good purely in social terms, in terms of practices, traditions, and the narrative unity of human lives, was bound to be inadequate until I had provided it with a metaphysical grounding." (MacIntyre, 'Prologue: After Virtue after a Quarter of a Century,' *After Virtue: A Study in Moral Theory* [Third Edition, 2007], p. xi).

I can only applaud MacIntyre's honesty here, even if the "damage" done by this book – which inspired scores of moral and political philosophers (and promulgated the "tradition" of being complicit with Christian metaphysics without in the least being aware of, or acknowledging, it) – is already done, has already bred a generation of Anglo-American scholars that proceed in its original vein of this theology-by-philosophical-means. Having said that, I am mostly in agreement with MacIntyre's critiques of liberal individualism; I just think that Nietzsche, especially in a Levinatschean capacity (which is perhaps invisible from one lodged so firmly within Christian metaphysics that it took him a "quarter of a century" to realize it), does not fall in that category. To end this with a positive note, let me quote a quite "Nietzschean" attack of MacIntyre on some of contemporary liberalism's (which MacIntyre often treats as synonymous with 'modernity') more prominent and pungent figures:

[...] [T]he figure cut by present-day conservative moralists, with their inflated and self-righteous unironic rhetoric, should be set alongside those figures whom I identified [...] as notable characters in the cultural dramas of modernity: that of the therapist, who has in the last twenty years become bemused by biochemical discoveries; that of the corporate manager, who is now mouthing formulas that she or he learned in a course in business ethics, while still trying to justify her or his pretensions to expertise; and that of the aesthete, who is presently emerging from a devotion to conceptual art. So the conservative moralist has become one more stock character in the scripted conversations of the ruling elites of advanced modernity. But those elites never have the last word. (Prologue, p. xv)

It might also behoove me to mention here that J. Cameron Carter, though making no direct link with MacIntyre's texts, indeed confirms that the theology that produced racism is, indeed, "Thomist-Aristotelian" (*Race*, p. 6).

²³³ According to Christian theology, of course, none of the children are "innocent," since both are born with the stain of 'Original Sin' upon them. In fact, the coloniser's child might be said to have at least a potential "innocence," since, as Christian, s/he could aspire to be saved (by God's love, etc.), something which the – likely non-Christian – colonized child cannot lay claim to. That this privilege was supposed to only have effects in the next world misunderstands the force of the Christian 'spirit' in ways I am trying to argue against in this chapter and throughout this work.

²³⁴ United States Holocaust Memorial Museum, 'The German Churches and the Nazi State,' *Holocaust Encyclopedia*, <https://www.ushmm.org/wlc/en/article.php?ModuleId=10005206>, accessed 20 April, 2016.

Of course, the Catholic Church, under the ward of Pope Pius XII, was notoriously silent about the Holocaust, as well as about other genocides and Nazi atrocities (as Michael Phayer's research shows, the Pope knew about the Nazis' mass-extermination of Jews as early as 1942). The Catholic Pope had maintained a silence that had, in fact, given free reign to Catholics' own moral consciences, but extending the same reign to their antisemitism as well. Yet this silence was also an active one: the Vatican chose not to relay the extent of the Nazi atrocities to its bishops across Europe, who might have been more inclined to assist given that knowledge; a sin of commission that allowed the rest of Europe to be stained only with a sin of omission with regards to this, uniquely *uncanny*, situation. Thus one finds that so much more could have been done by the various Churches in Europe – since they all took their lead from Pius XII – but also that there had been no small amount of Catholics who did, in fact, assist the Jews to escape the Nazi persecutions.

Of course, an antipathological sensibility would exclaim that it was because of Christianity's malignant antisemitism that the Church had a unique responsibility towards the Jews, which did not extend to the other genocides that the Pope had been also silent about, even those that directly involved Catholics – like the Nazi persecution of Catholic Poles or the Croatian Catholics' genocide against the Serbs. This seeming "consistent neutrality" that Phayer identifies would be, in an antipathological context, insufficient and suspicious. Both Italy and France had been, at that time, mostly Catholic, and so the question as to whether the Pope's intervention might not have helped avoid some of the atrocities of Vichy and Mussolini. In France, help for Jews is shown to have been wanting of support, one that never came, from the higher ecclesiastical authorities to help the suffering Jews. Cf. Michael Phayer, *The Catholic Church and the Holocaust, 1930-1965* (Bloomington: Indiana UP, 2000).

In Italy, Zuccotti shows, the Vatican extended no help to Jews who sought refuge from Nazi persecutions, but did help members of their own clergy under similar circumstances. Cf. Susan Zuccotti, *Under His Very Windows: The Vatican and the Holocaust in Italy* (New Haven and London: Yale University Press, 2000).

The French Catholic Church under Vichy never did supply a recognition of its fault in allowing the genocide against the Jews to continue in France (and elsewhere), and having issued an apology – and at the lower level of (some) bishops – much later than the rest of Europe's Churches; cf. Patrick Henry, 'The French Catholic Church's Apology,' *The French Review* vol. 72.6 (1999), pp. 1099-1105.

In general one could perhaps say – very superficially (for this difference is largely left unexplored by my antipathology) – that Catholicism had, indeed as Hegel saw it, remained 'external' to what the Protestant saw as the 'working' of the Christian 'spirit.' As Léon Poliakov showed, to recall, there was *a theological agreement* on the radical vice that will forever stain the Jews (i.e. the accusation of Deicide, that the Jews caused the death of Jesus Christ), except there appeared a *divergence* that asked after "[...] man's right to substitute himself for God in order to punish the Jews" (*History of Antisemitism*, p. 154).

²³⁵ Whether this fiat was issued by Rawls himself, or whether he is parroting an already existing one as some kind of (ontological, epistemological) necessity, is a moot point here. In the context of the issues broached above, it will not be difficult to show that Rawls – who famously articulated an extensive philosophical presentation and defense of liberalism's approach to justice in what he calls "justice as fairness" – follows the very same metaphysical structure that I am trying to help bring to justice; to bring *this* 'justice' to justice. The latter 'justice' does not betray the same grounding essence of "subjectivity" or "constitutional democracy" that follows a symmetrical I=other metaphysical outlook; there where equality is presupposed on an ontological level (and remains uncontestable since, as Rawls emphasizes, "justice as fairness" is "political, not metaphysical"). What I said above about the force of fiat is affirmed by Rawls himself: "in a constitutional democracy the public conception of justice should be, so far as possible, independent of controversial philosophical and religious doctrines" (John Rawls, 'Justice as Fairness: Political not Metaphysical,' *Philosophy & Public Affairs*, Vol. 14.3 (1985), p. 223 [my underline]).

Of course, Rawls does not think that *this* "justification" is necessary or called for, since "the justification of a conception of justice is a practical social task rather than an epistemological or metaphysical problem" (ibid, ibid n.2 [my underline]); and yet his main tool for effecting this liberal justice – commonly known as the "veil of ignorance" procedure – is one where, according to Rawls' own account, "the parties are described as merely artificial agents who inhabit a construction" (ibid, p. 239n.21 [my underline]). Hence, a contradiction arises whereby a "practical social task" is thought through "merely artificial agents." Rawls' 'veil of ignorance' makes this explicit from the first, that there is a key principle which pre-structure (but also pre-judge) all conflicts, which is the principle of equal liberty (TJ, p. 194). If the "original position" or the "veil of ignorance" are hypothetical abstractions, they are nevertheless directed at, as Rawls says, "the practical aim of reaching reasonable agreement on matters of political justice" (Restatement, p. 30). But is the connection, the imputed or "discovered" relation between the practical aim and the abstract means to deduce/produce it, truly free of all metaphysical assumption, or is it, rather, that it can only claim this since it responds to no metaphysical difference, since it is so mired in Western metaphysics that it cannot see it as a metaphysics? Is the relation between the abstract and the concrete really to be claimed without harboring within it any metaphysical claim?

Furthermore, Rawls calls this "practical" aim one of "reconciliation" – particularly following Hegel's concept in his *Philosophy of Right* – thus following a vast tradition of Anglo-American scholars who refuse to consider Hegel, *despite Hegel*, "metaphysically" at all (cf. Adriaan T. Peperzak, *Modern Freedom: Hegel's Legal, Moral, and Political Philosophy* (Dordrecht: Kluwer Academic Publishers, 2001), pp. 5-19). Even when he treats of Kant – what Rawls calls his "Kantian constructivism" – is specifically stated to avoid Kant's epistemological and metaphysical positions, and only maintaining a "Kantianism" of analogy, of structure (*Political*, p. 224n.2). But the problem here is the same, if not more acute: how can Rawls claim to have sidestepped Kant's metaphysical project – which indeed, according to Kant himself, was the original focus of his entire 'Critical Philosophy' – without delving into this metaphysics so as to show exactly how and where this "analogy" does not smuggle into it any of what I refer to here, after Hegel, as the Kantian 'spirit' (which might possess, as I am arguing here, a "kindred spirit")?

This same inability to entertain a critical engagement with the metaphysical problematic is also evidenced by how Rawls treats of the problem of 'ideology,' which he understands in Marxist – yet another follower of Hegel's 'spirit' – terms. This is something he addresses in his Restatement, probably in response to some critiques to his original Theory. Rawls realizes that when he treats of his justice procedure – a "reflective equilibrium" whereby the principles of justice come to be formed via the *reconciliation* of all parties to the 'original position' – the 'reconciliation' at its core might come to be a mere justification of an unjust "equilibrium," a violent or oppressive 'status quo.' Against this, Rawls argues, one should always keep in mind the threat of ideology (a term borrowed from Marx which, once again, gives not a hint how it might be connected to the metaphysical problematic):

The idea of political philosophy as reconciliation must be invoked with care. For political philosophy is always in danger of being used corruptly as a defense of an unjust and unworthy status quo, and thus of being ideological in Marx's sense. From time to time we must ask whether justice as fairness, or any other view, is ideological in this way; and if not, why not? Are the very basic ideas it uses ideological? How can we show they are not? (John Rawls, *A Theory of Justice: A Restatement* (Cambridge: Belknap Press, 2001), p. 4 n.4 [my underline])

Now, Rawls never treats of this ideological problem beyond the very nominal account presented here, in this late addition to his Theory. He uses 'ideology' only to describe something like a "delusion," but then is content to make no argument about how he sees the relation between 'delusion' and 'reality' – which is itself an "epistemological" question (which Rawls already chose not to engage), hiding behind it many metaphysical assumptions (about the 'subject,' about 'agency,' about 'truth,' etc.). And so, if we follow Rawls, what can we do to enact the proper "care" that will allow us to avoid 'ideology' in such a theory of reconciliation? Rawls' answer is exemplary in this sense, since it contains so many common Western metaphysical assumptions; and it is precisely their commonality that Rawls takes as a sign of veracity (which implies a particular understanding of 'Truth' *in terms of reconciliation* – which I show here, probably *ad nauseam*, is metaphysical through-and-through). Hence, to "avoid ideology," Rawls prescribes that,

[...] the general facts [...] must be believed by citizens for good reasons; their beliefs must not be illusions or delusions, two forms of ideological consciousness. Since the beliefs we attribute to the parties are those of common sense, as we called it, and of science when not controversial, there is a decent chance most of those beliefs are accepted for good reasons. (ibid, pp. 121-122 [my underline])

Now, as careful as Rawls is to not betray any absolute claim regarding the trustworthiness of such a procedure, of such assumptions (viz. "decent chance" is not *certainly*; "most beliefs" are not *all* beliefs), we are left, once again, with a danger that is never responded to, never attended. Unless Rawls can argue for the validity and legitimacy of "common sense" and "science when not controversial" (though it's unclear whether he means something like the Nazi "phrenology," i.e. for the tenability of its scientific method, or more like nuclear energy research, i.e. for the controversy about using/developing it), we are left with the same threat of a reconciliatory ideology that can, still, promote injustice in the name of a "status quo." This very glaring tautology – reconciliation might risk us with ideology, so to avoid ideology we employ a method of reconciliation – can only be redeemed once the many metaphysical layers that it glosses over are unpacked and thickened with arguments. But this is precisely what Rawls refuses to do.

There is, however, one aspect from which Rawls' Theory of Justice is vindicated, without contradiction, as "political, not metaphysical," but this has to do with the essential role of political theory itself, as well as the function of the political theorist. Is the latter to provide only analytic and descriptive accounts of "liberal democracy," mere "observations" that provide a conceptual basis for a regime that "we" (in this case United States citizens – minus the "black" ones perhaps) all already inhabit, a kind of "reverse engineering" of a political system already in place? In order, hence, to keep his theory of justice from betraying any "metaphysics," Rawls applies what he calls "a principle of toleration" as an overall strategy that dominates, in advance, all theoretical reasoning about justice. Of course, since this principle is itself abstract, arching over Rawls' *entire* theoretical reasoning, it runs the risk of being made into an assumption beyond which nothing can any longer be recognized or acknowledged as legitimate. It is not surprising, then, that Rawls' consistent analogy to the principle of toleration treats the "historical" problematic of the Reformation, and how Catholics and Protestants, slowly, learned to abide by this principle. Rawls never stops to think, of course, whether there was some metaphysical agreement to their respective theologies that allowed them to "find" this principle; that they might have always already been reconciled to the basic metaphysical conception of justice (i.e. the humility of 'Man' as *equally* "sinful" across the board, awaiting, and geared-towards, a final, absolute reconciliation).

I will return to the question of "toleration" – and its ethico-metaphysical violence – below. For now, let me finish by remarking that the (so called "only political") abstraction of Rawls' "original position" is indeed only 'political' insofar as it, in fact, abstracts the basic structure that underlies the understanding of justice in Western liberal democracies. Whether this basic structure is, itself, free of metaphysics is unclear, since Rawls, true to his word, avoids treating the metaphysical assumptions that might underwrite it. For Rawls, it seems, 'metaphysics' is an area of contention where no final arbitration can, *in principle*, be reached (TJ, 187; 'Political not Metaphysical,' p. 230). The "original position," as an abstract, formal, and hypothetical construction and constraint, presupposes "the symmetry of every one's relation to each other" (TJ, p. 11), directly expressing what Nietzsche disdainfully calls Western thought's "democratic prejudice," and also betraying precisely what Lévinas calls a metaphysics of Sameness. It means to take the question of power out of the picture completely, as if the historical evolution of what Rawls calls "constitutional democracy" were not driven by these concerns, or, were driven out of them by some Hobbes-like "natural law" or natural necessity.

These assumptions can be defended, but this requires one to take an external stance that is most readily afforded in metaphysical inquiries. Since Rawls made the decision to not engage in such questions, he has only one more option which is to rely on some "shared intuitions" of justice, some "common sense" of justice that, he admits, might be *unique* to the

particular society that he has in mind (hence, with this move, grounding his theory on intuition and common sense, Rawls knows that a problem of *difference* – different communities with different conceptions of justice – arises that he can neither solve, nor even address; ‘Political not Metaphysical,’ p. 225).

And yet, Rawls’ Theory of Justice does betray something of its metaphysical purchase – if not engagement – when Rawls chooses to end his book with the following claim about his ‘original position:’ “to see our place in society from the perspective of this position is to see it *sub specie aeternitatis*: it is to regard the human situation not only from all social but also from all temporal points of view” (TJ, p. 514). Once again Rawls, quite nominally, defends this statement from being taken “metaphysically:” “The perspective of eternity is not a perspective from a certain place beyond the world, nor the point of view of a transcendent being; rather it is a certain form of thought and feeling that rational persons can adopt within the world” (ibid, ibid).

Of course, presupposing this rationality as somehow homogenous throughout history – as if “reason” only consists in the capacity for such *total* abstraction – is either an anthropological observation for which Rawls cannot, and does not even try, present any proof (that would require a rational observer of ancient, sometimes pre-historic times, not to mention the problem of this observer’s capacity to transmit these insight to our “present”), or betraying precisely the metaphysical assumption made by Western understanding of “reason” (but to know this Rawls would have had to enquire – like I am doing here – after the metaphysical/theological assumptions that went into constructing this idea of “Reason” as an inherent property of ‘Man’ in general, which would also explain the (far too) easy (and hence far too suspicious) oscillation between a claim to ‘eternity’ and a claim to ‘reason.’

In this sense, to conclude with a “parting shot” as it were, it is perhaps indicative that Rawls, defending his claim for basic and ‘non-metaphysical’ moral assumptions, repeatedly uses the example of the abolition of slavery (TJ, pp. 325, 444; *Restatement*, pp. 23-24), and that his overall approach to philosophical thought in this context, what he calls the “principle of toleration” above, is itself predicated, again consistently and often, on the Protestant Reformation (TJ, p. 190; *Restatement*, pp. 192-193). As he articulates quite clearly, using both examples: “We collect such settled convictions as the belief in religious toleration and the rejection of slavery and try to organize the basic ideas and principles implicit in these convictions into a coherent conception of justice.” (‘Political not Metaphysical,’ p. 228).

For some scholarly works that argue in a similar vein to mine, cf. William E. Connolly, *Why I am Not a Secularist* (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1999); Jean Hampton, ‘Should Political Philosophy Be Done without Metaphysics?’, *Ethics* vol. 99 (1989), p. 814; though I do not subscribe to the *purposes* of her paper, Schwarzenbach highlights many points that – also undercutting the so-called “communitarian-liberal debate” – show the compatibility of Rawls’ theory with Hegel’s philosophy: Sybil A. Schwarzenbach, ‘Rawls, Hegel, and Communitarianism,’ *Political Theory*, 19.4 (1991), pp. 539-571; Neil points, quite correctly, to the way that Rawls’ *Theory of Justice* oscillates between ‘political’ and ‘metaphysical’ without being able to reject one and hold to the other (something I see as a sub-problematic of Rawls’ implied, yet unargued, line of *derivation* between the ‘abstract’ and the ‘practical’): Patrick Neal, ‘Justice as Fairness: Political or Metaphysical?’, *Political Theory* 18.1 (1990), pp. 24-50.

²³⁶ Let me add only this: If Judaism has a metaphysical mission, it is less to maintain itself in a State – on a particular piece of land (what John Locke called “inclosure”) – and far more to help bring justice, by teaching and example, into the world; to be the nomadic, and noble witness of an absolute ethical charge, to face the suffering and death of the other and bear responsibility. That is why the Jews are chosen, what they are chosen for. When the ‘antisemitism’ charge is used to defend injustices of the Israeli state – supported by the sole argument that the Jews *must* have a/this state – then it is an antisemite that is making this charge. If it is a Jew that is making this charge, we have – what today, tragically befits more and more of the Israeli people – an anti-Semitic Jew. This antisemitism is, as it had always been, on the metaphysical mission to, in all senses of the expression, “run the Jews into the ground.” There was a time when Zionism still debated about whether or not the Jews should use an army in Palestine; and well before then, before Zionism came to its Palestinian obsession, a time when the idea of a Jewish soldier, willing to die for his country, was considered, by Jews themselves, to be literally laughable. There was a time when Jews could not even be imagined to participate in, much less initiate, lynch-mobs against illegal immigrants, refugees from Eritrea and Sudan, fleeing a civil war. There was a time when the “everybody else is doing it so why can’t we?” was inconceivable, even insulting to the nobility of the Jew, the nobility of Judaism’s metaphysical mission. Bringing the metaphysical question back to the table means at least recalling everything that Judaism is nowadays in danger of forgetting.

Cf. John Locke, *Two Treatises of Government and A Letter Concerning Toleration*, ed. Peter Laslett. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2012) §§32-33, pp. 290-291.

²³⁷ LN 35[5], pp. 17-18

²³⁸ Jacques Derrida, ‘Préjugés. Devant la loi,’ *La faculté de juger* (Paris : Éditions de Minuit, 1985), p. 112.

²³⁹ Nietzsche, who published the *Genealogy of Morals* in 1887, had already published many of these insights concerning morality in previous publications – *Human, all too Human* (1878); *Daybreak* (1881); *The Gay Science* (1882); *Thus Spoke*

Zarathustra (1883); *Beyond Good and Evil* (1886) – this already indicates what I will not cease from underlining in this chapter – that it is the genealogy, *as method*, that is born from, borne out by, these polemics; that the impulse to respond finds its origin and ‘justification’ precisely as a *polemical methodology*.

²⁴⁰ Cf. Barry Smith, ‘Revisiting the Derrida Affair with Barry Smith: Barry Smith, Interviewed by Jeffrey Sims’ *Sophia* 38.2 (1999), p. 155.

Barry Smith, the primary author of the letter to *The London Times* that started the ‘Cambridge Affair’, said in retrospect that “there are times where you need to go into battle for what is right” treating Derrida’s work as analogous to “something like a spiritual death, as when a psychopath throws acid on a Rembrandt painting” (‘Revisiting,’ pp. 155-156). Smith’s Letter of May 9th, 1992 to *The Times* (London) is also printed in full with the interview (ibid, pp. 165-167). Cf. also Benoît Peeters, *Derrida: A Biography*, trans. Andrew Brown, (Cambridge: Polity, 2013), pp. 446-448.

Now, indignation is one way to go, but not my way, which tries to be more Nietzschean and affirmative. Such indignation can be marked in John D. Caputo’s response to Smith’s gesture, a response which is filled with indignant exclamations: “As if anyone asked them!”; “the very idea!;” “Some gratitude!” etc. As Caputo admits, this response to Derrida is, in his mind, a “stupefying misinterpretation.” Caputo, hence, wields his own indignation against that of Derrida’s attackers, charging them with hypocrisy; cf. Caputo, John D. (ed). *Deconstruction in a Nutshell: A Conversation with Jacques Derrida*. New York: Fordham University Press, 2008, pp. 39-40, 44

Rather than moralizing against these responses – based on a certain vague set of moral assumptions which are most likely also shared by the originators of this “defensive attack” (this would be, I believe, a case where I would become, in Lévinas’ famous opening words of *Totalité et Infini*, “dupée de la morale”), my antipathology affirms them, trying to speak to their pain rather than moralize against it.

In this vein – of assuming the same morality of the attackers just turning it against them – one could also refer to the aforementioned interview and point to its inner contradictions. For example, while Smith insists that his goal was defending Eastern European philosophy from Derrida (‘Revisiting,’ p. 149), he also discredits his writings – this was used as a definitive *demonstration* of Derrida’s unworthiness in the letter – as one to whom the philosophy departments remain immune or indifferent (‘Revisiting,’ pp. 155, 159). And yet, as Derrida once remarked himself, a coherence which betrays a contradiction indicates “the force of a desire” (‘Structure, Sign and Play,’ WD, p. 279); and my aim here is, indeed, to do *justice* to this very desire. I can identify this desire – here most notably, but I believe it present in many other silencings of this kind of dangerous or immoral (at some point Barry Smith even goes as far as suggesting that it does not deserve Academic freedom; cf. ibid, p. 157) – as precisely such “metaphysical antisemitism;” and we will see, in the course of this dissertation, how these themes – viz. protecting the ‘spirit’ from death and decline/corruption (ibid, pp. 156, 157, 159); trying to stay a certain “cancerous form of Derridian thought” (ibid, p. 156; Hitler had also prided himself for isolating the “Jewish problem” in the same way Koch identified the Bacillus); protecting the substantial/material from the empty and meaningless, analogizing Derridian thought as having to do only with the apparatus and not with the “actual” (their “boat” never gets to the water; cf. ibid, 156); as well as the accusation of lack of originality (ibid, p. 147) – are all ancient metaphysical charges of Christianity towards Judaism; are all, “in a nutshell,” theologico-political backlashes.

The threat is real; but we rarely get such brilliant eruptions of this “autoimmune” response to it. Academic life, in the best liberal tradition, is upright, peaceful, fair. Those that rock the boat are not allowed to get to the Academic water, with a large part of the aversion regulated by a structure whose “invisible hand” works in more and more insidious ways; through more and more unsuspecting people and procedures.

This is how Barry Smith, in alluding to a basis for what I can only call here a new “witch-hunt” on those that *do not deserve* academic freedom, can *cite* something like the American Association of University Professors (AAUP) that conditions academic freedom on “the careful use of the scientific method and reasoned argument in the search for truth” (ibid, p. 157). Now, once again, *the more moot point* is that this is simply not true. In the text this interview refers to, neither the word ‘method’ nor any form bearing the root ‘scien’ appear on that page or any other throughout the entire document (cf. American Association of University Professors, ‘Academic Freedom and Tenure: 1940 Statement of Principles and Interpretive Comments,’ *Academe: Bulletin Of The American Association Of University Professors*, vol. 76.3 (1990), p. 37). In the ‘Responsibilities’ section of the document – the very word Smith uses as his banner against Derridian cancer – there is a reference to an older, 1987 version that, once again, contains none of the above words nor even their general gist; cf. American Association of University Professors, ‘Statement on Professional Ethics,’ *Academe*, Vol. 73.4 (1987), p. 49). The point of the “contradiction” here is even more forceful, as we are here presented with an apparently “bad citing practice” which is “not becoming” a serious academic of this stature (especially not in the context of an accusation of just this sort).

My point, however, is that this kind of automatic, unreflective violence is precisely the kind my antipathology tries to provoke and interrogate, admittedly from a resentful position; what young Hegel referred to as Judaism’s “politics of cunning weakness.” This is not at all, or not *simply*, a “struggle for power” – something that Smith himself (granted, in a rather

dissociative, unconscious manner) admits. This "threat" to 'philosophy' not only isn't a threat to philosophy (leaving philosophy departments indifferent), but it also – looking back at it 5 years later – proved to have done nothing of what that Smith was so afraid, and "rallied to fight," for ("There are still few Eastern European philosophers who are taking the trouble to study their own native traditions of exact philosophy; but this is not, I think, a consequence of Derrida"; *ibid*, 159).

If only Smith himself had taken his own 'No's to construct a new philosophical method (instead of judging Derrida from an already existing one), perhaps his attack/polemic would accord more with Nietzsche's – but no *new* 'Yes' emerges from Smith's 'No's. Smith explicitly claims this pre-existing, *methodological* 'Yes', as an argument against Derrida (and his reading of Husserl), in the same interview: "Analytic philosophy, I believe, has the right method" (*ibid*, p. 148).

Here, then, an antipathological question arises for which coherence and academic seriousness are but excuses, yes, but whose validity is no less forceful for that, only more so. Antipathology wants to look at the "value" of rigorous research not so as to blame those who hold it (over against others), but precisely to interrogate why was it that they "lost it" (pun intended).

²⁴¹ By contrast, Barry Smith had never published anything concerning Derrida, excluding 2-3 talks – that do not require precise citation or a prolonged engagement – he gave in the early 90's titled 'Jacques Derrida: Writing to Death' (Barry Smith, *Invited Lectures*, <http://ontology.buffalo.edu/smith/cv/talks.html>, accessed 12 January 2017). In the above interview Smith only ever cites other critics of Derrida in support (cf. *Revisiting the Derrida Affair*, pp. 146, 147, 151).

²⁴² I remind the reader that Nietzsche – as shown in the previous chapter – does not pursue any kind of ontologically/absolutely *grounded* 'Truth.'

²⁴³ Here the translation "impulse" is misleading, suggesting only an "inner" ('im') force ('pulse' as the participle of the Latin *pellere* – "to push, drive."

²⁴⁴ 'Utility' is ahistorical since it merely reiterates a *means-ends logic* in a socio-political setting; this logic itself presupposes the *atemporal logical causation* (as syllogistic/analytic implication), an ethico-metaphysical assumption (with regards to time) that persists even when "transposed" to the socio-political field: causality, presupposing a cohesion of time (the causal chain recreates the temporal flux by tying one 'moment' to another moment). 'Habit' is itself already an appropriation of time, as it denotes an *ontological (id)entity that remains intact throughout time* and over which time has no power; habit uses and *dominates* time without the latter having any power to interfere.

²⁴⁵ In his *Lectures on the History of Philosophy*, in the section that explains why there are diverse "philosophies," Hegel betrays these absolute values/beliefs that, in turn, give meaning and direction to the whole of thought (including, of systematic necessity, thought about *Moralität* and *Sittlichkeit*): First, the belief – concerning what he calls "the instinct of reason" – that 'Truth' is single: "[t]he Truth is [...] one; and the instinct of reason maintains this irradicable intuition or belief." Then, due to this *necessarily unquestionable* assumption, this *unhistorical value* (how can one reasonably question the defining instinct of reason without contradicting oneself?), all thought is seen to "[...] pres[s] on through hunger and through thirst towards Truth, towards knowledge itself." (LHP I, pp. 17-18). Again, Nietzsche will not reject ahistorical values, but he will object to their being assumed as total, as comprehensive; for, as such, they preclude thought from having, indeed, a *future*.

²⁴⁶ I have decided to leave the 'will to power,' as well as the 'eternal return of the same' unthematized in this dissertation. Though they will make ample appearance, I wish to avoid their conceptual (in)closure. The reason for this is that, to my reading, these are the ur-principle(s) of Nietzsche's *method*, and, as such, are more coherently *performed* than thematized; inscribed more than de-scribed. Having said that, my approach is, on the whole, similar to that of Gilles Deleuze, who describes them, together, as the principle of a synthesis of forces, not only in their "unity" (which is always only achieved when one force becomes 'victorious,' dominant (over an-other)), but also in their production of diversity, where the 'eternal return' of thought/'will' – as what Alan Bass calls an "active interpretation" – can upset and confound this domination by imposing its own (differential) force of interpretation. Cf. NP, p. 52. This 'imposition' is also the opening-up of thought to chance; the diversion and diversification of the relation of (these interpreted) forces, which is why Deleuze writes that "[c]hance is the bringing of forces into relation" whereas "the will to power is the determining principle of this relation" (*ibid*, p. 53). This is also the link with the principle of 'eternal return,' for it "presupposes a critique of the terminal or equilibrium state [i.e. taking the force that came to dominate as somehow 'ideal' or 'true'; SC]" (NP, p. 47). For the Alan Bass reference, cf. Alan Bass, *Interpretation and Difference: The Strangeness of Care* (Stanford: Stanford UP, 2006), pp. 1-33.

²⁴⁷ Nietzsche, of course, has no compunctions about affirming the victory of the "winning" force(s), as well as the defeat of the losing one(s). Such a compunction would precisely obviate his ability to be responsive (and, I claim, responsible) to this struggle.

²⁴⁸ Nietzsche's 'will to power' philosophy will always insist on this one principle that resentment and Christian morality both abhor: that any value presupposes a difference in value, and that any difference in value always presupposes a hierarchy/domination of the weaker by the stronger.

²⁴⁹ I am highlighting the mentions of ‘height’ by Nietzsche here as preparation for the discussion below. First, the German *Höhe*, the ‘high,’ figures prominently both in Nietzsche’s endorsements of ‘nobility’ and its value-originating function, and in Martin Luther’s vitriol against all forms of it (in Catholicism *and* in Judaism). Second, to allude to the fact that the German *oberst(er)* is descendent from the same Proto-Indo-European root (‘*uper*’) as the German *über*, most famously appealed-to by Nietzsche’s concept(ion) of the ‘*übermensch*.’

²⁵⁰ Cf. Nietzsche’s following passage in his Notebook of Spring 1885: “The historical sense: the capacity to divine quickly the order of rank of the valuations by which a people, a society, a man lives - the relationship of these valuations to the conditions of life; the relation between the authority of the values and the authority of the forces that are at work (the presumed relation usually even more than the actual one): being able to reproduce all this within oneself constitutes the historical sense” (LN, 35[2] (1885), p. 17)

²⁵¹ This domination is, of course, particularly pronounced in Hegel’s philosophy of history.

²⁵² Of whom the modern English psychologists do not speak, and of which ‘psychology,’ in general, prefers to remain silent.

²⁵³ Francis Hutcheson, one of the earliest of British utilitarians, extols this method as “a universal Canon to compute the Morality of any Actions” (Francis Hutcheson, ‘An Inquiry Concerning Moral Good and Evil,’ *An Inquiry into the Original of Our Ideas of Beauty and Virtue in Two Treatises*, ed. Wolfgang Leidhold (Indianapolis: Liberty Fund, 2004) 3/7/2018. <<http://oll.libertyfund.org/titles/2462>>, Section III.XI.

Even Kant’s philosophy (from which the above “7+5” example is borrowed), for all its critical aspirations to stem the excesses of both Empiricism and Rationalism, never doubted this, and stated it clearly from early on in his *Critique of Pure Reason*: “[...] properly mathematical propositions are always a priori judgments and are never empirical, because they carry necessity with them, which cannot be derived from experience” (CPR, B14; cf. also *ibid*, B15f.).

For a quick but fairly distributed account of the fundamentals of utilitarianism and its theological origins, cf. Julia Driver, ‘The History of Utilitarianism,’ *The Stanford Encyclopedia of Philosophy (Winter 2014 Edition)*, ed. Edward N. Zalta, accessed December 13, 2015, <http://plato.stanford.edu/archives/win2014/entries/utilitarianism-history/>.

²⁵⁴ Here it might be appropriate to mention that Judaism – in the eyes of Christian philosophers like Kant and Hegel – were considered to be a “statutory” religion, given to obsessive legal argumentation/interpretation concerning God’s Law, caring very little for ‘character’ or ‘intention.’

Kant, on his part, makes the distinction between morality and legality in a parallel logic to the Christian one – following Saint Paul’s – between the ‘spirit’ and the ‘letter’ (a favorite distinction in Hegel as well). For Kant, the decisive difference between them lies in *the grounds for the action*, not its conformity with the Law. The ‘spirit’ – as the comprehensive truth/substance of the moral law – provides both external obedience and an internal conviction that mirrors it; the ‘letter’ – as a mere obedience to the moral law – recognizes the latter only as an external demand, never arriving at the morality of internalizing it as an incentive or ground for action, but still holding it as external and menacing, compelling from the outside (much like the Jewish God – always angry and unforgiving, always *separate*). Kant writes the following in the *Metaphysics of Morals*:

[...] laws of freedom are called moral laws. As directed merely to external [*äußere*] actions and their conformity to law they are called juridical laws; but if they also require that they (the laws) themselves be the determining grounds of actions, they are ethical laws, and then one says that conformity with juridical laws is the legality of an action and conformity with ethical laws is its morality. The freedom to which the former laws refer can be only freedom in the external use of choice, but the freedom to which the latter refer is freedom in both the external and the internal [*äußern als innern*] use of choice (PP, p. 375/Ak. 6:214).

In the *Critique of Practical Reason* as well, Kant makes the legality-morality distinction again by focusing on the *incentive* (*Triebfeder* – literally drive-spring, what sets the (moral) drive in motion) to follow the moral law: it must not be based on a feeling (e.g. fear of an *external*, vengeful God), but be done “for the sake of the moral law alone.” In a small footnote to this paragraph, Kant adds: “Of every action that conforms to the law but is not done for the sake of the law, one can say that it is morally good only in accordance with the letter but not the spirit (the disposition).” (PP, p. 198/Ak 5:71-72 [my underline])

And, indeed, this same structure is maintained in Kant’s assessment of the Jews: “The Jewish faith, as originally established, was only a collection of merely statutory [*statutarischer*] laws supporting a political state; for whatever moral [*moralische*] additions were appended to it, whether originally or only later, do not in any way belong to Judaism as such.” (RR, p. 154/Ak 6:125 [my underline]). Kant continues,

[...] all its [Judaism’s] commands are of the kind which even a political state can uphold and lay down as coercive laws, since they deal only with external [*äußere*] actions. And although the Ten Commandments would have ethical validity for reason even if they had not been publicly given, yet in that legislation they are given with no claim at all on the moral

disposition [moralische Gesinnung] in following them (whereas Christianity later placed the chief work in this) but were rather directed simply and solely to external observance. (ibid, p. 155/Ak 6:126 [my underline])

Hegel, for his part – following, as he says, Kant’s ‘spirit’ – was even more direct; he writes the following in *The Spirit of Christianity and its Fate*: “Rights which a man sacrifices if he freely recognizes and establishes powers over himself, regulations which, in the spirit of Jesus, we might recognize as grounded in the living modification of human nature [i.e., in an individual human being] were simply commands for the Jews and positive throughout.” (ETW, p. 206). And, he continues this Jews-Jesus juxtaposition thus: “[o]ver against commands which required a bare service of the Lord, a direct slavery, an obedience without joy, without pleasure or love, i.e., the commands in connection with the service of God, Jesus set their precise opposite, a human urge and so a human need.” (ibid, ibid).

²⁵⁵ On this point I can only signal at the vast issue of ‘natural theology’ which seems to enjoy the very same fate of metaphysics in Academia: it is said to have been completely overrun and replaced by secularism and science, though this claim serves only to obfuscate an activity that started in its name and can persist quite well without it. For example, the ideas that the world is given to knowledge, that it evinces a harmony of natural laws that are abstractly representable in mathematical symbols, etc. – are not “natural” ideas, and have not been held to be true in all times and in all places (to judge this fact as lack of “progress” already betrays a metaphysical teleology of the ‘spiritual Bildung’ type).

This idea of a Whole that is given to thought/knowledge as a project to be achieved is – however “atheistic” it may be – a theological notion that merely transposes (much as the Protestant did) God’s Kingdom of Heaven and the (visible, only exclusively accessible) Catholic Church on Earth, to an invisible Kingdom on Earth, accessible to all who have Reason or Common Sense; that is, as Descartes famously commented, to all *equally*. Lévinas intimates, in this context of Western “atheism,” a telling question/accusation, “with what lesser demon or strange magician have you therefore filled your heaven, you who claim that it is empty?” (DF, p. 143).

As this idea of an equalizing characteristic was never “eternally present” – as the national and spiritual (and other) nobilities can attest to – it cannot be rid of at least the suspicion (which I shore up here to the level of an accusation) that it is fundamentally theological, born from Christianity, and furthering a metaphysics which marks a rebellion against (and, for Nietzsche, the decline of) the Jewish faith.

Jeremy Bentham is a case in point in this regard: a known “fanatic” of secularism (perhaps even exceeding that of present-day Richard Dawkins), whom his Christian amanuensis had called a “hoary headed infidel,” and whose good friend John Quincy Addams noted his consistent “tenor [...] to discredit all religion,” Bentham had advanced *his utilitarian method* (for judging all value, including “truth value”) to disprove the existence of God (something that Hume, for example, left as an “unknown”; for the Adams and Colls quotes, cf. James E. Crimmins, ‘Bentham on Religion: Atheism and the Secular Society,’ *Journal of the History of Ideas* 47.1 (1986), p. 98).

Particularly interesting here is that the reasoning given to Bentham’s intractable views on the theological subjects of God and the Soul – which Crimmins accurately describes as a “secular positivism” (relegating “God” to the same place that the Vienna Circle’s ‘Logical Positivism’ movement relegated all “Metaphysics”; ibid, ibid) – relied on a Kantian logic (not to say ‘spirit’). Kant’s Critique of Pure Reason, to recall, showed that the existence of God (and other metaphysical/ultimate questions) is beyond human perception/experience, therefore leading Kant “to refuse knowledge to make room for faith” and set a limit to Reason in the Understanding. Bentham, whose treatise on Ontology is divided between ‘inferential’ (not given to the senses) and ‘real’ (sensible) entities, shows that both (*the Christian*) ‘Soul’ and ‘God’ belong to the former. Here is what he wrote in a treatise properly called ‘A Fragment on Ontology:’

The supreme, superhuman, inferential entity is God: sanctioned by revelation; sanctioned by the religion of Jesus as delivered by the apostle Paul, is the proposition that no man hath seen God at any time. If this proposition be correct, God not being consistently with the imperfection of the human senses capable of being referred to the class of perceptible real entities, cannot, in consequence of the imperfection under which human reason labours, cannot, any more than the soul of man considered as existing in a separate state, be referred by it to any other class than that of inferential real entities as above described (Jeremy Bentham, *The Works of Jeremy Bentham Vol. 8*, ed. John Bowring (Edinburgh: William Tait, 1838-1843), p. 196.

Due to this, Bentham infers the following, owing to a classic logic of utility (avoiding ‘detriment’ to anything ‘useful’ – but *useful for the attainment of workable and reliable knowledge*, of course): “By the learner as well as by the teacher of logic, all these subjects of Ontology may, without much detriment, it is believed, to any other useful art, or any other useful science, be left the places in which they are found.” (ibid, ibid). These ‘places’ are of course, for Bentham, the ethereal – un-useful and “immaterial” – realm of “inference.”

Two things should be noticed here, for I believe they hound most avid “secularists” and self-proclaimed ‘atheist scientists:’ the first is that Bentham’s on vitriol against religion cannot be explained from within his own outlook, which would lead to a kind of a Humean “undecidability” rather than the contempt that (the Christian) religion received from Bentham. Second,

relatedly and most importantly, there is a tension between what Bentham argues (to “leave religion be” as un-useful) and his active rejection of it, his hatred towards it. This means that his negative views on religion, views that subtended very positive policy-recommendations and laws in Bentham’s thoughts, writings, and actions, became impervious to his ‘Science,’ for the latter, they were to be left alone. This, I maintain, allowed Bentham – and many like him – to continue with this animosity towards the “immaterial” which *was not conferred upon any other “un-useful” phenomenon in the world* (say, “Fiction,” or “mental illness”). Here I see a structure whose animosity betrays a deeper suppression or denial. And what could this suppression be?

To put it necessarily briefly, it is precisely this kind of structure that allows something like ‘natural theology’ to co-exist – defended by the utilitarian’s animosity – with utilitarianism (cf. Crimmins, p. 101). It is as if the Christian project and *Weltanschauung* – i.e. Christian metaphysics – had been divided in two; a kind of (begrudged, unacknowledged) “division of labor” where Bentham chose one half (though still owing to a theological view – like that which separates ‘matter/body/senses’ from ‘thought/soul/spirit’), and “natural theology” can, conveniently, choose the other. As Crimmins Astutely notes, “[Bentham’s] belief that human beings do not have a spiritual nature fosters a science unable to deal with deep inner feelings and personality” (Crimmins, p. 100); “unable” or *unwilling?* would of course be, from Bentham’s view, an irrelevant, undecidable (i.e. non-useful) question.

Of course, it was the theologian that noticed that both are compatible, and here it is enough to briefly cite the famous William Paley who, as should be predictable by now, asserts a Christian interpretation of the “soul” and the “invisible” as still compatible with the “good/use-seeking” utilitarianism of the “body” and the “sensible.” Thus Paley, in his theological writings, can maintain his utilitarianism while arguing that “the kingdom of heaven is within us” (see quote in Crimmins, p. 100); and his Moral-Political writings introduce the idea of God’s good – “Divine benevolence” – right before introducing the principle of Utility (cf. William Paley, *The Principles of Moral and Political Philosophy, Book II: Moral Obligation* (Indianapolis: Liberty Fund Inc., 2012), pp. 39-44).

In this latter work, Paley deduces God’s intention towards the happiness of Mankind by arguing from the (supposedly eternal and self-evident) fact that there is pleasure and that there are “designs” or structures – a fact which he calls “contrivance” – for its attainment. From this fact, this natural theologian can infer God’s will (towards the good of ‘Man,’ of course – which, incidentally (in a rather *Kantian* argument) is also embodies ‘the good’ *in general*; cf. *ibid*, pp. 44-49). Paley can do this precisely because, for all his animosity, Bentham left this entire area – of ‘spirit,’ of “the heart” – unexplored (and, hence, open to any number of metaphysical structures/presuppositions that a “natural theologian” like Paley could make compatible with a complete system of “theological utilitarianism.”

²⁵⁶ In the third chapter I will analyze Hegel’s conception of the difference between the basis of all (human) Right(s), which is what he calls “Person,” from a merely empty “Subject” whose essence is also shared by animals and, as such, does not deserve (or warrant) such Right(s). The issue will turn on what Hegel calls ‘particularity,’ something that, in Judaism, had been elevated as the Singular Most High that maintains its irreconcilable separation. Hence “individual” here is taken to consist of an increasingly incarnate and self-knowing ‘I’ whose spiritual progression consists precisely in the elimination of what Lévinas had referred to, as elaborated in the previous chapter, as the “*me*” that interrupts the ‘I’ and puts it in question.

²⁵⁷ This ‘One’ also provided the glue in western thought’s conception of the community. This ‘One’ follows Christian theology’s metaphysical assumptions even when stated by political theorists that claim either indifference or a motivated animosity towards Christianity itself. I will give just some short examples, first from Thomas Aquinas who shows how this *logos* plays out with regards to the Christian *theos*, and then three of modern political theory’s most influential and “canonical” thinkers: Thomas Hobbes, John Locke, and Jean-Jacques Rousseau.

For a theologian like Thomas Aquinas, the ‘good’ is given to a metaphysically similar holism as that of Hegel’s Truth/Science. ‘Good’ is given to all of Mankind equally by virtue of an identical ‘conscience,’ and this conscience is shared by the whole the the human community. This conscience gives Man access to the good/bad – what he calls ‘natural law’ – and can identify, and punish, its infractions. The latter are caused due to the mystery of original sin, as “a punishment and consequence of divine law, depriving man of his proper dignity” (ST, 1.9.6). It is by ‘conscience’ (which is always a consciousness of an infraction, a guilt) that the “good man” shows integrity of outer body and inner soul, and the wicked – only to the former.

Hence, in Aquinas, there is this “holism of the good,” so to speak, “all the way down:” first in man himself: “the good love themselves, as to the inward man, because they wish the preservation thereof in its integrity [...]. [...] Likewise they experience no clashing of wills, since their whole soul tends to one thing.” Whereas, “the wicked have no wish to be preserved in the integrity of the inward man [...] nor do they agree with themselves, on account of the gnawings of conscience” (ST 2.25.7); then in relation to the community: “all who are included in a community, stand in relation to that community as parts to a whole; while a part, as such, belongs to a whole, so that whatever is the good of a part can be directed to the good of the whole.” (ST 2.58.5); and, “a government is the more perfect according as it is more universal, extends to more matters, and attains a higher

end” (ST 2.50.1); “all who are included in a community, stand in relation to that community as parts to a whole; while a part, as such, belongs to a whole, so that whatever is the good of a part can be directed to the good of the whole.” (ST 2.58.5).

For Hobbes, the impartial equalizer was conceived as ‘Nature.’ A truly modern political scientist, he sought to describe the political community in terms borrowed from physics (cf. the prominence of Newton’s first law of motion at the very beginning of the *Leviathan*) and geometry (the very method by which the *Leviathan* was written): the social bond was predicated upon a ‘state of nature’ where the self-seeking behavior of individuals – the ‘good’ here is assumed as assuring (present and future) survival – is the one law common to all, and which, eventually, binds the community together as a way to maximize this good, assuring security and longevity through the equality of every individual’s hope of attaining them. Otherwise, as the famous saying goes, life is “nasty, brutish and short.”

John Locke repeats a similar premise in his *Second Treatise of Government* with regards to Nature, and he even spells-out how Nature relates to the idea of a single God in this manner of convergence:

[...] The state of nature has a law of nature to govern it, which obliges every one: and reason, which is that law, teaches all mankind, who will but consult it, that being all equal and independent, no one ought to harm another in his life, health, liberty, or possessions: for men being all the workmanship of one omnipotent and infinitely wise Maker; all the servants of one sovereign Master, sent into the world by his order, and about his business; they are his property, whose workmanship they are, made to last during his, not another’s pleasure: and being furnished with like faculties, sharing all in one community of nature, there cannot be supposed any such subordination among us that may authorize us to destroy another, as if we were made for one another’s uses, as the inferior ranks of creatures are for ours. Every one, as he is bound to preserve himself, and not to quit his station willfully, so by the like reason, when his own preservation comes not in competition, ought he, as much as he can, to preserve the rest of mankind, and may not, unless it be to do justice to an offender, take away [...] (‘The Second Treatise,’ *Two Treatises of Government*, Ch. II §6, pp. 270-271).

For Rousseau, the logic is yet again similar, though he mentions not God but only Nature; the part-whole logic, and the holism of the common good – which he terms “general will” (*volonté générale*) – is, however, the same. He defines the main problem of his *On the Social Contract*, as “How does one find a form of association that will defend and protect, through the entirety of its common force, the person and belongings of every associated member, while every individual, in uniting with everyone else, will still be answerable only to himself and remain as free as before” (p. 166); while this pact is summarised as such: “[e]ach of us places his person and all his power in common under the supreme direction of the general will, and we receive into our association each member as an indivisible part of the whole” (Jean-Jacques Rousseau, ‘On the Social Contract, or, Principles of Political Right,’ *The Essential Writings of Jean-Jacques Rousseau*, ed. Leo Damrosch, trans. Peter Constantine (London: Vintage Books, 2013), p. 166, 168).

²⁵⁸ Classifying the moral act as ‘unegoistic’ – that is, as one that bears on *the other’s utility* rather than my own – changes neither the metaphysical assumption, nor the theological project(ion): we are still within the confines of a metaphysically coherent Soul/Subject that evinces a *standardized calculus* of ‘good,’ and aspires to maximize it across *different* histories and culture(s). And the ethico-metaphysical assumption that betrays its Christian origins here is precisely that God’s/Absolute ‘Goodness’ is (metaphysics), and *ought* to be (ethics), “made flesh” in the world, preparing the way to a knowledge (*logos*) of God (*theos*) that is, *in principle*, accessible to *all*, and expressible as a *system* of laws presided by the absolute ideal of its closure/fulfillment. In short, like ‘God’ and “God’s point of view,” ‘utility’ – as an incarnation of God’s infinite goodness – becomes the great equalizer.

²⁵⁹ Cf. Nietzsche’s remarks on Herbert Spencer’s obverse view; GM I §3, p. 27

²⁶⁰ I.e., some overriding, absolute value or “spiritual” *telos*, whether in a Hegelian, “*wirkliche*” manner or a Kantian “*Regulatives Princip*” one.

²⁶¹ That is also why Nietzsche’s first instinct is to study this history from its traces on language itself; these traces are the limits of language, the scars of its communication with something Other than itself. The pathos of distance – a pathos that forever designates the noble’s act as a *relation* – will have to carry this mark of (distinction from) weakness in the same, gratuitous, way with which the nobles first designated the ‘bad.’

²⁶² GS Preface § 2, p. 34. The ‘Spirit’ here is Kaufman’s appropriate translation of ‘Geist’; cf. KGW 5.2:15.

²⁶³ Even in his later writings, Heidegger defines thought as a *sending* [*Geschick*] that comes from Being; metaphysics itself is “sent” on its path by Being (a “sending” that determines history – as *Geschichte* – itself). In his ‘Letter on Humanism’ one can find the following explanation that will go some way to explaining both Heidegger’s attempt to retrieve ‘ontology’ from the clutches of Hegel’s speculative metaphysics, and how this attempt constitutes the medium through which Heidegger’s “ontological reduction” of Nietzsche’s ‘will to power’ and its obsession with ‘value’ becomes glaring and instructive in Emmanuel Lévinas’ philosophy of ‘exteriority,’ particularly what he (and subsequently Levinas as well) when he treats the metaphysical problem as an ethical one that comes from beyond ‘essence,’ and this includes an entirely new and difficult approach to ‘essence’ that is neither Heideggerian nor Hegelian (i.e. a temporality no longer ‘spiritual,’ an ethics – no longer Christian): neither does ‘essence’ operate its “transcendence” in an *ek-static* manner (i.e. stretched between

the antipodes of Being and Nothing), nor is it something which carries a 'ground' that "of itself" seeks to self-actualize. Hence, the Letter brings *Dasein* back to its essence, thus regulating/authorizing the *legitimacy* of the metaphysical inquiry/question (but, of course, a "legitimacy" derived wholly from 'Truth'):

[...] "essence" is now being defined neither from *esse essentiae* nor from *esse existentiae* but rather from the ek-static character of *Dasein*. As ek-sisting, the human being sustains Da-sein in that he takes the Da, the clearing of being, into "care." But Da-sein itself occurs essentially as "thrown." It unfolds essentially in the throw of being as a destinal sending [*Seins als des schickend Geschicklichen*]. (Heidegger, 'Letter on Humanism,' *Pathmarks*, p. 249 [my underline])

Furthermore, in the 'On the Question of Being' (his letter to Ernst Jünger), Heidegger writes of absence, of what vanishes/disappears – something which Nietzsche will always address through his philosophy of becoming ('will to power') – precisely under an overarching umbrella of presence. This presence, moreover, is a destiny – not in the sense of *Dasein's* *Schicksal* ('fate') any longer, but – the *Geschick* of Being itself that "sends" metaphysics itself on its "path." In this sense, the problem of metaphysics is treated as a "given" issued forth by Being itself.

The disappearance, the absence, is determined from out of a presence and through such presence. Such presence precedes all that disappears, surpasses it. Thus, wherever beings disappear, there prevails not only such beings taken on their own, but, in an authoritative manner, something else. Everywhere the surpassing that returns to beings, the "transcendens pure and simple" (Being and Time, §7), is "the being" of beings. Surpassing is metaphysics itself, where this name now refers not to a doctrine and discipline of philosophy, but rather to the fact that such surpassing is "given". It is given to the extent that it is brought onto the path of its prevailing, i.e., destined. The incalculable fullness and suddenness of what unfolds as surpassing is called the destiny of (objective genitive) metaphysics. (Heidegger, 'On the Question of Being,' *Pathmarks*, trans. William McNeill (Cambridge: Cambridge UP, 2010), p. 312)

²⁶⁴ If Nietzsche intends to rehabilitate what he calls in his *Genealogy* "the instinct of freedom," it is precisely to combat that which had – through the ethico-metaphysical apparatus of resentment – become an infinity of self enclosure; a fulfillment wherein Truth can conquer more and more of existence until, finally, it can redeem it. The "temporal break" – between history and pre-history – in the Nietzschean will to power, when read as a gesture on the metaphysical battleground that never left Nietzsche's sight, are the "finitude" that the what he calls "the theological instinct" seeks to abolish or leave behind in the name of a divinely ordained license and command to incarnate within oneself the infinite freedom of God. See previous chapter for the Lévinasian concept of "finite freedom."

²⁶⁵ WTP Book III §556 (1885-1886), p. 301

²⁶⁶ OB, p. 8

²⁶⁷ Cate Curtis, *Friedrich Nietzsche* (New York: Overlook Press, 2005), pp. 39-40.

²⁶⁸ Nietzsche showed, from an early age, a rigid obedience to the rules and norms of his surrounding institution, be it family, school, or society at large. Indeed, in his youth, this attitude won him scorn from his schoolmates for his fanatical devotion to the rules as such. One such story is useful to mention here: upon one particularly rainy day, when all of his peers ran to their homes at the end of the school day, Nietzsche – citing to his puzzled and worried mother the school's regulations for a student's appropriate manner of departure (which should be calm, and precludes running) – made his way back home calmly and slowly, soaked to the bone. In addition, Nietzsche was notably enthusiastic and creative with regards to his religious studies (mostly Protestant Christianity), having gained the nickname "the little pastor" from his school peers. Cf. Carl Pletsch, *Young Nietzsche: Becoming a Genius*, p. 34)

²⁶⁹ The German *eigen*, here meaning "suitable for," derives from *Eigen* which means "(one's) own," or "one's propriety."

²⁷⁰ Compare with Lévinas: "The task is to conceive! of the possibility of a break out of essence. To go where? Toward what region? To stay on what ontological plane? But the extraction from essence contests the unconditional privilege of the question "where?"; it signifies a null-site [non-lieu]" (OB, p. 8)

²⁷¹ Unlike Hegel, however, this "progression" admits of no direction; Nietzsche, hence, refuses to impose a definite spiritual telos on this "enigma."

²⁷² In the *Groundwork*, Kant articulates the difference between the categorical imperative as the (moral) law (of the will) and mere (moral) "principles;" in the latter,

[...] what it is necessary to do merely for achieving a discretionary purpose can be regarded as in itself contingent and we can always be released from the precept if we give up the purpose; on the contrary, the unconditional command leaves the will no discretion with respect to the opposite, so that it alone brings with it that necessity which we require of a law" (Kant, 'Groundwork of the Metaphysics of Morals,' PP, p. 72/Ak. 4:420).

Kant goes on to explain that,

[...] since the imperative contains, beyond the law, only the necessity that the maxim be in conformity with this law, while the law contains no condition to which it would be limited, nothing is left with which the maxim of action is to

conform but the universality of a law as such; and this conformity alone is what the imperative properly represents as necessary (ibid, p. 73/Ak. 4:420-421).

²⁷³ Hence the famous iteration of the CI that states: “act only in accordance with that maxim through which you can at the same time will that it become a universal law” (*Groundwork of the Metaphysics of Morals*, PP, p. 73/Ak. 4:421).

Since this is the first and, as Allan Wood is right to emphasize, merely formal depiction of the Categorical Imperative (CI), the universality of the law is only clear in application, in its eternal possibility (and hence necessity) of being thought-of with regards to any and all (morally relevant) actions (Allen W. Wood, *Kantian Ethics* (Cambridge: Cambridge UP, 2011), p. 69f.).

Yet, as the second formulation stipulates – and this is the one that, according to Wood, is the material or teleological one (ibid, p. 70) – this ‘universal’ is not merely a content-less abstraction, for it is precisely corresponding to the universality of nature itself. ‘Nature,’ of course, makes no sense (and hence, like the *Ding an sich*, no consequence) for Kant outside the transcendental understanding (where intuitions and categories are synthesized in the “unity of apperception” which is the ‘I’):

[...] Since the universality of law in accordance with which effects take place constitutes what is properly called nature in the most general sense (as regards its form) – that is, the existence [“enter the transcendental”; SC] of things insofar as it is determined in accordance with universal laws – the universal imperative of duty can also go as follows: *act as if the maxim of your action were to become by your will a universal law of nature.*” (*Groundwork*, PP, p. 73/Ak. 4:421 [all original emphases]).

Kant explains this with four examples, of which I will only cite the second, most famous, one, about the man who, to get out of financial straits, makes a promise of payment that he knows he can’t keep. This man’s:

[...] maxim of action would go as follows: when I believe myself to be in need of money I shall borrow money and promise to repay it, even though I know that this will never happen. Now this principle of self-love or personal advantage is perhaps quite consistent with my whole future welfare, but the question now is whether it is right. I therefore turn the demand of self-love into a universal law and put the question as follows: how would it be if my maxim became a universal law? I then see at once that it could never hold as a universal law of nature and be consistent with itself, but must necessarily contradict itself. For, the universality of a law that everyone, when he believes himself to be in need, could promise whatever he pleases with the intention of not keeping it would make the promise and the end one might have in it itself impossible, since no one would believe what was promised him but would laugh at all such expressions as vain pretenses (*Groundwork*, PP, p. 74/Ak. 4:422).

Since the universal is not just “duty” but duty in accordance with the universality of nature – which admits *a priori* of all the categories of the understanding – it imports into the CI this pre-condition of intelligibility, since the universal cannot abide self-contradiction (here I am in agreement with Llewelyn’s analysis; cf. John Llewelyn, *Emmanuel Lévinas: The Genealogy of Ethics* (London: Routledge, 1995), p. 72).

One can also add to this what Kant writes about ethical duty in his *Metaphysics of Morals*: “[...] act in accordance with a maxim of ends that it can be a universal law for everyone [jedermann] to have” (PP, p. 525/Ak. 6:395 [my underline]). Here ‘universality’ is directly presupposing, or at least strongly alluding to, the general egalitarianism of the “jedermann” (thus, of course, taking the ‘pathos of distance’ completely out of the picture, i.e., by fiat).

The universalizability of the Kantian maxims of duty, hence, must always pass through the test of the transcendental – the latter having been erected by Kant precisely to block access to the ‘Thing’ that lies beyond the understanding’s (*Verstand*) capacities to regulate and critique the “flights of pure reason (*reinen Vernunft*)” as it were (in Kant’s metaphysics of morals, though this is belied by several recent attempts to “Kantianize Lévinas” and vice-versa, all ethical prescription must (the deductive/logical must) presuppose that it be within my power to fulfill – that it be within the realm of the transcendental, the realm of possibility: “It is always [*zu aller Zeit*] in everyone’s power [*in jedes Gemalt*] to satisfy [*leisten*] the commands of the categorical command [*kategorischen Gebote*] of morality” (CPrR, p. 38/Ak. 5:36-37 [my underline]).

Seen in this manner, a “Nietzschean” imperative like “always resist the moral environment” would, just like the “always make false promises” maxim, fall into the self-contradiction whereby every human person both constitutes the moral environment and absolutely resists it. This, the universal law of nature cannot abide. Though Kant does not explain this in the *Groundwork*, Henry Allison had pointed out that in the Second Critique Kant recognizes that there is a problem with this subsumption of the moral maxim – as commanded by a law of freedom – under universal schemata of nature, which sports *Verstand*’s heterogeneous character to that of *Vernunft*. As Allison shows, Kant refers to the natural law as a type, a model for the law of freedom – a necessary representation that mediates the two owing to the power of judgment (Henry E. Allison, *Kant’s Groundwork for the Metaphysics of Morals: A Commentary* (New York: Oxford UP, 2011), p. 177ff). Of course, by what right does Kant promote this analogy or model, and what kind of ethico-metaphysical imposition is inaugurated therein, is left for this present study to – slowly and painfully, as in all archeological excavations into the nooks of *ressentiment* – expose to conflict and challenge.

²⁷⁴ The following quote from Nietzsche's *Ecce Homo*, would do nicely to describe (some of) the principles of this strange method, which Nietzsche calls *Kriegs-Praxis* – a “practice of war:” “First: I only attack causes that are victorious; I may even wait until they become victorious. Second: I only attack causes against which I would not find allies, so that I stand alone [...]: that is *my* criterion of doing right” (EH, *Why I am so Wise*, §7, pp. 232-233/KGW 6.3:272-273)

²⁷⁵ Nietzsche, *en bref*, pits an ethico-metaphysical ‘nobility’ against Kantian ‘humility’. Here I am – and I think that Nietzsche is, too – largely in agreement with Paul Saurette’s analysis of Kant’s moral philosophy as a kind of “*askesis*” of humility/humiliation; cf. Paul Saurette, *The Kantian Imperative: Humiliation, Common Sense, Politics* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 2005). Indeed, this Kantian ‘spirit’ is what, I maintain, continues in Hegel’s philosophy to assume absolute claims, *not merely as a subjective* kind of “Bildung,” but an actual, absolute one, the *Bildung* of *Geist* itself.

²⁷⁶ It is interesting to give a brief example here of how Nietzsche’s philosophy is commonly treated by philosophy scholars, notably the Hegelian ones. In Stephen Houlgate’s “assessment” of Nietzsche’s relation to Hegel, he proceeds via an indeed Academically sanctioned method: he collects and tries to systematize all of Nietzsche’s explicit referrals to Hegel and Hegel’s writings (which are never “Academic” engagements themselves, but more reactions to the “bad air” that Nietzsche’s “genius of nostrils” had Nietzsche perceived in the Hegelian “spirit”). As these are not many, and not written to ward off this methodological attack – but written from, as I am showing here, a resistant method altogether – Houlgate finds little “evidence” of Nietzsche’s position regarding Hegel, and proceeds to make conjectures as to the origin of Nietzsche’s “anti-Hegelianism.”

Here, however, he betrays his method: he deduces from the fact that “the majority” of Nietzsche friends were Schopenhauerian that they were also anti-Hegelian (though he never shows evidence of this), and concludes, *as an aid to his argument*, that “it is likely [this kind of conjectural construction repeats itself in Houlgate’s ‘genealogy’] that the philosophical environment amongst Nietzsche’s friends [...] was largely anti-Hegelian” (Stephen Houlgate, *Hegel, Nietzsche and the Criticism of Metaphysics* (Cambridge: Cambridge UP, 2004), pp. 229-230 n. 23 [my underline]).

Had Houlgate taken Nietzsche’s *method* as seriously as he does Hegel’s, he would have qualified this inference in the light of what I show above, and below, about Nietzsche’s treacherous relation to *any* “atmosphere” in which he happens to find himself; only a brief look at his relations to Rée, Strauss, Wagner – the latter was even for a time Nietzsche’s mentor – would suffice to question this inference (cf. *ibid*, pp. 24-37). This kind of “philosophical” or “Academic” approach to Nietzsche’s thought and writings is perhaps most apparent in Houlgate’s treatment of Nietzsche’s thought as a “Dionysiac philosophy of life” (*ibid*, p. 1).

As such a reduction of Nietzsche’s thought (to the Greeks’) is wont to do, Houlgate’s analysis lumps Nietzsche into a philosophical project that writes a “non-metaphysical” philosophy (rather than, as I am trying to show in Nietzsche, a dynamic, metaphysically critical one). From there Houlgate can comfortably claim that Nietzsche’s philosophy “remains caught up in abstract oppositions” (which Hegel, I agree, did thoroughly reject; cf. *ibid*, p. 183). However, between being anti-metaphysical and attempting to write a non-metaphysical philosophy there is still – albeit, admittedly, a metaphysical – difference (this also has to do with why Houlgate prefers to treat Nietzsche’s thought as ‘Dionysiac’ rather than ‘Antichristian’): if Hegel would mind the abstraction that subtends the empty oppositions of what he called *Verstand*, or the ‘philosophy of reflection,’ he does so in view of their *aufhebung*, their reconciliation as (always false because always) opposites. Nietzsche, as I hope is becoming clear, does *not* object to oppositions – what I sometimes refer to here as ‘pathologies’ – but follows and preaches a method that will both multiply and disseminate them (never absolving them, but also never obviating their eternally recurring emergence), with a view to more distances, more differences being opened (rather than achieving any reconciled, systematic status).

Hence, Houlgate is right in saying that Nietzsche has no just claim “to have produced a truly non-metaphysical philosophy” (*ibid*, p. 63), but not because “within his one[; SC] dynamic world of forces he retains a distinction between primary and secondary levels of existence, between real force, activity and becoming on the one hand, and fictional stability and identity on the other” (*ibid*, *ibid*), a statement that, to anyone who knows Nietzsche’s committed *amor fati* towards profundity and masks would seem puzzling. No, Nietzsche’s is not a non-metaphysical philosophy because he still betrays sensitivity – and affirmation – of the metaphysical *difference* inaugurated by the priests – or “Academics,” “scholars” – of *ressentiment*. That is why he is *more antichrist than Dionysus*, for his main goal was to resist the victory of an already victorious metaphysics, a metaphysics so victorious that it needn’t any longer justify its existence, but has become an ensconced ‘prejudice.’

The latter is the ethico-metaphysical assumption/‘ground’ of some fundamental unity, a spiritual teleology of self-reconciling knowledge that must deny – in the first place (this denial is its sole *drive*) – the metaphysical difference which Nietzsche to make productive, creative, to explode into multiple ‘distances’ and ‘perspectives.’ It is the “stability” and “identity” that Nietzsche rejects as absolute, thereby opening up the metaphysical distance while refusing to infuse it with any reconciling or cohering entity, be it God, Fate, or even ‘Spirit’ – the ‘will to power,’ as well as the eternal return of the same,

were principles of dissolution and dispersion, of decision and selection (not necessarily performed by an “individual” but by a certain undetermined ‘quanta of force.’

²⁷⁷ for, “where one commands, where one sees something beneath oneself, one has no business waging war” (‘Ecce Homo: Why I am So Wise’ §7, in GM, p. 232)

²⁷⁸ Lévinas sees this as a result of the primacy of ontology over ethics, which Levinatzsch will show is the silencing of the proto-moral, peacefully and gratuitously given word, whose “pathos” marks the power difference between the powerful/distinguished and the destitute/generic.

²⁷⁹ This system/truth-seeking philosophy holds a pretense to seek the world/God before it seeks justice, but this is due to the latter’s *question* having already been, silently yet decisively, resolved. It is this “silent” behind-the-scenes solution that is combatted both by Nietzsche’s call to trans-value moral values (while resisting-by-exposing the sickly and clandestine violence of *ressentiment*), and by Lévinas’ emphasis on the metaphysical *breach* (that occurs in the face-to-face encounter between a powerful ‘I’ and a destitute, *malheureux* Other).

In this vein, Lévinas’ concept of the absolute asymmetry between the (powerful) ‘I’ and the (destitute) Other, and Nietzsche insistence on keeping the pathos of distance alive (to testify to this pre-ontological and generative difference of power) can join forces against Western, or Hegelian-Protestant, metaphysics.

²⁸⁰ I am using “personal-particular” here to differentiate between this ethico-metaphysical responsibility towards the Other and the Hegelian guilt which comes out of *Sittlichkeit* and originates the concept of a “person” as the basis out of which all particularity (i.e. ‘vanity’) is purged in the successive stages of *Sittlichkeit*’s rise up the spiritual ranks.

²⁸¹ This passage is also the best articulation of what I mean when I insist, with Levinatzsch, that the problem of method in any phenomenology is an ethico-metaphysical problem of responsibility: this responsibility cannot be exhausted by any claim, either teleological or ‘actual,’ to ‘knowledge,’ but must be thought in/as an *excess* of the (by now) “commonsensical” demands of ‘universality’ or ‘Truth.’ Put in Lévinasian terms, thought appears as a trace of the Other; it is the an-archival witnessing of an interruption that calls for its *signification*, a ‘saying’ that induces a ‘said’ that is never equal to it

²⁸² Cf. GM II §14, p. 81

²⁸³ Not the “behind” of “another world,” but the an-archy of power-struggles in/as ‘will to power’

²⁸⁴ Cf. Fyodor Dostoevsky, *The Brothers Karamazov*, trans. Richard Pevear and Larissa Volokhonskyp (London: Everyman’s Library, 1992), p. 245.

This quote – and Lévinas’ oft-repeated citation of it – perhaps marks the most resilient kernel of difference between Nietzsche and Lévinas towards which my Levinatzsch perhaps inflicts the most hermeneutic violence. The issue revolves around the question of guilt, and the metaphysical construct that provides for its resilience: Lévinas does not make a clear distinction between the *state* of ‘guilt’ and, say, the *event* of ‘accusation,’ and, thus, will never go to the Nietzschean lengths of explaining what exactly is the economy that underlies or enables this state of ‘guilt.’ Indeed, Lévinas will also never explicitly or directly point towards Christianity as the purveyor of guilt, and the violence that is implicit in its theological principle.

This perhaps follows naturally from the fact that, opting to argue explicitly against Heidegger, Lévinas never makes a sustained and explicit engagement with the modern theological philosopher, i.e., Hegel. Another possible reason for this lacuna is that Lévinas also chooses – and perhaps here we at least have a *structural* battle against Hegel’s metaphysics – to separate his “Jewish” writings from his “philosophical” ones, thus himself internalizing all that strife of “translation” (between “Hebrew” and “Greek”) that I am attempting to, with Nietzsche’s help, shore up. Still, I hope that my sustained analysis of Lévinas and Nietzsche as the Levinatzschean war machine of my project will show that at a certain level, beholden to certain political stakes, the violence of my ‘Levinatzsch’ might provide some “life” to both thoughts.

²⁸⁵ Cf. PS Preface §20, p. 11; SZ, pp. 7f

²⁸⁶ The examples for this are so rampant that I limit myself disciplinarily to political theorists, since, after all, it is the primary discipline that I address my Levinatzsch to in an effort to extricate Nietzsche from the Hegelian metaphysical structure that continues to shape so much of it, and so much of it unbeknownst. Here one might consider: Richard Wolin, *The Seduction of Unreason: The Intellectual Romance with Fascism : from Nietzsche to Postmodernism* (Princeton, N.J: Princeton UP, 2004); Leo Strauss, *Natural Right and History* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1953); Alasdair MacIntyre, ‘Genealogies and Subversions,’ in *Nietzsche, Genealogy, Morality: Essays on Nietzsche’s Genealogy of Morals*, ed. Richard Schacht (Berkeley and Los Angeles: University of California Press, 1994), pp. 284-305. The latter is a moral philosopher, but one who has exerted a tremendous influence on Anglophone political theory scholarship.

Jürgen Habermas, for his part, opines that Nietzsche “cannot legitimate the criteria of aesthetic judgment that he holds on to because he transposes aesthetic experience into the archaic, because he does not recognize as a moment of reason the critical capacity for assessing value” (Jürgen Habermas, *The Philosophical Discourse of Modernity: Twelve Lectures*, trans. Frederick Lawrence (Cambridge, Mass: MIT Press, 1987), p. 96): the metaphysical holism of ‘reason’ that Habermas presupposes here, echoes the absence of “criteria” for values and valuations in Nietzsche’s will to power philosophy – as “the other of reason,”

the “aesthetic” activity of will to power itself, as “archaic” (ibid, ibid) self-fashioning and beyond the reach of presence/history/reason, this activity cannot *secure* any coherent, rationally-expressible criterion of selection.

In his *A Secular Age*, Charles Taylor writes that Nietzsche’s *Genealogy* forwards, “[...] the idea that there is a demand for meaning as such, as it were, any meaning, as against something more specific”, hence implying a kind of relativism of meaning, while, to my reading, Nietzsche’s point is closer to an “absolute singularism” of *power* (*A Secular Age*, p. 381). That this view assumes a Hegelian metaphysical teleology of ‘reconciliation’ can perhaps best be shown in how Taylor tends to incorporate Nietzsche’s ‘transvaluation’ within the Hegelian framework (something which I consistently argue against throughout this chapter, albeit for singular, “anti-universalizable” reasons). That is why Taylor, addressing the problematic wherein “human beings are always in a situation of conflict between moral demands, which seem to them to be irrecusable, but at the same time uncombinable”, can still maintain that “we can and should struggle for a ‘transvaluation’ (to borrow Nietzsche’s term *Umwertung*) which could open the way to a mode of life, individual and social, in which these demands could be reconciled.” (Charles Taylor, ‘Charles Taylor Replies: Introduction,’ *Philosophy in an Age of Pluralism: The Philosophy of Charles Taylor in Question*, ed. James Tully (Cambridge, Cambridge UP, 1994), p. 213, 214).

Taylor’s methodological holism can also be spied in his writing style, which forever speaks from and addresses the first and second person *plural*, justly assuming that he – unlike Nietzsche – has lots of “ears” that listen, a lot of philosophers for whom he is “understood” (notwithstanding the possibility that Taylor took Hegel’s “the I that is we and the we that is I” so seriously to employ it even at the rhetorical/stylistic level).

²⁸⁷ Whether this ‘necessity’ is conceived as logical-spiritual (Hegel), or universal-transcendental (Kant) or historico-hermeneutical (Heidegger).

²⁸⁸ At the very beginning of his *Beyond Good and Evil*, Nietzsche gives a succinct formulation of how Truth can obscure the question of responsibility – denying its participation in the will to power, replacing it with a “will to truth.” The latter indeed evinces a particular approach – a particular *interest* (i.e. claim to *power*) – whose own ‘science’ ought to be questioned (a questioning for which Nietzsche recommends his will to power):

The will to truth which will still tempt us to many a venture, that famous truthfulness of which all philosophers so far have spoken with respect – what questions has this will to truth not laid before us! What strange, wicked, questionable questions! That is a long story even now – and yet it seems as if it had scarcely begun. Is it any wonder that we should finally become suspicious, lose patience, and turn away impatiently? that we should finally learn from this Sphinx to ask questions, too? Who is it really that puts questions to us here? What in us really wants “truth”? (BGE §1, p. 9).

For more on Nietzsche’s view of the “will to truth,” cf. GS §344, pp. 280-283; GM III §24, pp. 148-153; ibid, §27, pp. 159-161; LN 43[1], pp. 50-51; ibid 9[91] pp. 154-157; WTP §455, pp. 249-250.

²⁸⁹ Let me give but one example: In the *Science of Logic*, in the first section of the first Book – called ‘With What Must the Beginning of Science be Made?’ (SL, p. 45) – Hegel shows how indeed it is “the whole truth” – what Hegel calls here “the concrete and supreme truth of all being” – that constitutes, *not only the purpose* of all ‘science,’ but *an overriding assumption* that presides over the entire enterprise (as a “truthful” one).

[...] It must be admitted that it is an essential consideration – one which will be found elaborated again within the logic itself – that progression is a retreat to the ground, to the origin and the truth on which that with which the beginning was made, and from which it is in fact produced, depends. – Thus consciousness, on its forward path from the immediacy with which it began, is led back to the absolute knowledge which is its innermost truth. This truth, the ground, is then also that from which the original first proceeds, the same first which at the beginning came on the scene as something immediate. – It is most of all in this way that absolute spirit (which is revealed as the concrete and supreme truth of all being) comes to be known, as at the end of the development it freely externalizes itself, letting itself go into the shape of an immediate being – resolving itself into the creation of a world which contains all that fell within the development preceding that result and which, through this reversal of position with its beginning, is converted into something dependent on the result as principle. Essential to science is not so much that a pure immediacy should be the beginning, but that the whole of science is in itself a circle in which the first becomes also the last, and the last also the first.” (SL, p. 49/GW 21:57 [my underline])

²⁹⁰ What Lévinas, above, calls “the one expelled from everywhere and even from itself” precisely sticks a wedge at the very heart of Hegel’s holistic teleology of thought/being; a ‘One’ that resembles more the Jewish God of separation rather than the Christian ‘One’ of incarnation and reconciliation. In *The Gay Science* Nietzsche makes an allusion to this – *Deus Absconditus/Revelatus* – difference, and where he himself stands in this regard: “Is it true that God is present everywhere?” a little girl asked her mother; “I think that’s indecent” – a hint for philosophers!” (GS Preface §4, p. 38 [my underline])

²⁹¹ OB, p. 12

²⁹² This approach had been already epitomized in Aquinas and Augustine who saw evil as a mere “lack” in the ‘Good’ (*Summa Theologica* I.1Q48.3). Reconciled into a single term, like “utility” or “the unegoistic act” in fact keeps the essential,

the one who has being ('Good,' 'the noble'), as the only voice that matters; its significations are no longer, as in Nietzsche's *parallel*, an expression of speaking to the Other, but the collapsing of the Other into the Same in principle. Instead of a 'pathos of distance' we get, at best, a Heideggerian *ek-stasis* of essence.

²⁹³ To recall, in his *Beyond Good and Evil* Nietzsche describes the 'master morality' ('Herren-Moral') as the "first type [ersten Art] of morality" Cf. BGE, 'What is Noble' §260, p. 204/KGW 6.2:219)

²⁹⁴ Except one must keep in mind that here was an entirely new "coin" owing to the opening towards a whole new discourse (thus, never, as in paying a beggar, presupposing an existing economy but, first, inaugurating a new discourse and, only then, a new economy).

²⁹⁵ This relation should not be confused with the (Christian) theological concept of ἀγάπη (*agape*), or 'love,' where a Divine Truth – adopted in(to) philosophy most systematically and unabashedly (God bless him) by Hegel – by authorizes and sanctifies a deed as "good" (or recoils from it if "evil"). This latter type of "prejudice" is fought by both Nietzsche, who begins his genealogy from the recognition of how much the conception of "altruism" as the 'origin' of morality does injustice to both thought and morality, and Lévinas – of whom I will only supply a brief quote on this point to allude to the unholy link I am making in Levinatztch; approaching the noble-plebeian encounter as an ethical encounter – precisely for the lack of "altruism" or debt on the side of the noble and the lack of significance of the plebeian in the eyes of the noble, that nevertheless generates a proto-moral word in the (original meaning of) 'bad':

[...] La rencontre d'Autrui ['Other'] est d'emblée ma responsabilité pour lui. La responsabilité pour le prochain qui est, sans doute, le nom sévère de ce qu'on appelle l'amour du prochain, amour sans Éros, charité, amour où le moment éthique domine le moment passionnel, amour sans concupiscence. Je n'aime pas beaucoup le mot amour qui est usé et frelaté. Parlons d'une prise sur soi du destin d'autrui. (Lévinas, 'Philosophie, justice et amour,' *Entre Nous : Essais sur le penser-à-l'autre* (Paris: Éditions Grasset & Fasquelle, 1991), p. 121)

This "mutual enemy" of Lévinas and Nietzsche is what will authorize – and also, of course, severely delimit and critique – my decision to wed them both in this "negative," preparatory project, devised in order to do philosophical justice to the question of value (in Nietzsche); the question of Ethics (in Lévinas). It is true that Lévinas is always delicate when touching this theological, or, better yet, metaphysical difference between Christianity and Judaism – and, admittedly, in my 'Levinatztch' this difference is neither explained nor even given much quarter – but the substance of his statements, as well as the object of their resistance, is fundamentally shared by both.

²⁹⁶ The other that is not, like the enemy, a counter-part. This point is crucial to understanding how the Levinatztchean approach to metaphysics differs from the Hegelian one; for it is precisely through the opposing, through the counter-part, that Hegel reduces the Other to the Same to enable what has often been called the absolution or closure of metaphysics (along with its 'Why?' questions, I might add). The counter-part is not the Lévinasian Other, just as the other noble is not the Nietzschean plebeian. Just like what Lévinas says about the third, the noble's other is the other noble (what Lévinas would call the "neighbor" in *Otherwise than Being*), while the Other, the other 'other,' was the plebeian to whom the moral word is addressed. Lévinas writes the following of "the third party:"

[...] The act of consciousness is motivated by the presence of a third party alongside of the neighbor approached. A third party is also approached; and the relationship between the neighbor and the third party cannot be indifferent to me when I approach. There must be a justice among incomparable ones. There must then be a comparison between incomparables and a synopsis, a togetherness and contemporaneity; there must be thematization, thought, history and inscription. But being must be understood on the basis of being's other. To be on the ground of the signification of an approach is to be with another for or against a third party, with the other and the third party against oneself, in justice. This way of thinking is against a philosophy which does not see beyond being, and reduces, by an abuse of language, saying to the said and all sense to interest. (OB, p. 16)

²⁹⁷ This noble afterthought was *not a deed*; it was not born from the nobility's happy activity of self-distinction in a struggle with a certain counter-part. It does not come in the noble's active presence, in her essential 'being,' but somehow as her activity's "wrapper" or waste product. The noble's activity of overcoming and conquering his revered enemy where both he and his life are wholly present, wholly exposed, and wholly active had, hence, *neither pathos nor distance*; an activity of self-distinction, but *not* an activity directed to the other (as "other-depiction"). The latter already needed a moment of slackening, of non-presence in the noble, just as much as it needed the noble's excess to re-act (to). In short, it needed to be, in some "noble" manner, passive.

²⁹⁸ The phrase that I chose for the title of this chapter suggests a similar kind of communication, modeled after the Biblical "Abyssus [ad] abyssum invocat" ('deep calls to deep,' Psalm 42:8) that suggests a relation between two different abysses; the 'abyss' of nothingness and want here betrays a difference from itself, a doubling or a fold, in a manner reminiscent of the aforementioned "passivity which is not one" that manages to invoke, to produce a voice/saying, out of this difference. In a way (that I cannot elaborate upon here) it is also reminiscent of the famous Nietzschean saying from *Beyond Good and Evil* that "when you look long into an abyss, the abyss also looks into you" (BGE §146, p. 89).

²⁹⁹ Compare Lévinas' comments in *Otherwise than Being*:

[...] Signification, saying- my expressivity, my own signifyingness qua sign, my own verblativity qua verb – cannot be understood as a modality of being; the disinterestedness suspends essence. As a substitution of one for another, as me, a man, I am not a transubstantiation, a changing from one substance into another, I do not shut myself up in another identity, I do not rest in a new avatar. As signification, proximity, saying, separation, I do not fuse with anything. (OB, p. 14 [my underline])

Though I do not conduct this investigation in anything resembling a rigorous manner, I do wish to point out that in this quote one finds – embedded within an approach to language – a Lévinasian “poke” at Christian metaphysics, as subtle as it is, in the same place where Nietzsche puts his own, much less subtle, “pokes” at resentment and what it had done to philosophy. I do pursue this conjunction in a rigorous manner throughout this work, but what I do not – though it deserves serious investigation – is precisely the different “styles” that are employed here: Lévinas might have seen the same problems and sensed the same urgencies as Nietzsche, but displayed far more subtlety in doing so (this also includes Lévinas' attempts to separate his “Jewish writings” from his “philosophical” ones). What is the meaning of this difference of style, and how does it pertain to Lévinas' and Nietzsche's respective “intellectual honesty” (to use a Nietzschean term), still looms at large.

³⁰⁰ The pagan noble is “too present” to conceptualize any such *endurance* in time as to undergird a concept such as ‘debt,’ and hence cannot be said to give without owing since this notion of “owing” hadn't entered into this burgeoning moral discourse until after Christian resentment assured the decline of the Pagan nobles and their values. Hence the Pagan nobles had, according to Nietzsche, a bad *memory*: the “[...] strong, full natures in whom there is an excess of the power to form, to mold, to recuperate and to forget” (GM I §11, p. 39) are indeed “missing” the very capacity *to secure any event that is not wholly present*; this “animal,” to use Nietzschean terms, hadn't the “right to make promises” since its memory was weak and unimportant, its considerations and calculations always directed toward the present, and hence could assure neither a ‘history,’ nor any reliable “solvency” of promises/debts (which are always deferred to a future).

Already in *Human, All Too Human* – to tarry over this question of memory/forgetting a bit – Nietzsche writes that it is forgetting that even allows for “morals” to be conceived as such, *to have such power*, even in his, much later, day (this echoes with Nietzsche's critique of the ‘unegoistic’ value as the source of morality – something which this following passage *both criticizes, and affirms*). I maintain here that the Nietzschean Genealogy operates a *methodological affirmation* of this forgetting, one that – rather than dreaming of some full memory/truth – inscribes it in a more radical manner. This is precisely where Nietzsche's call for a “historical sense” (bringing the pre-history of all conscious thought into consideration), echoes Lévinas' phenomenology of presence/consciousness as already beholden to the immemorial an-archy of the ‘saying,’ an echo that continues right down to a kind of shared attitude between the two thinkers towards the question of God in this (moral) regard:

Justice goes back naturally to the viewpoint of an enlightened self-preservation, thus to the egoism of the reflection: ‘to what end should I injure myself uselessly and perhaps even then not achieve my goal?’ – so much for the origin of justice. Since, in accordance with their intellectual habit, men have forgotten the original purpose of so-called just and fair actions, and especially because children have for millennia been trained to admire and imitate such actions, it has gradually come to appear that a just action is an unegoistic one: but it is on this appearance that the high value accorded it depends; and this high value is, moreover, continually increasing, as all valuations do: for something highly valued is striven for, imitated, multiplied through sacrifice, and grows as the worth of the toil and zeal expended by each individual is added to the worth of the valued thing. – How little moral would the world appear without forgetfulness! A poet could say that God has placed forgetfulness as a doorkeeper on the threshold of the temple of human dignity. (HH §92, p. 49 [my underline])

³⁰¹ Emmanuel Lévinas, ‘Uniqueness,’ *Entre Nous: On Thinking-of-the-Other*, trans. Michael B. Smith and Barbara Harshav (New York: Columbia UP, 1998), pp. 192-193.

³⁰² Nobility's presence/activity only consists in a self-affirming conflicts against other such self-affirmations; its overabundance of health precludes consideration of its own mortality

³⁰³ Which is what the investment of this distance in a currency, its internalized economy of ‘guilt,’ secretly plots to achieve – the havoc that the “democratic prejudice” wreaks on ‘value’ altogether

³⁰⁴ In an early fragment that precedes ‘The Spirit of Christianity and its Fate’ by about a year, Hegel writes that “[t]rue union, or love proper, exists only between living beings who are alike in power and thus in another's eyes living beings from every point of view [this is more apposite as describing the noble-enemy relation which Nietzsche calls “respect,” SC]; in no respect is either dead for the other. This genuine love excludes all oppositions (ETW, p. 304). Also compare Hegel's much later understanding of love (vis-à-vis the “will”) in Hegel's *Philosophy of Right*: “Ethical life [*Sittlichkeit*] is the unity of the will in its concept and the will of the individual, that is, of the subject. Its initial existence is again something natural, in the form of love and feeling – the family; here, the individual has overcome [*aufgehoben*] his personal aloofness and finds himself and his consciousness

as a whole” (G. W. F. Hegel, *Elements of the Philosophy of Right*, trans. H. B. Nisbet, ed. Alan W. Wood (Cambridge: Cambridge UP, 1991), §33A, p. 63).

Abraham’s exit, hence, would have no place in Hegel’s “right” – and, hence, finds no “right” but that of a ‘skandalon’ or a hurdle to be overcome – for he refuses the love of family in the solitude of a self-exception or departure; hence, not to join any bigger assembly like Hegel’s ‘civil society’ – where, “as self sufficient individual[] [...] [he would be] held together [with society] only by the bond of mutual need” (ibid, ibid) – but to leave altogether towards the utterly alien and unknown. Allowing this kind of power over him, Abraham also proves that, to Judaism, the very notion of “self-sufficient individuality” is already denied, for Abraham was *absolutely dependent* on his God: as Hegel comments in his ‘Spirit of Christianity’ text,

[...] With his herds Abraham wandered hither and thither over a boundless territory without bringing parts of it any nearer to him by cultivating and improving them. Had he done so, he would have become attached to them and might have adopted them as parts of his world. The land was simply given over to his cattle for grazing. The water slept in deep wells without living movement; digging for it was laborious; it was dearly bought or struggled for, an extorted property, a necessary requirement for him and his cattle. The groves which often gave him coolness and shade he soon left again; in them he had theophanies, appearances of his perfect Object on High, but he did not tarry in them with the love which would have made them worthy of the Divinity and participant in Him [hence, it is the rejection of ‘love’ that forbids Abraham’s ‘spirit’ to ever become incarnated in a *Sittlichkeit*; SC]. He was a stranger on earth, a stranger to the soil and to men alike. (ETW, p. 186)

³⁰⁵ These breaks can only define this *Da* as an *after*-effect, a parting gift from an escaping coward looking-back, a (not ungrateful) betrayal.

³⁰⁶ I’m thinking here primarily of Actor-Network Theory, Complexity Theory, and Relational Ontology. Many proponents of these approaches indeed seem unwilling to center around Identity in their thought-practices: Relational Ontology shifts the focus to “the relation” between the ontological identities (thus redefining the identities themselves); ANT shifts the focus from the traditional ‘Actor’ Identity to networks and the vast interrelationships between actors they provide (again as a way to redefine the ‘Actor’ Identity); and complexity theory’s algorithm-based solutions to a methodological assumption it shares with relational ontology, since it sees phenomena in terms of complex, interconnected and unpredictable systems (refusing the identity of either a defining “stem” of the system or some simple (i.e., non-complex) conception of its whole).

What none of these theories perform is, however, the necessary ethico-metaphysical work against the more basic assumption of symmetry that underlies them; an assumption that betrays how even taking the ontological (id)entity out of *center*, it still provides the comfort by remaining in orbit (or, worse, becoming a telos), than questioned as to its own primacy as that which orients and decides the *methodology* of thought.

The Lévinasian question is also, indeed, “relational,” but the relation it depicts is not between Identities but between an Identity and a Wholly Other; all the above approaches never break that one ethico-metaphysical assumption that underwrites the occidental view of science (at least as seen in Hegel): that relations are symmetrical and, in essence, reversible. Engaging with Lévinasian ‘an-archy’ and his “ethics as first philosophy,” with Nietzsche’s ‘will to power’ as the highest ethical challenge of *becoming*, means attacking precisely this assumption, what Nietzsche dubs the “democratic prejudice” of European ressentiment, and Lévinas calls “egology” of the Philosophy of the Same (only such a philosophy would see the relation as essentially symmetrical).

³⁰⁷ Like, for example, a thought’s treatment of its unthought or Other is considered in terms a lack of ‘truth,’ a “you still don’t have the whole picture, just research it a bit further” kind of discourse. This is also, fundamentally how the priest of ressentiment will reduce the question of justice to the economy of guilt, as I will show below.

³⁰⁸ Nietzsche writes:

[...] It was out of this pathos of distance that they [the nobles] first seized the right to create values and to coin names for values”; and a little bit further down, adds in a parenthesis: “(The lordly fight of giving names extends so far that one should 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,” they seal every thing and event with a sound and, as it were, take possession of it.) (GM I §2, p. 26 [my underline]).

The guiding question I ask here, the main question that makes ‘Levinatzsch’ “stick together” – the *ethico-metaphysical* ‘Why?’ question – works both with the noble’s value-designation towards the plebeian other, and towards language in general: *Why* would the powerful *need* to speak, to invent language in the first place, if they already possess full presence and contentment? Surely, a Christian theology would say that this, too, is because of guilt; but, in *opening* the Why? question, in making it surface, ‘guilt’ is no longer necessary, nor can it any longer *transparently* provide its (Christian) answer.

³⁰⁹ “Regarding the personality of a philosopher, our only interest is that he was born at a certain time, that he worked, and that he died.” (Martin Heidegger, *Basic Concepts of Aristotelian Philosophy*, trans. Robert D. Metcalf and Mark B. Tanzer (Bloomington & Indianapolis: Indiana UP, 2009), p. 4.

³¹⁰ The personality of biography of the philosopher/thinker, if I may be allowed such an extrapolation, would be akin to Heidegger's views on *Gerede*, the mere passing on of words owing to an uprooted *Neugier*: Heidegger treats of "idle talk" (*Gerede*) as a mere "passing the word along" and hence possessing "complete groundlessness" (BT, p. 212/SZ, p. 168); hence, "when *Dasein* maintains itself in idle talk, it is-as Being-in-the-world-cut off from its primary and primordially genuine relationships-of-Being" (BT, p. 214/SZ, p. 170).

Heidegger writes the above in a section immediately followed by his accounts on "curiosity" (*Neugier*), which is once again seen as a cutting from the existential and the essential, the same "uprooting" or "groundlessness" that Heidegger finds so appalling (see previous chapter): "Curiosity is everywhere and nowhere. This mode of Being-in-the-world reveals a new kind of Being of everyday *Dasein* – a kind in which *Dasein* is constantly uprooting itself." (BT, p. 217/SZ, p. 173). And so, just like "[t]he existential Interpretation of death takes precedence over any biology and ontology of life" (BT, p. 291/SZ, p. 247), in the same way an existential primordially (ontological circumspection) underscores and founds the merely "*existentiell*". Making the latter into the foundation – a defining feature of idle-talk and/or curiosity – is surely to persist in a ontological uprootedness that, for Heidegger, grants no path to the existential truth. Heidegger confirms, with regards to "idle talk," that this uprootedness is a possibility of *Dasein*, and indeed the "reality" it more often than no finds itself in: "Far from amounting to a "not-Being" of *Dasein*, this uprooting is rather *Dasein's* most everyday and most stubborn 'Reality'" The question (about the meaning of Being) remains regardless of one's circumstances of life:

[...] *Dasein's* ways of behaviour, its capacities, powers, possibilities, and vicissitudes, have been studied with varying extent in philosophical psychology, in anthropology, ethics, and 'political science', in poetry, biography, and the writing of history, each in a different fashion. But the question remains whether these interpretations of *Dasein* have been carried through with a primordial existentiality comparable to whatever existentiell primordially they may have possessed." (BT, p. 37/SZ, p. 16).

³¹¹ It is true that such an obviation of the biographical counters Heidegger's own method of 'facticity' in Being and Time, where thought always arises and understood in a particular historico-ontological 'horizon.' Even if we allow this, however, my point remains, and for two reasons that have already been alluded-to above: first, Heidegger's own comportment with regards to his National Socialist affiliation – one that he himself granted a philosophical (an ontological and historical) weight, and was then utterly silent about – echoes a similar manner of personal distance from (his) thought, refusing to speak precisely to what exactly was the National Socialist appeal to him (and, by extension, also remaining silent about the role his anti-Semitism had taken in this appeal); second, even if the "person" is included in the Heideggerian thought-about-thought, it is still only a *Dasein*, a "subject" reduced to her 'Da's and – as shown in the previous chapter with regards to the Heideggerian "conscience" – deaf, or more precisely *philosophically immune* to all that exceeds it. Since the "mystery" of singularity – beyond the *Dasein* – can neither be affirmed any concrete place in 'Being,' nor arrived-at from some authentic vantage point of 'Truth,' Heidegger's "fundamental ontology" finds itself in a position where it *must* keep silent about it.

³¹² Here Nietzsche is using the Roman rather than the Greek example since it was in Rome where the clash between pagan and Christian metaphysics of valuation took place, and there where the fate of Europe was finally decided in the victory of the latter; the Pagan Empire that had persecuted Christians fell to the seduction of the Christian symbol/bait – hence Rome's exemplary status in "fleshing out" the Jews/Pagans contradiction.

³¹³ This explains how Nietzsche's thought connects to Lévinas' Jewish thought precisely as/through its critical project vis-à-vis Western metaphysics/morality; why, as commented by Nietzsche's biographer, Nietzsche's is not a Jewish or 'Semite' thought but more of an anti-antisemitic one (Curtis Cate, *Friedrich Nietzsche* (New York: Overlook Press, 2002), ch. 39). Yirmiyahu Yovel makes this "anti-anti-Semitism" the most explicit in his *Dark Riddle* (Pennsylvania: The Pennsylvania State UP, 1998), pp. 119-138. Also, in what constitutes an important (and rare) alliance for this dissertation, cf. Abed Azzam, *Nietzsche Versus Paul* (New York: Columbia UP, 2015), p. 25.

The new book by Robert Holub, *Nietzsche's Jewish Problem: Between Anti-Semitism and Anti-Judaism* also mentions this, but – in contradistinction to the intimate ethico-metaphysical connection I am elaborating here (where, I believe, is in agreement with Abed Azzam's overall approach; cf. *ibid*, p. 159n.4) – only as a "crude racist" phenomenon, a "political racism" (perhaps yet again there appears here the implicit assumption in Western discourse – John Rawls is the explicit exemplar here – that states that "political" is "not metaphysical"). What Holub identifies as Nietzsche's "negative bias" towards Jews becomes reduced to his understanding of Judaism as something unique and powerful/dangerous. Yet that 'Judaism' means something to Nietzsche, that he affords a "bias" or interpretation of Judaism – wherein *both the danger* (of nihilistic devaluation of all values) *and the hope* (of post-nihilistic transvaluation of all values) were unprecedented – is not enough to *morally* accuse him with "Judeophobia" without explaining *on what value* this accusation is based. The motive that Holub admits to is, once again, centered on the "truth of the matter," a "clarification" to guard against "improper contextualizations" and "manipulations." Against these purported "sins" against the "proper context" of Nietzsche's thought (about Jews), Holub wields a "light" of "proper understanding" (it is important here to realize that this attitude – which is

almost an axiom of writing in Western-Academic contexts/discourse – is not in the least “immodest;” indeed, as I try to show, it implies a humility beholden to a higher/universal “truth”).

[...] In general I understand my study as one that clarifies for the reader Nietzsche’s views on this important topic. The issues are complex, and Nietzsche is not always free from contradiction. But if his utterances are properly contextualized, then he is more consistent than he otherwise appears to be. In sum, I hope to shed new light on a controversial subject that has been misunderstood, oversimplified, and sometimes manipulated by previous scholarship. (Robert C. Holub, *Nietzsche’s Jewish Problem: Between Anti-Semitism and Anti-Judaism* (Princeton: Princeton UP, 2016), p. xiv)

The “crudity” identified here is, I maintain, a *metaphysical* “crudity” that underlies the “political” one (this metaphysical condition and its relation to the “psychology” of moral valuations is precisely what I make visible in Nietzsche through ‘Levinatztch’). Hence Holub writes that,

When we consider what Nietzsche understood by anti-Semitism, we form a somewhat different and more differentiated view of his relationship with Jews and Judaism. There is little question that Nietzsche considered himself an adversary of the political anti-Semitism that arose in Germany in the 1880s. If we consider only his antagonism to this crude racist movement, he surely qualifies as an anti-anti-Semite.” (ibid, p. xivf)

³¹⁴ Hence Nietzsche writes of an “instinct for freedom” – that can be directly discharged by the strong/noble, being necessarily turned back, repeatedly, by the weak/slave:

[...] fundamentally it is the same active force that is at work on a grander scale in those artists of violence and organizers who build states [i.e., the ‘strong;’ SC], and that here, internally, on a smaller and pettier scale, directed backward, in the “labyrinth of the breast,” to use Goethe’s expression, creates for itself a bad conscience and builds negative ideals (GM II §18, p. 87).

³¹⁵ It is only in the “fatigue” of Judaism that Christianity uses this space to radically close off all revaluations after its metaphysical *telos* of reconciliation/love (a *telos* that the Jews – precisely due to their “abysmal hatred” – could not posit for themselves).

³¹⁶ Nietzsche alludes to the elevation implied in the Jewish maneuver/ressentiment in a paradoxical manner. As he says of *ressentiment*: “only here did the human soul in a higher [höheren] sense acquire depth [Tiefe]” (GM I §6, p. 33/KGW 6.2:280). The very conceptualization of ‘bad’ by the noble pagans, hence, achieves an elevation of sense/meaning (and also *stakes*) with the infinite depths of a Judaic “evil.” This “higher sense” is what I here conceive of as the ethico-metaphysical register that Nietzsche’s will to power seeks to think through.

³¹⁷ TD, p. 324

³¹⁸ HH, I §69, pp. 44-45/KGW 4.2:79

³¹⁹ Emmanuel Lévinas, ‘The Temptation of Temptation,’ *Nine Talmudic Readings*, trans. Annette Aronowicz (Indiana: Indiana UP, 1990), p. 35.

³²⁰ My interpretation here will be in general agreement with Yirmiyahu Yovel’s, who identifies Christianity and not Judaism as Nietzsche’s true target, and enemy (Yirmiyahu Yovel, ‘Sublimity and Ressentiment: Hegel, Nietzsche and the Jews,’ *Jewish Social Studies* 3.3 (1997), p. 2).

For Yovel, Judaism was only reviled insofar as it was “priestly,” thus limiting Nietzsche’s disdain to what he identified as the source of Christianity, noting that the Jewish priests were, for Nietzsche, “genealogical cousins” of Nietzsche’s-day (Christian) anti-Semites; they both shared the psychological structure Nietzsche refers to as *ressentiment* (ibid, p. 3, 18). If my argument that Nietzsche was first and foremost an enemy of a Christian metaphysics (which I endeavor to show is inherently, that is *theologically*, anti-Semitic), then Yovel’s identification of Nietzsche as an “anti-antisemite” (ibid, p. 16) corresponds to my argument.

Basically, what I wish to point out is that the ‘No’ installed by the Jewish reversal of values – not based on any political might but rather proceeding from a weakness – is still self-reclusive and self-separating. It was only the priestly Judaism – the Judaism that sought to make this ‘No’ productive of a political power – that Nietzsche vilifies as what gave birth to the Christian nihilism that he saw as threatening and spreading throughout the whole of Europe. The diaspora Jews, as Yovel argues, were, in Nietzsche’s eyes, possible catalysts for the *übermensch* (ibid, p. 21).

³²¹ There is an issue here, however, with Nietzsche’s argument, which bears upon what I will argue is his methodological performance. When he writes that, with the Jewish reversal of values, it is “the wretched alone” that are the good, he is in fact lumping together the Jewish and the Christian modes of valuation (which, I will show, was part of his rhetorical strategy to remind his ‘ressentiment’ environment and audience that they are, in fact, still implicated in the Judaism that they so persist, in a full-blown “bad faith,” in hating).

The Jewish revaluation was, in fact – and Nietzsche will admit these in many other texts, where he does not have to perform this methodological maneuver – a particular one. As such, it did not say “the wretched alone are the good” but “we, who are wretched but uniquely so, are the good, are God’s chosen people.” It is only with the “doubling down” of the Jewish

gesture by the Jewish priests (and Nietzsche always thinks of Paul in this regard), that it becomes the general category of “the wretched.” Though it is true that Jewish ethics was unique in prescribing ethical laws to defend the wretched, it had still maintained a difference from the non-Jewish ones. It is only with Christianity that this ethic had lost its claims to nobility – as I will show in the case of Luther – and generalized, not to say naturalized, (most of) Mosaic Law to the egalitarian level of ‘Natural Law.’

³²² I will cite two examples from pagan mythological narratives, and intentionally pick the two that had been most dear to the Germany of modernity: by which I mean the Greek and Norse mythologies. In Greek Mythology, for example, the head of the gods, Zeus, has no power or dominion over Moira, the goddess of Fate. In Norse Mythology, the Norns weave the threads of fate – a process they perform from and under the protection of the cosmological “tree” Yggdrasil, which is older than Wotan/Odin (the chief of the Norse gods), and over which he has no control (except to hear what is about to transpire).

³²³ Cf. also:

[...] How can one today still defer so far to the simplicity of Christian theologians as to join them in proclaiming that the evolution of the concept of God from the ‘God of Israel’, the national God, to the Christian God, the epitome of everything good, is an advance? [...] when he becomes the poor people’s God, the sinner’s God, the God of the sick par excellence, and the predicate ‘saviour’, ‘redeemer’ as it were remains over as the predicate of divinity as such: of what does such a transformation speak? such a *reduction* of the divine?” (AC §17, p. 139)

³²⁴ Let me augment my analysis with a “corrective” view to Nietzsche’s *strategic* conflation of Judaism and Christianity in the *Genealogy*, which I will leave here to speak for itself, in the context of all that has been said above:

In the Jewish “Old Testament,” the book of divine justice, there are human beings, things, and speeches in so grand a style that Greek and Indian literature have nothing to compare with it. With terror and reverence one stands before these tremendous remnants of what man once was, and will have sad thoughts about ancient Asia and its protruding little peninsula Europe, which wants by all means to signify as against Asia the “progress of man.” To be sure, whoever is himself merely a meager, tame domestic animal and knows only the needs of domestic animals (like our educated people of today, including the Christians of “educated” Christianity) has no cause for amazement or sorrow among these ruins – the taste for the Old Testament is a touchstone for “great” and “small” [recall, in this context, Nietzsche’s pathos of distance; SC] – perhaps he will find the New Testament, the book of grace, still rather more after his heart (it contains a lot of the real, tender, musty true-believer and small-soul smell). To have glued this New Testament, a kind of rococo of taste in every respect, to the Old Testament to make one book, as the “Bible,” as “the book par excellence” – that is perhaps the greatest audacity and “sin against the spirit” that literary Europe has on its conscience (BGE §52, pp. 65-66)

³²⁵ Cf. the following passage from Nietzsche’s Late Notebooks, where he mentions both the Jewish ‘No’ and his high regard for Diaspora Judaism in the context of Paul’s infectious, “priestly” genius:

[The Jewish family of the Diaspora] with its pride, hidden and disguised as humility, of the ‘chosen ones’, with its unenvious saying No, deep within, to everything which has the upper hand and possesses power and magnificence. To have recognized this as power, to have recognized this psychological state as communicative, seductive, infectious for heathens too – that is the genius of Paul (LN 10[181], p. 204 [my underline])

Cf. also:

[...] I recall again the invaluable saying of Paul: ‘God hath chosen the weak things of the world, the foolish things of the world, base things of the world and things which are despised’: that was the formula, in hoc signo *décadence* conquered. – God on the Cross – is the fearful hidden meaning behind this symbol still understood? – Everything that suffers, everything that hangs on the Cross, is divine.... We all hang on the Cross, consequently we are divine.... We alone are divine.... Christianity was a victory, a nobler disposition perished by it (AC §51, pp. 180-181)

³²⁶ Cf. ‘The ‘Improvers’ of Mankind,’ in *Twilight of the Idols*, AC §2, p. 67; AC §22, pp. 143-144.

³²⁷ This conundrum – as my BLM example ought already to have shown – is still “with us,” still endemic to many contemporary discourses the flounder upon attacking racism while remaining open to the counter-accusation of “reverse racism,” or preaching equality while being unable to account for what came to be known as “white privilege.” I maintain, of course, that it is not a ‘racism’ per se, but a Christian domination that denies its theological origins by having recourse to a supposedly “scientific” discourse of biological differences (an axiological problematic that – after its embarrassing externalization in the Holocaust of a Christian Europe – itself did not survive the muzzle of Christian morality). Once, as Nietzsche says in the epigraph to this chapter, “the very concept of master” has been preempted, violence does not necessarily stop – it is simply evaded or denied *as a necessity of the very discourse that preaches “non-violence” and “equality.”*

³²⁸ Mohandas K. Gandhi, *Non-violence in Peace & War Vol. 1*, trans. Mahadev H. Desai (Ahmedabad: Navajivan Pub. House, 1948), p. 263.

³²⁹ Once again, this is not a ‘Jewish’ construction: the Jews were commanded by God to look after the weak that they encounter (the classic case, one of Lévinas’ favorite examples, relates to the foreigner, orphan and widow), but not to the weak as such; God was still, and always, the God of Israel and not of “all the weak.” The relation between ‘Israel’ and the weak had retained the separation (that all relation requires) via – you guessed it – God’s *Law*.

³³⁰ Cf. also: “I have the taste of two millennia against me” (GM III §22, p. 144)

³³¹ From early on in the *Genealogy*, Nietzsche mentions how the pagan nobles were beset by the Jews who enacted a spiritual revenge against them, commencing what Nietzsche calls the “slave revolt” (against the nobles/masters), a revolt that had been victorious (cf. GM I §7, pp. 33-34).

³³² Compare, for example, the following passage from the *Genealogy*, where Nietzsche is asking himself, rhetorically, why he is using such a “harsh” language; to which he responds:

[...] But why stroke the effeminate ears of our modern weaklings? Why should we give way even one step to their tartuffery of words? For us psychologists this would constitute a tartuffery in *deed*, quite apart from the fact that it would nauseate us. For if a psychologist today has *good taste* (others might say, *integrity*) it consists in resistance to the shamefully moralized way of speaking which has gradually made all modern judgments of men and things slimy (GM III §19, p. 137)

Also compare the following from *Ecce Homo* (again it would benefit you here to think of Heidegger and von Trier as guiding examples):

It also seems to me that the rudest word, the rudest letter are still more benign, more decent than silence. Those who remain silent are almost always lacking in delicacy and courtesy of the heart. Silence is an objection; swallowing things leads of necessity to a bad character-it even upsets the, stomach. All who remain silent are dyspeptic.

You see, I don’t want rudeness to be underestimated: it is by far the *most humane* form of contradiction and, in the midst of effeminacy, one of our foremost virtues. (EH, *Why I am so Wise* §5, p. 229)

³³³ Yirmiyahu Yovel, *Dark Riddle: Hegel, Nietzsche, and the Jews* (Pennsylvania: Pennsylvania UP, 1998), p. 150

³³⁴ Yet it is important to recall here the Jewish God’s fundamental interdiction, in the Second Commandment, against all images, all such “contents” ascribed to Its ‘Most High’ Divinity.

³³⁵ My – minor, yet decisive – difference from Yovel’s brilliant analysis consists in what he makes of Nietzsche’s anti-Semitism as it relates to what he calls Nietzsche’s “self-overcoming” (cf. *Dark Riddle*, pp. 122-124; 151-152): this *process* – which Yovel is right to distinguish from (Christian) *tolerantia* and/or “liberal civility” and “good will” (cf. *ibid*, p. 123; I would also add contemporary liberalism’s *bon ton* catchphrase of “political correctness”) – is “overcome” by Nietzsche “intimate relations” with close anti-Semites (like his notoriously Nazi sister). But the genealogy as Yovel conceives it – a “going down to the foundations of each concept” (*ibid*, p. 109) – is, in my view, this very overcoming; its enactment and, indeed, its *raison d’Être*.

Thus, when Yovel examines Nietzsche’s “rhetoric” (*ibid*, p. 152) he does not make the methodological connection to his genealogy. Indeed, Yovel goes on to speculate that “his self-overcoming enabled Nietzsche to use the traces of his conquered anti-Semitism without allowing them to re-poison his mind” (*ibid*, *ibid*). “[Y]et, this is a dangerous game,” Yovel adds immediately: “Nietzsche is playing with fire here, both with himself and with his audience” (*ibid*, *ibid*). I would here hazard a Nietzschean claim, whereby it is not his self-overcoming that Nietzsche presupposes as a safety net against becoming impure for dealing with the impure; it is rather that *this very “rhetoric”*, the force and “spur” of the Nietzschean writing-machine, *that is* (t)his self-overcoming. What I mean to show here is that this danger is already the atmosphere of anyone trying to think, and precisely think through, resentment; hence Nietzsche depicting his psychological method, not to say genius, as a “catching the spirit in the act.” For the (re)valuating approach to betrayal pursued here, we cannot posit any teleological assurance unless it is temporally open to being revoked, overwritten or abused: as that which arrives from elsewhere – never (wholly) given to any conscious control (or its ontological equivalent – the project(ion)) – can always subvert both ‘friend’ and ‘enemy’ plans.

³³⁶ This is what Nietzsche means when he discusses the nihilism of the “will to truth,” and the Christian ideal that underwrites it:

[...] All I have been concerned to indicate here is this: in the most spiritual sphere, too, the ascetic ideal has at present only one kind of real enemy capable of harming it: the comedians of this ideal for they arouse mistrust of it. Everywhere else that the spirit is strong, mighty, and at work without counterfeit today, it does without ideals of any kind – the popular expression for this abstinence is “atheism” – except for its *will to truth*. But this will, this remnant of an ideal, is, if you will believe me, this ideal itself in its strictest, most spiritual formulation, esoteric through and through, with all external additions abolished, and thus not so much its remnant as its kernel. (GM III §27, p. 160)

³³⁷ *Anti-Semite and Jew*, pp. 56-57

³³⁸ Galatians 3:23-29

³³⁹ To show that this had been said as a methodological critique against Christian “sensibility,” designed to defend against – or at least protest the eventual – covering-over of the Greek conception of nobility (and *Distanz*), let me quote a bit more fully:

[...] Regarding this background of all Christian morality, Christianity did aim to “Judaize” the world. How far it has succeeded in Europe is brought out by the fact that Greek antiquity – a world without feelings of sin – still seems so very strange to our sensibility, although whole generations as well as many excellent individuals have expended so much good will on attempts to approach and incorporate this world. “Only if you *repent* will God show you grace-that would strike a Greek as ridiculous and annoying. He would say: “Maybe slaves feel that way (ibid, ibid).

³⁴⁰ Cf., for example, Nietzsche’s account of “[t]he will to power in every combination of forces – resisting what’s stronger, attacking what’s weaker” (LN 36[21], p. 25)

³⁴¹ Here one sees the particularly priestly asceticism in a saying – too often allowed to proceed as benign/positive – like Abraham Lincoln’s: “Do I not destroy my enemies when I make them my friends?” (quoted in Robert Greene and Joost Elfers, *The 48 Laws of Power* (London: Profile Books, 1998), p. 12).

³⁴² The “family” of Man owes everything to the incarnation of the Son of God/Man; this is where and when the Monotheist God – that used to have the national specificity of ‘Israel’ – became the God of everyone – and it is from this ‘everyone’ that the generic ‘Man’ was born. Jesus Christ had taken the Jewish privilege and transformed it to the privilege of ‘Man’ (still exclusionary, except not it was a generalized and internalized exclusion). All of this, of course, is mediated by and through the unifying function that ‘Spirit’ and ‘Love’ replace for the schismatic quality of the ‘Letter’ and the ‘Law.’ Through the Son of God, “we” – that is, all those who qualify as having a soul – i.e., as being redeemable by Christ – are made the “sons” of “our Father” In the Book of John we read Jesus say unto God:

[...] I do not ask for these only, but also for those who will believe in me through their word, | that they may all be one, just as you, Father, are in me, and I in you, that they also may be in us, so that the world may believe that you have sent me. | The glory that you have given me I have given to them, that they may be one even as we are one, | I in them and you in me, that they may become perfectly one, so that the world may know that you sent me and loved them even as you loved me. (John 7:20-23)

³⁴³ I believe it will not be difficult to show that Thomas Hobbes’s *Leviathan* theorized the conditions of what he calls the “State of Nature” by *presupposing a Christian Subject, but taking away the function of the priest*: this leaves one with, indeed, a schismatic realm – somewhere *between the segregational stability of Judaism and the congregational stability of Christianity* – where it is “every ‘man’ for himself.” It is hence no surprise that, in order to explain communal life, Hobbes has to rely on a transcendent principle of convergence that wields absolute authority, even if he would relegate it to an earthly person/institution rather than a metaphysical ‘God’ (the function and the structure are the same in this, so-called ‘secular’ or ‘scientific’ understanding of communal cohesion). William Connolly makes a similar argument – at least structurally – when he says that Hobbes “walks a tightrope: [...] to overcome anarchic tendencies in [...] Protestantism without falling back to the net of ‘Popism’” (William Connolly, *Political Theory and Modernity* (Oxford: Basil Blackwell, 1988), p. 21). This view is also supported by Michael Allen Gillespie as well, who writes that Hobbes’ “[...] view of the world is the result of his acceptance of the basic tenets of nominalism, especially as it is received and transmuted by the Reformation”, and that, hence, in/through Hobbes “[...] it is not the rejection of religion that produces modern natural and political science but the theological demonstration of religion’s irrelevance for life in this world” (which follows Luther’s views of predestination and *sola fide*); cf. Michael Allen Gillespie, *The Theological Origins of Modernity* (Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, 2008), pp. 209, 210.

It also comes as no surprise, then, that – just as the Christians see ‘Man’ as possessing a ‘soul’ that seeks to become one with God and be saved – Hobbes sees ‘Nature’ and ‘Reason’ as possessing “laws” directing ‘Man’ towards peace and mutually beneficial living conditions in equal subservience to the Sovereign (who is, indeed, depicted famously on the cover of the *Leviathan* as One big Man composed of a multitude of smaller ‘men’). I believe that this, Hobbes’, approach to ‘science’ and ‘reason’ is encapsulated in the following passage: “The Light of humane minds is Perspicuous Words, | but by exact definitions first snuffed, and purged from ambiguity; *Reason* is the *pave*; Encrease of *Science*, the *way*; and the Benefit mankind, the *end*.” (Thomas Hobbes, *Leviathan in Two Volumes: A Critical Edition*, Vol. 2, ed. G. A. J. Rogers and Carl Schuhmann (London: Continuum, 2003), p. 40.

³⁴⁴ Dickey, pp. 165-166.

³⁴⁵ Once again, as in Heidegger’s ‘*ekstasis*,’ what was the ‘ek’ of the an-archical event gets rendered as a kind of projection or bridge, a state or stasis, whereby ‘transcendence’ loses its metaphysically interruptive nature, and is domesticated by becoming immanent.

³⁴⁶ Zvi Kolitz, ‘Yossel Rakover Speaks to God,’ *Yossel Rakover Speaks to God: Holocaust Challenges to Religious Faith* (Hoboken: KTAV Publ., 1995), p. 22

³⁴⁷ Perhaps there is none more illustrative of this “gap,” this *separation* between the Jewish God and his people’s suffering, than in the story of Job; where Job, who is righteous in the eyes of God Himself, is made to suffer as a mere test of his faith. Hence, to put it briefly, the Jew, upon every suffering and pain inflicted on her head, will always *look up in question and suspicion*, whilst looking to *the Law* in faith and “love.”

³⁴⁸ Cf. for example Isaiah 42:6: “I am the Lord, I have called you in righteousness, I have taken you by the hand and kept you; I have given you as a covenant to the people, a light to the nations”.

³⁴⁹ Cf. Hegel’s comments in his ‘Spirit of Christianity’ text,

[...] With his herds Abraham wandered hither and thither over a boundless territory without bringing parts of it any nearer to him by cultivating and improving them. Had he done so, he would have become attached to them and might have adopted them as parts of his world. The land was simply given over to his cattle for grazing. The water slept in deep wells without living movement; digging for it was laborious; it was dearly bought or struggled for, an extorted property, a necessary requirement for him and his cattle. The groves which often gave him coolness and shade he soon left again; in them he had theophanies, appearances of his perfect Object on High, but he did not tarry in them with the love which would have made them worthy of the Divinity and participant in Him [hence, it is the rejection of ‘love’ that forbids Abraham’s ‘spirit’ to ever become incarnated in a *Sittlichkeit*; SC]. He was a stranger on earth, a stranger to the soil and to men alike. (ETW, p. 186)

³⁵⁰ Thomas Aquinas, *Summa Theologica* 2.162.2. For the relation of pride to the devil, cf. ST 1.63.2-3, and in: Saint Augustine, *The City of God*, trans. Henry Bettenson (London: Penguin, 2003), Book XIV Chapter 3, pp. 551-552.

³⁵¹ Nietzsche bespeaks this “leap” in the relation to God as well: “If God wished to become an object of love, he should have given up judging and justice first of all; a judge, even a merciful judge, is no object of love.” (ibid §140, p. 190)

Jeffrey Librett confirms this dynamic in his assessment of the way Christian theology treats (and *had to treat*) the Old Testament Judaism as a kind of a “prefiguration” of the coming of Christ. In his account, which, again, I wholly agree with, states that: “Sooner or later, here or there within the Christian realms, something like the Reformation had to get started, for the Church only prefigured itself from the start, endlessly contained and failed to contain its own Judaism within itself” (Librett, p. 20 [my emphasis])

³⁵² Cf. Friedrich Nietzsche, ‘Schopenhauer as Educator,’ *Thoughts Out of Season Part II: The Use and Abuse of History and Schopenhauer as Educator*, trans. Adrian Collins (Edinburgh: The Edinburgh Press, 1909), pp. 135ff.

³⁵³ Cf. for example, the following passages. In the first Nietzsche complains that the necessity of Christian patience, forbearance or forgiveness is locked in a contradiction that uses knowledge to rid itself of the ethico-metaphysical question (of justice, of “right”). In the second, this time from the Genealogy itself, he once again treats of the famous quote from Jesus on the Cross (“forgive them, for they know not what they do”), where the negative relation of inability to avenge wrongs turns to a positive valuation of oneself, a descriptive morality that becomes prescriptive; in short – what is today called a “rationalization.”

Whether we are able to forgive. - How can one forgive them at all, if they know not what they do! One has nothing whatever to forgive. - But does a man ever know completely what he does? And if this must always remain at least questionable, then men never do have anything to forgive one another and pardoning is to the most rational man a thing impossible. Finally: if the ill-doers really did know what they did – we would have a right to forgive them only if we had a right to accuse and to punish them. But this [as ‘loving’ Christians (hence the contradiction); SC] we do not have. (‘The Wanderer and His Shadow,’ §68, HH, p. 327);

[Here Nietzsche is positing an “observer” or interlocutor to explore the realm of resentment; the following is what this interlocutor “reports” back to Nietzsche; SC] [...] and impotence which does not require into ‘goodness of heart’; anxious lowliness into ‘humility’; subjection to those one hates into ‘obedience’ (that is, to one of whom they say he commands this subjection – they call him God). The inoffensiveness of the weak man [...] here acquire[s] flattering names, such as ‘patience,’ and are even called virtue itself; his inability for revenge is called unwillingness to revenge, perhaps even forgiveness (‘for they know not what they do – we alone know what they do!’). They also speak of ‘loving one’s enemies’ – and sweat as they do so. (GM I §14, p. 47)

³⁵⁴ Here I recognize a precursor who studied European Christendom’s New World project – one which he calls that of an “incorporating society” – and particularly how the unsettled Jewish difference has primed (not to say prompted) this project, especially as it is unconsciously (even to most contemporary historians and post-colonial scholars) made *operative* in the relation of the newly-arrived Christians to America and their treatment of the native “Indians.” See: Jonathan Boyarin, *The Unconverted Self: Jews, Indians, and the Identity of Christian Europe* (Chicago: Chicago UP, 2009).

³⁵⁵ *Anti-Semite and Jew*, pp. 67-68

³⁵⁶ GM I §14, p. 48

³⁵⁷ ST 1.63.2 [my underline]

³⁵⁸ Hence, Aquinas states that, “[w]hatever is in our power, is subject to our command. But the acts of the will, most of all, are in our power; since all our acts are said to be in our power, in so far as they are voluntary. Therefore the acts of the will are commanded by us.” (ST 2.17.3).

Recall, in this context, that the Jews conceived of ‘command’ as arriving wholly from without – an external Codex of Law bestowed upon them by a ‘*Deus Absconditus*’ God – and, moreover, applies to a very limited “us,” much more limited than the generic ‘Man’ that Aquinas’ treatises are dealing with (under the general heading of ‘Treatise on Human Acts: Acts Peculiar to Man’). The Jewish God, of course, cares little for intention or voluntary choice. Here the Biblical story of the Arc of the Coven – which I mentioned earlier on occasion – is a case in point; a story that takes place upon King David moving the Arc, by God’s decree, back to Jerusalem. During this journey, the oxen that carry the Arc stumble, and the Arc was about to fall, which made Uzzah, one of King David’s men, to insinctively – for he knew and “felt” how holy the Arc was – support the Arc with his hand; God, however, having decreed that the Arc should not be touched (due precisely to its “holiness”), kills Uzzah on the spot. It is not the holiness “within me” that matters to the Jewish God, it is the holiness of His Law alone:

And David and all the house of Israel were celebrating before the Lord, with songs and lyres and harps and tambourines and castanets and cymbals. | And when they came to the threshing floor of Nacon, Uzzah put out his hand to the ark of God and took hold of it, for the oxen stumbled. | And the anger of the Lord was kindled against Uzzah, and God struck him down there because of his error, and he died there beside the ark of God. (2 Samuel 6:5-7 [my underline])

³⁵⁹ Ibid, ibid.

³⁶⁰ Here Aquinas specifically uses the example of the “bigger” good – since it is more comprehensive, and in principle attainable by all – of knowledge, or truth. Moreover, Aquinas explains this with regards to the passions – and their moral regulation – specifically when addressing the difference between a divinely-ordained “zeal” of love, and the baser, privative “zeal” of envy:

[...] [Z]eal arises from love of good. But through defect of goodness, it happens that certain small goods cannot, in their entirety, be possessed by many at the same time; and from the love of such things arises the zeal of envy. But it does not arise, properly speaking, in the case of those things which, in their entirety, can be possessed by many: for no one envies another the knowledge of truth, which can be known entirely by many (ST 2.28.4 [my underline])

³⁶¹ Once again, it is important to note that this height was still affirmed in the Jewish “reversal,” only to be denied ex hypothesi in the Christian *décadence* that became of it. For the Jews, envy was just supposed to work in the opposite way: *they were supposed to be the example that ll other nations are to be envious of.*

³⁶² Nietzsche, ‘Homer’s Contest,’ *Prefaces to Unwritten Works*, ed. and trans. Michael W. Grenke, (South Bend: St. Augustine Press, 2005), p. 82/KGW3.2:278

³⁶³ This will go some way in further substantiating my claim that Nietzsche’s “Greek reminders” are fundamentally resistances – in the name of this lost ‘nobility’ – to a metaphysics (of *ressentiment*) that can no longer see Greek nobility as such, to a “moral world order” that already underlay his contemporary philologists and their analyses; cf. *Daybreak* §563, p. 226.

³⁶⁴ While Nietzsche does not supply a citation, I believe he is referring to a mention of Hesiod in Aristotle’s *Politics*, where the relation between democracy and tyranny is conceived of as being in an “opposition,” but – since “the final form of democracy is tyranny” (*Politics*, 1312b4) – one describes as similar to the *competition* between two potters; thus, one is supposed to goad the other into becoming better. Cf. Aristotle, *Aristotle in 23 Volumes, Vol. 21: Politics*, trans. H. Rackham (Cambridge: Harvard UP, 1944).

³⁶⁵ Consider the following juxtaposition Nietzsche makes between the New Testament and the Old, and spoken, once again, against the *victory* of the former over the latter: “I do not like the “New Testament,” that should be plain; I find it almost disturbing that my taste in regard to this most highly esteemed and overestimated work should be so singular (I have the taste of two millennia against me): but there it is! [...] The Old Testament – that is something else again: all honor to the Old Testament! I find in it great human beings, a heroic landscape, and something of the very rarest quality in the world, the incomparable naiveté of the strong heart; what is more, I find a people. In the New one, on the other hand, I find nothing but petty sectarianism, mere rococo of the soul, mere involutions, nooks, queer things, the air of the conventicle [...]” (GM III §22, p. 144 [original emphasis in italics; mine in underline])

³⁶⁶ Cf. Tractate Baba Batra, Ch. 2:I.6 B, in *The Talmud of Babylonia*, vol. XXII.A, trans. Jacob Neusner (Atlanta: Scholars Press, 1992), p. 97

³⁶⁷ Cf. in Nietzsche, GM III §9, p. 113.

³⁶⁸ John 1:9-17

³⁶⁹ AC §29, p. 153

³⁷⁰ Cf. in Nietzsche's *Will to Power*: "The symbolism of Christianity is based on the Jewish, which had already resolved all reality (history, nature) into a holy unnaturalness and unreality – which no longer recognized real history, which was no longer interested in natural consequences –" (WTP §183, p. 111)

³⁷¹ This key difference between the argumentative Jew and the reconciled/loving Christian stands at the basis of what I sometimes allude to here as the "see no evil" morality (that I associate with Christianity, as well as Mohandas Ghandi). Nietzsche writes in the *Antichrist*, in a passage that ought to be read here with Hegel's teleology of Absolute Knowledge in mind (and the Christian nature of the 'spirit' that brings this teleology the "good news," the "glad tidings" of absolute reconciliation), how,

[...] The 'glad tidings' are precisely that there are no more opposites; the kingdom of Heaven belongs to children; the faith which here finds utterance is not a faith which has been won by struggle – it is there, from the beginning, it is as it were a return to childishness in the spiritual domain. The occurrence of retarded puberty undeveloped in the organism as a consequence of degeneration is familiar at any rate to physiologists. – Such a faith is not angry, does not censure, does not defend itself; it does not bring 'the sword' – it has no idea to what extent it could one day cause dissention." (AC §32, p. 156 [my underline])

Nietzsche continues, further below:

[...] Neither can such a doctrine [as Christianity] argue: it simply does not understand that other doctrines exist, *can* exist, it simply does not know how to imagine an opinion contrary to its own.... Where it encounters one it will, with the most heartfelt sympathy, lament the 'blindness' – for it sees the 'light' – but it will make no objection..." (ibid, p. 157 [my underline])

³⁷² It was Aristotle who was the first to present a holistic account of thought as a causal chain of inference harking back to the "first cause" of an original, "unmoved mover," then, through Plotinus and Anselm, superimposed upon the "Judeo-Christian" conception of a Single Absolute God. I am fully aware that this is a rather tenuous and extremely fragmented account both of the role of the *theos* in Aristotelian logic, as well as its uptake in Christian theology – but for the purposes of this dissertation I shall limit myself to the last great philosophical incorporation of theology in/as Hegel's System of Science, specifically the *Science of Logic*.

In addition to the various citations above concerning the central role that God plays in Hegel's *Logic*, I can cite here Cyril O'Regan's statement that not only discusses "Hegelian Logic as Logica Divina," but precisely confirms that his logic constituted a kind of "restitution of Aristotle" (cf. Cyril O'Regan, *The Heterodox Hegel* (Albany: SUNY Press, 1994), p. 86ff.). Also cf. Giovanni Reale, *The Concept of First Philosophy and the Unity of the Metaphysics of Aristotle*, trans. John R. Catan (Albany: SUNY Press, 1980).

Here is what Nietzsche – and I am citing this to show that his resistance to the metaphysical Aristotle-Hegel trajectory is similar to what a Jewish critique of it might say – says about logic in *Will to Power*; wherein the unity and ethico-metaphysical self-sufficiency that is ascribed to 'logic' (a function borrowed from the *theological* 'God') is insisted by Nietzsche to be considered as a matter not of necessity or truth, but decision and power (hence, putting me responsible for any argument that I dismiss; my responsibility can no longer hide behind "contradiction" to justify such a dismissal). Nietzsche will always acknowledge everything in the philosophical procedure that denies its own power/violence, owing to the 'irony' of the ethico-metaphysical closure that it presupposes: "[t]he irony of the dialectician is a form of mob revenge: the ferocity of the oppressed finds an outlet in the cold knife-thrust of the syllogism" (WTP §431, p. 236). He details the "knife thrust" as itself – though citing some (natural, rational, or divine) necessity – an effect of will to power:

We are unable to affirm and to deny one and the same thing: this is a subjective empirical law, not the expression of any "necessity" but only of an inability.

If, according to Aristotle, the law of contradiction is the most certain of all principles, if it is the ultimate and most basic, upon which every demonstrative proof rests, if the principle of every axiom lies in it; then one should consider all the more rigorously what presuppositions already lie at the bottom of it. Either it asserts something about actuality, about being, as if one already knew this from another source; that is, as if opposite attributes *could* not be ascribed to it. Or the proposition means: opposite attributes *should* not be ascribed to it. In that case, logic would be an imperative, not to know the true, but to posit and arrange a world that shall be called true by us.

In short, the question remains open: are the axioms of logic adequate to reality or are they a means and measure for us to create reality, the concept "reality," for ourselves? – To affirm the former one would, as already said, have to have a previous knowledge of being-which is certainly not the case. The proposition therefore contains no criterion of truth, but an imperative concerning that which *should* count as true. (WTP §516, p. 279 [my underline])

³⁷³ Nietzsche indeed treats Christianity as a "logical consequence" of Judaism, but – considering what Nietzsche says in the quote above (regarding the question of logical necessity being underwritten by the question of power) – this 'logical consequence' is, fundamentally, the *décadence* of Judaism; when Judaism had no more power to sustain *its* pathos of distance:

What values are negated by [Christianity]? What does its counterideal comprise?—Pride, pathos of distance, great responsibility, exuberance, splendid animality, the instincts that delight in war and conquest, the deification of passion, of revenge, of cunning, of anger, of voluptuousness, of adventure, of knowledge; the noble ideal is negated: the beauty, wisdom, power, splendor and dangerousness of the type "man": the man who fixes goals, the "man of the future" (—here Christianity appears as a logical consequence of Judaism —). (WTP §221, p. 129)

³⁷⁴ In *Antichrist*, Nietzsche goes so far as to call Protestantism the "Original Sin" of German philosophy in general; cf. AC §10, p. 133).

³⁷⁵ We find in Luther the following, which only extols faith — whose provenance is only ever known to God, and only ever having any effect after death — over the worldly saints and their various works/miracles:

[...] In the papacy there is a book containing the legends or accounts of the saints. I hate it intensely, solely for the reason that it tells of revolting forms of worship and silly miracles performed by idle people. These legends and accounts actually accomplish only one thing: they increase contempt of the government and of the household, yes, even almost of the church itself. Therefore such tales should be shunned and utterly rejected, for the chief thing of Christian doctrine is faith. (*Luther's Works Vol. 3: Lectures on Genesis: Chapters 15-20*, ed. Jaroslav Jan Pelikan, Hilton C. Oswald, and Helmut T. Lehmann (Saint Louis: Concordia Publishing House, 1999), p. 325 [my underline]).

The problem here, of course, is the one that attends all problems of height — the problem of *hierarchy*. Luther takes issue with the fact that the Catholic Church — in according such great privilege to 'saints' — are in fact propagating a differentiation between Christians that Luther's metaphysical assumptions concerning Christianity directly contradict. Averse to all distinction, Luther saw all Christians as equally united in Christ, and, to that end, considered them all as 'saints.'

This Lutheran position reflects itself also when considering the Dogmatic interpretation of Heaven and the arrangement of the Angels and Saints besides God and Jesus Christ. Upon death, the Saints are said to rise to Heaven, which — according to classical Catholic Dogma — they are positioned respective of their closeness to Jesus in virtue. This positioning can, in fact, be used to divine more minute variations on the "Jesus theme." If, for example, a saint who gave all his worldly possessions to the poor might be positioned "lower" than a saint who treated leprous patients and drank the pus of their wounds, this could still give some qualification as to the importance of each act relative to the other. This, in turn, yields a position/value that becomes entrenched, marked as such (i.e., a 'pathology'), and can, in turn, be used to condemn or praise — be judgmental or envious — living believers and peers.

For the arrangement of the Saints in Heaven — what Aquinas calls "degrees of beatitude" — and its direct bearing on the primary theological virtue of Christianity, '*Caritas*;' cf. Thomas Aquinas, ST 3.93.2-3. Another, more illustrative example of such 'inner division' could, of course, be found in Dante Alighieri's *Paradiso*.

³⁷⁶ Cf. "[...] [Christianity] desires to destroy, shatter, stupefy, intoxicate, the one thing it does not desire is *measure*: and that is why it is in the profoundest sense [...] un-Hellenic." (HH, §114, p. 66)

³⁷⁷ Cf. "[...] How can one today still defer so far to the simplicity of Christian theologians as to join them in proclaiming that the evolution of the concept of God from the 'God of Israel', the national God, to the Christian God, the epitome of everything good, is an *advance*?" (ibid §17, p. 139 [my underline])

³⁷⁸ Cf. "[...] if one judges his morality according to his capacity for great self-sacrificing resolution and self-denial (which, protracted and grown to a habit, constitutes holiness), then it is in his affects that he is most moral" (ibid §138, p. 74)

³⁷⁹ On the face of it, this role and function imposed upon the 'will' goes against Martin Luther's doctrine of salvation through faith alone. Free will, as Luther explains in his famous response to Erasmus titled 'The Bondage of the Will,' cannot bring Man to Salvation, since Salvation ought to be wholly dependent upon the direct intervention of God's grace — that is, outside of Man's control. Putting this power in the hands of Man is hence, for Luther, the ultimate sacrilege;:

If we believe that Satan is the prince of this world, ever ensnaring and fighting against the kingdom of Christ with all his powers; and that he does not let go his captives without being forced by the Divine Power of the Spirit; it is manifest, that there can be no such thing as—"Free-will!"

If we believe that original sin has so destroyed us, that even in the godly who are led by the Spirit, it causes the utmost molestation by striving against that which is good; it is manifest, that there can be nothing left in a man devoid of the Spirit, which can turn itself towards good, but which must turn towards evil! [...]

If we believe that Christ redeemed men by His blood, we are compelled to confess, that the whole man was lost; otherwise, we shall make Christ superfluous, or a Redeemer of the grossest part of man only,—which is blasphemy and sacrilege! (Martin Luther, *The Bondage of the Will*, trans. Henry Cole, ed. Edward T. Vaughan (Grand Rapids: Wm. B. Eerdmans Pub. Co, 1931) §167 [my underline])

Also cf.,

I herewith reject and condemn as sheer error all doctrines which glorify our free will, as diametrically contrary to the help and grace of our Savior Jesus Christ. Outside of Christ death and sin are our masters and the devil is our god and lord, and there is no power or ability, no cleverness or reason, with which we can prepare ourselves for righteousness

and life or seek after it. On the contrary, we must remain the dupes and captives of sin and the property of the devil to do and to think what pleases them and what is contrary to God and his commandments (Martin Luther, 'Confession Concerning Christ's Supper,' *Martin Luther's Basic Theological Writings*, ed. Timothy F. Lull (Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 1989), p. 33 [my underline])

Yet what Luther in fact is doing is refusing the possibility of ever "willing ourselves to Salvation," *all the while accepting the divine example of Jesus Christ* and the opening to His Divine Grace by (an internalized) faith. Thus, Luther's theological position makes sure that no earthly power can ever expect to have its faith rewarded in life, and this means, fundamentally, that the will shall always remain accused and insufficient, shall always have to test its "faith" through becoming more and more like its divine symbol, but not any closer to it on that account; thus, at last, generating a "nausea," a mistrust of 'Man' in herself and her acts, since neither can ever deliver any expression of power (including the "proto-moral" expression of the Greeks).

Since 'faith' is a necessity for all those who want to be saved (through their belief in, and love for, Jesus Christ), this symbolic, "divine exemplar" is destined to turn on any and all intentions (attending acts), and all affects. This, effectively, entails that faith shall probe ever deeper, an infinite principle of self-scrutiny that can never be fully accomplished, but must continue indefinitely. It is clear that such a view of human acts, demanding the metaphysical 'humility' of 'Man' through deifying self-sacrifice and self-abnegation (which, as long as one is alive, are inexhaustible ideals *by definition*), when arising *within* Christian metaphysics, would also devolve upon the repudiation of all acts, which is why Nietzsche calls it a "devaluation" of morality, and dubs it nihilistic:

[...] What was especially at stake was the value of the "unegoistic," the instincts of pity, self-abnegation, self-sacrifice, which Schopenhauer had gilded, deified, and projected into a beyond for so long that at last they became for him "value-in itself," on the basis of which he *said No* to life and to himself. But it was against precisely *these instincts* that there spoke from me an ever more fundamental mistrust, an ever more corrosive skepticism! It was precisely here that I saw the *great danger* to mankind, its sublimest enticement and seduction but to what? to nothingness? – it was precisely here that I saw the beginning of the end, the dead stop, a retrospective weariness, *the will turning against life*, the tender and sorrowful signs of the ultimate illness: I understood the ever spreading morality of pity that had seized even on philosophers and made them ill, as *the most sinister symptom of a European culture that had itself become sinister*, perhaps as *its by-pass to a new Buddhism? to a Buddhism for Europeans? to – nihilism?* (GM Preface §5, p. 19 [my underline])

³⁸⁰ It is with Christianity that "hypocrisy" indeed became a problem, since it was the indelible sign of its denied ethico-metaphysical war against the Judaism it "swallowed" or usurped. Martin Luther's writings, of course, are rife with invectives against this non-correspondence between the act and the affects that are (supposedly) commanded upon it to attend the act. That was, indeed, Luther's main line of attack against the "Papists" and other "hypocrites" – they fail to see that the telos of Christ's mission was to become internalized as an inner example one must turn one's will to merge with; to internalize Christ as a "gift," an *inner example (unlike the saints)*:

[...] As St. Peter says in I Peter 4,5 "*Christ suffered for us, thereby leaving us an example.*" Thus *when you see how he prays, fasts, helps people, and shows them love, so also you should do*, both for yourself and for your neighbor. However this is the smallest part of the gospel, on the basis of which it cannot yet even be called gospel. For on this level Christ is of *no more help to you than some other saint*. His life remains his own and does not as yet contribute anything to you. In short *this mode [of understanding Christ as simply an example] does not make Christians but only hypocrites*. You must *grasp Christ at a much higher level*. [...] The chief article and foundation of the gospel is that *before you take Christ as an example, you accept and recognize him as a gift, as a present that God has given you and that is your own*. This means that when you see or hear of Christ doing or suffering something, you do not doubt that *Christ himself, with his deeds and suffering, belongs to you*. On this you may depend as surely as if you had done it yourself; *indeed as if you were Christ himself*. (Martin Luther, 'A Brief Instruction on What to Look for and Expect in the Gospels,' *Basic Theological Writings*, p. 106)

Also compare the following from Luther's *The Bondage of the Will*:

[...] *being hated of God, they [the Jews] were given up to so many vices, in order that they might be convinced* from the fruits of their ungodliness, *that they willed and did nothing but evil*. And then, he judges the Jews also separately; where he saith, that the Jew "in the letter," is a transgressor of the law: which *he proves, in like manner, from the fruits, and from experience*: saying, "Thou who declarest that a man should not steal, stealest thyself: thou who abhorrest idols, committest sacrilege." *Thus excepting none whatever* [Luther is referring here to a passage by Paul that sees all – Jews and Greeks alike – as under Sin; SC], but those who are Jews "*in the spirit.*" (*The Bondage of the Will*, §139)

³⁸¹ Nietzsche sees what he calls the (Christian) "conscience vivisection" as the result of a denied *right to cruelty*. The latter – as it clear from Nietzsche's analysis above of Greek 'Groll' – was affirmed in Greek paganism as the affirmative discharge of their height/nobility, as the activity of the 'enmity' and 'revenge' that they allotted to only their most venerable peers (i.e., nobles of other nations). In a move later followed by Michel Foucault's own "genealogy," this form of celebration

and affirmation became hidden with the turn to Christianity, guilty. Like all “bad things,” like everything which smacks of that irreconcilable difference of height/value, this cruelty had been *also turned on itself* (recall the fate of Jewish ‘hatred’) through the substitution of ‘conscience’ for the infinite, *potentially* all-consuming (for only Christianity “fulfilled” this “potential”) *Distanz* of the Jews. It is now in and through ‘conscience’ that ‘Man’ enjoys his cruelty, except that now he has to become a masochist, enjoying a self-inflicted cruelty that, in turning on itself, follows the Christian ‘example’ (and, subsequently, is deemed, in the eyes of Christianity, worthy of ‘Salvation’):

[...] There is also an abundant, over-abundant enjoyment at one's own suffering, at making oneself suffer – and wherever man allows himself to be persuaded to self-denial in the religious sense, or to self-mutilation, [...], or altogether to desensualization, decarnalization, contrition, Puritanical spasms of penitence, vivisection of the conscience, and *sacrificio dell'intelletto* [sacrifice of the intellect; WK] à la Pascal, he is secretly lured and pushed forward by his cruelty, by those dangerous thrills of cruelty turned against oneself (‘Our Virtues,’ BGE §229, p. 159 [my underline])

Cf., also, Nietzsche's comments in the *Genealogy*:

[...] We modern men are the heirs of the conscience-vivisection and self-torture of millennia: this is what we have practiced longest, it is our distinctive art perhaps, and in any case our subtlety in which we have acquired a refined taste. Man has all too long had an “evil eye” for his natural inclinations, so that they have finally become inseparable from his “bad conscience.” An attempt at the reverse would in itself be possible – but who is strong enough for it? – that is, to wed the bad conscience to all the unnatural inclinations, all those aspirations to the beyond, to that which runs counter to sense, instinct, nature, animal, in short all ideals hitherto, which are one and all hostile to life and ideals that slander the world. To whom should one turn today with such hopes and demands? (GM II §24, p. 95 [my underline])

³⁸² That is how, as Nietzsche said above, Christianity waged “a war to the death” against nobility (AC §5, p. 129)

³⁸³ Cf. “The entire morality of [...] [Jesus'] Sermon on the Mount belongs here: man takes a real delight in oppressing himself with excessive claims and afterwards idolizing this tyrannically demanding something in his soul.” (HH §137, p. 74)

³⁸⁴ cf. *Homer's Contest*, pp. 91-92

³⁸⁵ Hence Nietzsche writes of the third and final stage of nihilism that follows the aforementioned procedure dialectically. First, there is the incarnation of some highest good or an eternally true knowledge that, historically, remains transcendent and unachieved *in life*; hence: “Nihilism as a psychological state will have to be reached, *first*, when we have sought a “meaning” in all events that is not there: so the seeker eventually becomes discouraged.” (WTP §12, p. 12). Then, when this meaning comes back to haunt ‘Man’ – since, though fulfilled *de jure* (in the Christian *pleroma*) it remains “unfulfilled” *de facto* (in history) – it posits a ‘soul’ within ‘Man’ to aspire for this fulfillment and accrue guilt for its lack (of fulfillment). Hence, the second stage of nihilism happens “[...] when one has posited a totality, a systematization [i.e. a Wholeness *in principle*; SC], indeed any organization in all events, and underneath all events, and a soul that longs to admire and revere has wallowed in the idea of some supreme form of domination and administration” (*ibid*, *ibid*).

The last stage of nihilism occurs “as soon as man finds out how [the] world is fabricated solely from psychological needs [the interiorization of all difference as ‘affect;’ SC], and how he has absolutely no right to it, [hence entailing] disbelief in any metaphysical world [...]” (*ibid*, p. 13). This is what, finally, leads to the nihilism of disvalue, of an absolute valuelessness that had despaired of all values; having imposed one ‘ideal’ value/telos after another – through the (literally) immaculate coherence of the Jesus symbol – this process leads one to despair and “slander” all purposes, all goals, all values, all “truths,” and to do so thoroughly, psychologically, scientifically. It is the nihilism that awaits at the end of what Hegel called “the labor of the negative:”

What has happened, at bottom? The feeling of valuelessness was reached with the realization that the overall character of existence may not be interpreted by means of the concept of “aim,” the concept of “unity,” or the concept of “truth.” Existence has no goal or end; any comprehensive unity in the plurality of events is lacking: the character of existence is not “true,” is false. One simply lacks any reason for convincing oneself that there is a true world. Briefly: the categories “aim,” “unity,” “being” which we used to project some value into the world-we pull out again; so the world looks valueless. (*ibid*, *ibid*).

³⁸⁶ ‘Transcendence and Height,’ BPW, p. 17

³⁸⁷ For example, Jesus testimony when tried in front of Caliphaz (the Jewish head priest), in Matthew 26:64: “But I say to all of you: From now on you will see the Son of Man sitting at the right hand of the Mighty One and coming on the clouds of heaven”. Also cf. Mark 2:10: “I want you to know that the Son of Man has authority on earth to forgive sins”.

³⁸⁸ The English versions of Exodus – e.g. New and Traditional King James Version, as well as the New Revised Standard Version of the Bible – translate “we will do and we will be obedient” (Exodus 24:7). This probably follows from the Latin Vulgate that puts “obedientes” as a translation to the Hebrew “ve’nishma” (and (we) will hear.”

Luther, who translated the Bible directly from the Hebrew Scriptures, indeed comes closer to the Hebrew meaning and uses “*gehorsamen*” in which – though it has the meaning of “to obey” – at least the sound of the German *hören*, to hear, is still

present (compared with the more distant ‘*audire*’, to hear (as in ‘audience’) in ‘obey’ (*ob+audire*). The difference is important in our context since “to do and to obey” suggests a mere *compounding* of the “doing,” while “do and hear” is a radicalization of the act towards God: the Jews commit to carry the act out *before* “hearing” (i.e. knowing) what it is. This also shows, I think, what Lévinas means by calling Jewish freedom “difficult.”

³⁸⁹ I am alluding here to the like the “fate-vs.-will” conflict that animates all Greek tragedy; I will return to this Greek-tragic conflict, and more precisely to its Christian/Hegelian/Philosophical appropriation in the next, concluding, chapter.

³⁹⁰ This is also what I take Nietzsche to mean when he writes that “it is the Church, not its poison, that repels us” – it is the visibility and externality of the ‘Church,’ in its Dogma and hierarchical structure (that “seems to hinder rather than hasten” the progress of resentment’s “poison”), that repels the Protestant, and yet its Christian *ressentiment* still exerts its seduction (cf. GM I §9, p. 36). I will continue elaborating the ethico-metaphysical implications of Protestant *Bildung* – especially as Hegel justified and systematized it – in the next, concluding chapter.

³⁹¹ Cf. Martin Luther’s commentary on Saint Paul’s Epistle to the Romans:

[...] only the gospel reveals the righteousness of God (i.e., who is righteous and how a man can be the righteousness of God is the cause of salvation. Here, too, “the righteousness of God” must not be understood as that righteousness by which he is righteous in himself, but as that righteousness by which we are made righteous (justified) by Him, and this happens through faith in the gospel.

Also cf., “as through faith the righteousness of God lives in us, so through faith also sin is alive in us, i.e., by faith alone we must believe that we are sinners, for this is not obvious to us; indeed, quite often we are not even conscious of it. Therefore, we must stand in the judgment of God and believe him when he says that we are sinners, for he cannot lie.” (Martin Luther, *Lectures on Romans*, ed. and trans. Wilhelm Pauck (Louisville: Westminster Press, 1961), pp. 17-18, 81 [my underline]).

I will further elaborate the implications of the Protestant impetus towards “individuation” by looking at, in the next chapter, the role of Hegel’s conception of “Person” and “Personality” with regards to civil “Right” (*Recht*) and the philosophy of ‘ethical life’ (*Sittlichkeit*) that attends or supports it.

³⁹² Cf. “Essence is pure identity and inward shine only because it is negativity relating itself to itself” (ibid, §116, p. 181); and also: “[...] God, the essence, is goodness, by virtue of lending existence to the moments of his inward shining in order to create a world” (ibid, §131A, p. 200). My underline in both quotes.

³⁹³ Compare here what Hegel writes of the role that human ‘feeling’ takes in this knowledge of God:

[...] It is required not only that we know God, right, and the like, that we have consciousness of and are convinced about them, but also that these things should be in our feeling, in our hearts. This is a just requirement [here is Hegel’s ethico-metaphysical decision; SC]; it signifies that these interests ought to be [but what kind of *ethics* underlies this “ought”?; SC] essentially our own – that we, as subjects, are supposed to have identified ourselves with such content. A human being who has the right in his heart is one who is identified with the spirit. (LPR 1827, p. 139)

³⁹⁴ The violence of Hegel’s metaphysical assumptions – in the light of the quote from the above endnote – comes more clearly into view when he writes that any “ethics” that could prescribe the “ought” cited is already assumed in/as spiritual immanence that *must* bring itself, as Truth, to consciousness:

[...] religion, right, ethics, and everything spiritual in human beings, is merely aroused [Hegel cites Plato’s theory of *anamnesis* a page earlier; SC]. We are implicitly spirit, for the truth lies within us [this is the metaphysical assumption; SC] and the spiritual content within us must be [and here is its ethical implication; SC] brought into consciousness. (LPR 1827, p. 161).

And this principle of sublation-via-internalization indeed counters – salubriously, in Hegel’s opinion – the “Jewish principle.” Hence, with regard to ‘Man’ and/or ‘Consciousness,’ “Jewish culture reveals a consciousness of only one group of living relationships, and even these in the form of concepts rather than of virtues and qualities of character. [...] the Jews had to express [...] only relations between strangers [i.e., the relation to an “absconded” God; SC], beings different in essence” (“Spirit of Christianity,” ETW, p. 255). As Hegel explains in reference to Christ’s self-depiction (as the “Son of God”), “[t]he relation of a son to his father is not a conceptual unity” (ibid, p. 260), but is “a unity of essence” (ibid, p. 261).

Hence the “spiritual” need to countervene “[...] the Jewish principle of opposing [i.e. instead of ‘reconciling,’ SC] thought to reality, reason to sense” (ibid, p. 259), in accordance with the “son of God, who does not judge, sunder, or divide, does not hold to an opposite in its opposition. An utterance, or the stirring, of the divine is no lawgiving or legislation, no upholding of the mastery of the law. On the contrary, the world is to be saved by the divine” (ibid, p. 262) [My underlines throughout].

I believe that there is a clear indication here of how Hegel’s overarching methodology of ‘Science’ is already the product of an assumption that, if not for Jewish thought that still fights it from the depths of Christianity’s “Hell,” seduces and usurps the Greek-Pagan noble mode of valuation. Presupposing a ‘we’ that encompasses both Christians and Pagans, hence, performs a violence that Nietzsche had astutely chosen antisemitism in order to expose – the infinite reconciliation of Hegel’s Lutheran-Christian theology can only betray its animosity through the “bad” infinity of a Jewish God that repeatedly needs to

be negated. In short, the only trace of Pagan “finitude” or separate and *distinguished* reality (the ‘reality’ that Nietzsche ascribes *only* to Pagan *nobility*) is attested to there where its *archē*-trace – the “effigy” of *Distanz* constructed by the Jews as a declaration of war – is being effaced; and with this effacement, of course, love can usurp ‘war.’

³⁹⁵ In his Notebooks from 1885-1886, Nietzsche writes: “[...] the specialist is necessary, but belongs to *the category of tools*” (LN 1[234], p. 65)

³⁹⁶ Nietzsche always laments that he can find no such “true philosophers” and often wonders whether such a creature is even *possible* any longer (cf. BGE §211, p. 136)

³⁹⁷ Cf. “*Turm bauen*” is precisely how the tower of Babel was rendered in German in the *Luther Bibel* (“*einen Turm bauen*”; Genesis 11:4).

³⁹⁸ Hence, “[t]he worst and most dangerous thing of which scholars are capable comes from their sense of the mediocrity of their own type” (BGE §206, p. 126).

³⁹⁹ Here Nietzsche was the most *explicitly* engaged, as he maintained a methodological focus – as is made clear in the *Genealogy* – that Lévinas had no patience for: “I do not believe that transparency is possible in method or that philosophy is possible in the manner of transparency. Those who have dedicated their entire lives to methodology have written many books instead of the more interesting books they could” (“Questions and Answers,” GCM, p. 89).

⁴⁰⁰ This is what Nietzsche means in the preface to this work when he says, “perhaps the time is at hand when it will be comprehended again and again *how little* used to be sufficient to furnish the cornerstone for such sublime and unconditional philosophers’ edifices as the dogmatists have built so far [...]”. It is this ‘little’ – in the form of a(n all-too-human) value *contingently* used/chosen (for justifying a given philosophical position/dogma), that has been absolutized and made “metaphysical” by the priests of *ressentiment*. Because ‘truth’ had been assumed to be essentially “fused” with this ‘beyond,’ most particularly with the ‘beyond’ opened up by a *Mono*-theist metaphysics, the identification of the true and the good in/as the beyond. Descartes’ employment of *doubt* both veracity and benevolence unite in the infinite figure of ‘God.’

In the First Meditation, Descartes mentions “God, who is supremely good and the source of truth” (René Descartes, *Meditations on First Philosophy: With Selections from the Objections and Replies*, trans. and ed. John Cottingham (New York: Cambridge: Cambridge UP, 1986), p. 15). This is the *role* (rather than definition) of God insofar as Descartes postulates His existence at the most crucial moment of his (method of) *doubt* – its obverse (the notorious *genium malignum*) will grant Descartes’ his most *fundamental* “clear and distinct” truth (in the form of “*ego sum, ego existo*”); cf. *Meditations*, pp. 16-17.

⁴⁰¹ To anticipate a little, the *method* by which this specificity is to be transubstantiated into generality is – in the eyes of this antipathologist – the essence of the Hegelian *Aufhebung*, precisely as the *Bildung of Absoluter Geist*; it is where the Hegelian ‘*Wissenschaft*’ finally overcomes philosophy itself, by no longer *desiring* (always ‘external’; ‘positive’) knowledge (no longer, hence, *philo*-sophia), but *possessing*, and *comprehending* this possession, (internal(ized); absolute) knowledge. In this transubstantiated generality of absolute knowledge, every specificity that is of essence is given its proper place in the ‘*wirklichkeit*’ of the *Begriff*. The latter’s ‘grasp’ will only be absolute if and when it can sublimate the gesture of self-othering/alienation at the origin of Monotheist metaphysics as a kind of “momentum-gathering” towards “resolving” this separation and arriving at a, literally, *fuller* concept of ‘God,’ God’s *actuality* – that is, ‘Spirit.’ The wholeness is preserved *nominally* from the ‘One’ of Monotheism (losing its punctual, inter-ruptive essence) while the *fullness* is the (*aufgehoben*) result of the chaotic multiplicity of (Pagan) ‘Nature.’ It is essentially this *generalization* of the origin of moral value that Nietzsche attacks when he ascribes to Hegel’s thought “a moral origin” (WTP, §410, p. 221)

⁴⁰² This is neither the first nor the only time that Nietzsche is seen to reject ‘God’ so as to defend against the thematizing of divinity in moral terms, where a ‘good’ that arises *within* Being made to rule over all of Being – something Nietzsche calls the “moral world order” – which robs us of the possibility of ever doing justice to history (ergo, to *violence*):

The concept of God falsified; the concept of morality falsified [...] These priests [...] with unparalleled disdain of every tradition, every historical reality, they translated their own national past into religious terms, that is to say they made of it a stupid salvation-mechanism of guilt towards Yaweh and punishment, piety towards Yaweh and reward. We would feel this most shameful act of historical falsification much more painfully if millennia of ecclesiastical interpretation of history has not made us almost oblivious to the demands of integrity in historicis. And the philosophers have seconded the Church: the lie of the ‘moral world order’ permeates the whole evolution even of the most recent philosophy. What does ‘moral world order’ mean? That there exists once and for all a will of God; that the ruling power of the will of God, expressed as punishment and reward according to the degree of obedience, is demonstrated in the destiny of a nation, of an individual. – The reality displaced by this pitiable lie is: a parasitic kind of human being which prospers only at the expense of every healthy form of life, the priest, abuses the name of God [...] (AC §26, p. 149 [my underline emphasis]).

Note that in this passage, the origin and history of the nation of Israel is distinguished from their Christian transformation precisely as a disconnect from an individual history and to hypostasization in(to) religious forms; it is where

the (mis)adventure of Israel itself became generalized, made to rule. The Jewish encounter with God ceases to be individual/singular, and reverts to the religious term of the “will of God,” which now, in the Christian version, becomes a God of all, one that expands and embraces rather than secludes-itself and chooses/marks. This “hugging,” “Good Lord” can only belie the (Jewish) encounter with Divinity, and encounter that was always deemed singular and singularizing.

On this point, we should be remiss not to mention Gilles Deleuze, whose devout Nietzscheanism is exemplified in his philosophical project, as addressed in his *Différence et répétition*: to articulate a *philosophy of Difference* that would not be subordinated to an identity. Hence, Deleuze identifies an enemy in what he calls “*l’image morale de la pensée*”, a veritable subordination of philosophy, of thinking, to a metaphysics of identity – the aforementioned “idealized” Being – that cannot conceive of an originary, or pre-originary difference (and, in turn, cannot think repetition other than as generality; i.e., a metaphysics that cannot think *time* as/in (constitutive) rupture and rather constrain it to/as an eventless continuity, something which already *assures* the veracity of the link between cause and effect); cf. Gilles Deleuze, *Difference and Repetition*, trans. Paul Patton (New York: Columbia UP, 1994), pp. 131-132/Gilles Deleuze, *Différence et répétition* (Paris: Presses universitaires de France, 1972), pp. 172-173.

⁴⁰³ Here it is important to interject a long-overdue caveat concerning the meaning of ‘Christianity’ in this chapter, as well as throughout this dissertation. Since the latter is Hegel-oriented – or, more broadly speaking, an orientation towards the appropriation of the Christian narrative of Salvation as seen through the eyes of German Protestant Pietism in the 17th-18th Centuries (the philosophy that developed in this context – Kant, Hegel – and how it was rethought in the 19th-20th Centuries – Nietzsche, Heidegger) – my critique is not directed against every possible permutation of ‘Christianity.’ As Cyril O’Regan’s work persuasively argues, Hegel’s “philosophizing” of the Christian narrative is, as he puts it, “heterodox” to both orthodox Lutheranism and orthodox Protestantism.

Thus, with regards to the “Judeo-Christian” narrative of history – a curious construction since Judaism itself had only traditions of Biblical interpretations rather than a specific overall ‘history’ (much less *world-history*) – O’Regan identifies three major “heterodox” views by Hegel: the first is that this narrative “reveals” God, in the ontological meaning of “disclosure,” only indirectly and by implication, while Hegel’s appropriation of it sees this ontological revelation to be enacted explicitly and directly, as a full-blown “ontological discourse” (*Heterodox Hegel*, p. 304); the second view concerns the narrative span: while the Christian narrative does admit universality, it leaves both the “alpha” and the “omega” of this narrative outside itself, as “nonnarrative boundaries” of the universal (hi)story that unfolds. For Hegel, of course, the alpha and the omega become one in the narrative (at least insofar as the narrative itself has *any* validity) (*ibid*, pp. 304-305); Lastly, and deriving from the first two, the Hegelian view of the Christological narrative of salvation – as history and ontology, as comprising the alpha and the omega of God in the Absolute Knowledge of God’s Revelation – is radical, since the aforementioned history and ontology, according to O’Regan, “do not touch the divine” in the Judeo-Christian narrative (*ibid*, pp. 305-306).

⁴⁰⁴ The Christian conscience and its morality based on “pity” would be the paradigmatic instance of such a decadence – employed by/through the abominable construction of “free/autonomous will” that is expiated in “pity” – and what it does to any ethico-metaphysical affirmation of difference/distance (remember that the Jewish Law has no room for pity at all – ethical consideration was commanded and performed without knowledge, and, hence, without being internalized first as an “intention”). For example, cf.

If, in spite of that, some small and great misdemeanors have been committed against me, “the will” cannot be blamed for this, least of all any *ill* will: sooner could I complain as I have already suggested, of the good will that has done no small mischief in my life. My experiences entitle me to be quite generally suspicious of the so-called “selfless” drives, of all “neighbor love” that is ready to give advice and go into action. It always seems a weakness to me, a particular case of being incapable of resisting stimuli: *pity* is considered a virtue only among decadents. I reproach those who are full of pity for easily losing a sense of shame, of respect, of sensitivity for distances; before you know it, pity begins to smell of the mob and becomes scarcely distinguishable from bad manners (‘Why I am So Wise?’, EH, §4, p. 228).

⁴⁰⁵ Thus, Saint Paul – *the* “priest” in Nietzsche’s eyes, a true hero in the eyes of Hegel – writes in his Epistle to the Romans: “the commandments, “You shall not commit adultery, You shall not murder, You shall not steal, You shall not covet,” and any other commandment, are summed up in this word: “You shall love your neighbor as yourself.” Love does no wrong to a neighbor; therefore love is the fulfilling of the law” (Romans 13:9-10).

⁴⁰⁶ Memory, in turn, would allow thought a self-comprehension as ‘free will’ in the same way in which the actor internalizes the negativity of her act – its suffering and finitude – as guilt. This is Hegel’s view in the *Phenomenology of Spirit*, where – following his analysis of Antigone as the quintessential Greek Tragedy – the actor recognizes the limiting forces that “negate” her act as a necessary ‘guilt.’ There is no ‘deed’ for Hegel’s “Christology” other than the one that is an incarnate ‘soul’ that – through its self-investment in “deeds” – interprets the resulting strife and failure as its own guilt, leading to a higher understanding of the ‘spirit’ that attended it (as the spirit of the Whole/Truth). Hence,

[The act of self-consciousness] [...] raises itself out of simple immediacy, and spontaneously splits itself into two. By this act it gives up the specific quality of the ethical life [*Sittlichkeit*], of being the simple certainty of immediate truth, and initiates the division of itself into itself as the active principle, and into the reality over against it, a reality which, for it, is negative. By the deed, therefore, it becomes guilt. (PS §468, p. 282).

I will discuss this “tragic” interpretation of Antigone – especially with regards to guilt and its non-place in “Jewish tragedy” – in the last chapter.

⁴⁰⁷ My argument here is limited to the address I am making here, the contexts of my phenomenology of hatred as a communicative gift to the Christian space that afforded me its hospitality. It serves, like Nietzsche and Lévinas, not to vindicate an absolutely “just” approach to ethical questions or historical narration, but a sorely-needed critique of a system that continuously perpetrates a violence that it cannot acknowledge, that more often than not it cannot even see. “Staying with the hatred” is a way for the Jewish “genius of hatred” – at it was called by both Nietzsche and Hegel (as Christians) – to offer-up a betrayal of itself and the way that its *previously contained* hatred still animates, both positively (persecution of Jews) and negatively (‘civilizing the world’), a fundamentally Christian understanding of social justice and political situations.

⁴⁰⁸ This is another connection that Heidegger’s comportment towards ethical questioning shares with Immanuel Kant’s. When Kant writes, in a footnote to his Second Critique’s Preface : “if there were no freedom, the moral law would never have been encountered in us” (quoted in CPR, p. 4), I believe it logically consistent to say that – in a manner that recalls the “nihilistic logic” mentioned earlier, for Kant where there is no freedom, there can be no moral law and hence no ‘morality’ as such. This relates to Kant’s more comprehensive metaphysical position whereby – when it comes to morality – it is the possible that constrains the moral commandment (I will show that, with regards to the Jewish promise at the foot of Mount Sinai (that they will first “do, and *then* hear” God’s command(ment)s) – it is precisely there where I have no freedom that I am made responsible, that a moral valuation is demanded of me at the same time it is conceded to be “impossible.” For example, when Kant writes, in the First Critique, that

[...] Pure reason thus contains – not in its speculative use, to be sure, but yet in a certain practical use, namely the moral use – principles of the possibility of experience, namely of those actions in conformity with moral precepts which could be encountered in the history of humankind. For since they command that these actions ought to happen, they must also be able to happen, and there must therefore be possible a special kind of systematic unity, namely the moral (CPR, p. 678; A807/B835 [my underline])

Hence the role of freedom in “practical reason,” since it is this freedom that underwrites all “rationality” or “Reason,” in the ‘possibility’ of its eventual fulfillment – a possibility that, in turn, authorizes the ethical command, or the “ought:” “I call the world as it would be if it were in conformity with all moral laws (as it can be in accordance with the freedom of rational beings and should be in accordance with the necessary laws of morality) a *moral world*” (ibid, ibid; A808/B836 [Kant’s italics, my underline]).

The ‘Levinatzschean’ view I offer here reverses the hierarchy in Kant: the command’s impossibility is the only thing that keeps moral valuation responsible to its own, unknown an-archy; the ‘possible’ neither defines nor constrains the ethical command – rather the reverse. Perhaps this can be made a little clearer with regards to Hegel’s understanding of the “spirit” of Kant’s philosophy: indeed positing regulative ideas – that are based in the *possibility* (again) of arriving as a “highest good”, following the positing of an immortal soul and the existence of God – Kant’s view of thought follows from a *teleology* (however enigmatic) whereby Man aspires to achieve something that can never be fully “realized” (but still commanded to aspire in this manner):

[...] Reason, as the faculty of principles, determines the interest of all the powers of the mind but itself determines its own. The interest of its speculative use consists in the cognition of the object up to the highest a priori principles; that of its practical use consists in the determination of the will with respect to the final and complete end.” (‘Critique of Practical Reason,’ PP, p. 236; Ak 5:119-120).

The aforementioned “determination” is the a priori assumption that the will can be free(d) so as to “aim” at the proper “Good.” What is this ‘will’ that is defined as directed towards a “final and complete end”? Definitely not a Jewish ‘will,’ for the latter seems content with its own, *separate(d)* divine task of *doing without even willing*; the “Good” that, as Lévinas says (borrowing from Plato) is beyond Being – like the Jewish God – and utterly unknown precisely in/as this ‘good’ (in this sense Kant would see Judaism, as he did in fact, as a *heterogeneous* collection of statutory directives rather than following a single ‘higher purpose’).

The Jews, in their doubled metaphysical separation – the *only* people chosen by God; the Jewish *God being utterly separated from the world* (except through this relation – which is not a union) – cannot allow themselves any knowledge of a higher purpose/telos, for the Law approaches them from “without,” as it were, a passivity of the “chosen” rather than the humility of the “good willed.” Furthermore, even if there was a “highest good” in Jewish Messianism, this Good is forever “heterogeneous” to the world, maintaining a separation even in the so-called “fulfillment” of God’s Divine Will/Plan: they

will have returned to their 'Zion' upon the Messiah's arrival, and, from there, spread "light" upon the world's peoples by themselves becoming a moral example; no harmony – the separation between the peoples still remains in this "Jewish teleology."

Furthermore, just like there is no concept of 'Heaven' in Jewish Orthodoxy, no "happiness" is ever promised the Jews by God, not even as an unachievable telos. This problem in incarnating the "good" – as harmony, in/as 'conscience,' with the natural and human worlds alike – indeed makes for a "lack" which Kant had extolled Christianity for having plugged. Metaphysically speaking, then, Kant conceives of (moral) thought as directed towards a *telos* of wholeness or perfection, made possible only in principle (but this is precisely the principle that dictates "What may I hope for?") by an immortal soul aspiring to arrive at, become One with, an existing God; Hegel's problem with Kant, to recall, was that he "stopped half way," positing a kind of "transcendental membrane" that formally blocks thought from achieving this union. Kant's Christian "spirit," however, is clear, even to Kant himself, as ought to be sufficiently evident from the following two passages from the Second Critique:

The doctrine of Christianity [...] gives on this point a concept of the highest good (of the Kingdom of God) which alone satisfies the strictest demand of practical reason. The moral law is holy (inflexible) and demands holiness of morals, although all the moral perfection that a human being can attain is still only virtue, that is, a disposition conformed with law *from respect* for law [i.e., not "innate" or "natural" goodness, but an *aspiration*; SC], and thus consciousness of a continuing propensity to transgression [...], hence a self-esteem combined with humility [read: a Greek noble "sick" with *ressentiment*; SC]; and so, with respect to the holiness that the Christian law demands, nothing remains for a creature but endless progress, though for that very reason he is justified in hoping for his endless duration [i.e. as an immortal 'soul'; SC]. [...] But the moral law of itself still does not promise any happiness, since this is not necessarily connected with observance of the law according to our concepts of a natural order as such. The Christian doctrine of morals now supplements this lack by representing the world in which rational beings devote themselves with their whole soul to the moral law as a kingdom of God, in which nature and morals come into a harmony [I read the seed of Hegelian 'reconciliation' here; SC], foreign to each of them of itself, through a holy author [in Hegel – 'spirit'; SC] who makes the derived highest good possible. (ibid, p. 243/Ak. 5:128 [my underline])

[...] Christian morals, because it frames its precept so purely and inflexibly (as must be done), deprives the human being of confidence [the "confidence" found, for example, in Hegel's speculative idealism; SC] that he can be fully adequate to it, at least in this life [once again – presupposing an eternal 'soul'; SC], but again sets it up by enabling us to hope that if we act as well as is within our power, then what is not within our power will come to our aid from another source [one can read here echoes of the Christian Doctrine of 'grace'; SC], whether or not we know in what way. (ibid, p. 243 note/Ak. 5:129)

⁴⁰⁹ The Heideggerian solution – to de-fine this freedom in historico-ontological terms – still does not do justice to the fundamental separation that thought inaugurates between itself and its (already dominated, 'an-archic' or 'pre-historic') Other. In terms of his philosophy of time as well as his phenomenology of existence, his idea of 'freedom' necessarily consists in the projections of the understanding (in which or towards which *Dasein* is always 'thrown'). These projections, in turn, are depicted as the (ontological) "transcendence" that – much like the formal structure of Kant's "half-baked" 'spirituality' (See previous note) – reduces all future outcomes to "potentialities of Being" which, as Heidegger notes, constitute the "ontological-metaphysical" 'egoicity' (*Egoität*) that underwrite *Dasein*'s "care" well before (not a chronological, but a *logical* "before") it can comport itself as "egoistic" and "altruistic."

The 'ontological-metaphysical' here should already remind the reader of the previous chapter, where I showed how Heidegger inflects the metaphysical question(ing) and Lévinas' ethico-metaphysical critique of this maneuver. For Heidegger, it is the *projections* of the understanding that constitute *Dasein*'s 'freedom' as a "transcendence" that is free(d) to exist (either as "fallen" or as "authentic"). This freedom has to do with *Dasein*'s possibility or potentiality in comporting itself towards the world – and in/as Da-sein that reflects upon its own death as the de-finition of its own "potentialities" for Being(-there/Da) – as an ontological freedom that underwrites the ethical one. What I call above Nietzsche's "proto-moral word" – spoken by a Pagan noble to a "bad" or "miserable" plebeian/slave – it is neither 'Being,' nor any other kind of shared 'essence' that authorizes moral values. When the noble 'I' speaks to the plebeian 'thou' it is a moral speech precisely because there is nothing yet in existence that necessitates it; this necessity is not ontological, does not come from Truth/Being, but ethico-metaphysical, coming from the Other.

The following quote will go some way in connecting this "ontological fundamentalism" concerning 'freedom,' as well as the latter's investment with what Lévinas calls "eg-ology" (where the self-same – as a totality enclosed in/as Being – betrays an ethico-metaphysical stance. Heidegger's "egoicity" thus condemns the other person – with whom I have moral relations underwritten by some ethical situation/encounter – only insofar as this other is also a *Dasein just like me*. That is what Lévinas means by "egology" of "the philosophy of the Same," and that is where Levinatzsch offers an approach to freedom

that allows the Otherness of the other to be conceived-of responsibly as eliciting from me a judgment/value; not to fulfill any “potentialities” of Being, but being the “hostage” of a separate and yet imposingly commanding Other, to whom (and for whom) ‘I’ affirm my power/glory through being commanded to speak (a “thou” irreducible to its ‘Being’ or Being-there, and Other that is not “*Dasein*, like me”). Hence the necessity of *Dasein*’s transcending freedom that Heidegger calls an “egoicity” that,

[...] does not deal with an existentiell, ethical egoism, but it deals rather with the ontological-metaphysical description of the egoicity [*Egoität*] of *Dasein* as such. Only because *Dasein* is primarily determined by egoicity can it factually exist as a thou for and with another *Dasein*. The thou is not an ontic replicate of a factual ego; but neither can a thou exist as such and be itself as thou for another ego if it is not at all *Dasein*, i.e., if it is not grounded in egoicity. The egoicity belonging to the transcendence of *Dasein* is the metaphysical condition of the possibility [remember Kant? See previous note; SC] for a thou to be able to exist and for an I-thou relationship to be able to exist. The thou is also most immediately thou if it is not simply another ego, but rather a “you yourself are:” This selfhood, however, is its freedom [this spells the ontological-metaphysical sense of freedom; SC], and this freedom is identical with egoicity, on the basis of which [and here is where it betrays its ethico-metaphysical assumption/decision; SC] *Dasein* can, in the first place, ever be either egoistic or altruistic. (Martin Heidegger, *The Metaphysical Foundations of Logic*, trans. Michael Heim (Indiana: Indiana UP, 1984), p. 187 [my underline]).

⁴¹⁰ Jewish “suffering,” for Lévinas, in inherently different, it is a suffering “that at no stage assumes the value of a mystical atonement for the sins of the world” (‘Loving the Torah More than God,’ DF, p. 143)

⁴¹¹ ‘The Temptation of Temptation,’ *Nine Talmudic Readings*, p. 49 [my underline]

⁴¹² It is important to note here that proto-moral word does not bespeak a *regret* for the noble-plebeian *Distanz* – as if this *Distanz* itself is already an injustice that could/should be avoided (precisely the *Weltanschauung* of Christian slave morality) – but rather its affirmation *as a sign of (the noble’s) election*; what Lévinas, in the epigraph to this chapter, calls “glory.” It is not an apology for the noble’s full presence – and triumphant, however “finite,” freedom – but precisely where the realm of valuation finds its origins, responding to a call from nowhere, from what Lévinas calls the ‘Good.’ This ‘Good,’ of course – unlike Truth (be it as/in Hegel’s ‘*Geist*’ or Heidegger’s (ground of) ‘*Sein*’) – is not strived for *by* the noble’s activity, but, *in the latter’s passivity*, “chooses” the noble herself, interrupting this pure Being/activity as both its affirmation and (non guilt-inducing) ‘accusation.’

⁴¹³ Where, of course, the encounter with the other is done always is the extreme synchrony of presence – as mediated through memory – another recasting of interest and debt within *an already established system of reciprocal exchange*.

⁴¹⁴ Cf. Nietzsche’s comments about the noble-plebeian relation as analogous to the bird of prey’s relation to the lamb (GM I §13, pp. 44-45); Lévinas will speak of an ‘I’ that cannot hide behind an assumed spontaneity (nor power/knowledge) that absolves me from relation to the Other, for this relation already posits me as the Other’s usurper; cf. TI, p. 84)

⁴¹⁵ Friedrich Nietzsche, ‘The Wanderer and his Shadow,’ §237, HH, p. 370.

⁴¹⁶ Hegel, ‘Spirit of Christianity,’ ETW, p. 228

⁴¹⁷ Dante, *Inferno* XXVIII.112-117 [translation modified]

⁴¹⁸ As alluded to before, this power was itself usurped from the Catholic Church, whose Dogmatic temporal narration had been usurped by the Reformed Protestant Church, an event that had been eventually forgotten and buried thanks to the claim that this history was indeed undisputed and universal, justified by its methodological quest for ‘Truth’ and its deification of historical ‘evidence’ and their impartial ‘testimonies.’ For an eye-opening account of this problematic of metaphysical power – showing ‘Science’ and ‘Truth’ are still only the later “handles” for this usurped power over time – cf. Constantin Fasolt, *The Limits of History* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2013).

⁴¹⁹ It is perhaps appropriate to repeat here that “God” with a Capitalized ‘G’ refers specifically to the Monotheistic deity; in this case, it is so since, as mentioned earlier, Pagan gods did not have power over ‘Fate,’ and indeed could only know it, but not change it (this is true in both Norse and Greek mythologies – which, in our Western/Germanic context it is sufficient, I think, to count as an argumentative ground)..

⁴²⁰ Cf. “See, I am coming soon; my reward is with me, to repay according to everyone’s work. | I am the Alpha and the Omega, the first and the last, the beginning and the end.” (Revelations 22:12-13)

⁴²¹ This also goes some way to explain what Lévinas means when he defends “humanism,” but calls, precisely, for a “humanism of the Other.” I have not the time nor the space for a just treatment of this Lévinasian problematic – which involves not only the eminent figure of Edmund Husserl (much neglected here), but then-contemporary debates that pitted phenomenology and a certain “structuralism” against the classical notion of “humanism.” However, true to the manner in which I chose to engage with Lévinas – i.e. always vis-à-vis my, imposed, context – I ask you to read the following chosen passage, from Lévinas’ own short introduction to his collection of essays titled *Humanisme de l’autre homme*, with my comments concerning “Fate” and the supposedly absolute necessity of reconciling oneself to it, in mind:

[...] The "thinking subject" who seeks this intelligible arrangement interprets itself thenceforth, despite its industrious research and inventive brilliance, as a detour taken by the system of being for its own needs, a detour traced by its terms or structures in order to hitch itself, assemble itself in a great present and, what's more, burst out with truth at all its points, to show off. The subject lets being be.

[...] [this subject] it has no significant life beside the truth it serves and where it shows itself. The rest of what is human remains foreign to it. (Emmanuel Lévinas, *Humanism of the Other*, trans. Nidra Poller (Chicago: University of Illinois Press, 2003, p. 5 [my underline].)

⁴²² Hence, also, the moral/guilty 'Human Subject' will always feel cheated/betrayed by the excessive demands of the moment itself, the encounter that leaves him/her with no justification, as if all his/her pain, that was *supposed to count for something*, suddenly vanishes, and counts for nothing at all: the Other is still interrupting, demanding incommensurable, asymmetrical gestures; new significations, new narrative "accounts" of 'history,' new heroes and new victims that are now actively sought-out as opposed to passively awaiting they become visible on the onto-historical radar. The "radar" does not justify violence without remainder, it is only a limited instance of responsibility towards it in an eternally recurring, Nietzschean-sceptical, test. This is what Levinatztzsch means when it proclaims 'guilt' as a bastardization or appropriation of thought's relation to time/power; for, at its basis, it is deployed so as to shut the complainer up rather than *talk* to her; to have the "sighs" of history's victims effaced so as to reach the "real," the work-ed/able (*wirkliche*) logos of thought/reality.

⁴²³ Even the sighs of the "all" do not count in this calculus: only their existence, their survival.

⁴²⁴ Woody Allen, *Love and Death*, perf. by Woody Allen, Diane Keaton (1975; New York: MGM, 2000).

⁴²⁵ Mohandas K. Gandhi, *All Men Are Brothers: Life and Thoughts of Mahatma Gandhi*, trans. Krishna Kripalani (Paris: UNESCO, 1958), pp. 102-103.

⁴²⁶ LPR, p. 194

⁴²⁷ Emmanuel Lévinas, *On Escape: De l'évasion*, trans. Bettina Bergo (Stanford: Stanford UP, 2003), p. 53.

⁴²⁸ Aeschylus, 'Agamemnon,' *The Oresteia*, trans. Robert Fagles (Norwalk : Easton Press, 1999), lines 1134-1136, 1076-1077, and 1999-1203 respectively [As done consistently with oft-translated Foreign language texts (e.g. in the case of Aristotle above as well as Dante below), I will refer not to page numbers but to lines, achieving a wider application throughout the various versions and translations of these works]

⁴²⁹ In a later stage of a more pluralized power (shifting from autocracy to democracy), the changing minds of the people could lead to re-legislation while still maintaining *the community's political integrity* as what is called "the general will;" but Creon, being himself only one (*autos*), could not afford the same adaptability that this inner-differentiation allows the *demos* (democracy). Of course, had Creon *not ruled with the good of the demos in mind* at all, this contradiction would not have arisen in the first place; his "fateful" essence is precisely in being on the cusp of a shift, constrained to perform the acts that will end tragically, but will surface a naked contradiction that will have to, then, be reconciled in a new – higher, richer – political integrity.

⁴³⁰ Sophocles, 'Antigone,' *The Theban Plays*, trans. Ruth Fainlight and Robert J. Littman (Baltimore: The Johns Hopkins UP, 2009), lines 183-190.

⁴³¹ Cf. the following quote from Hegel's *Encyclopedia Logic*: "Reason comes to the world with absolute faith [*Absoluten Glauben*] in its ability to posit this identity and to elevate its certainty into truth, and with the drive [*Triebe*] to posit the antithesis [between itself and the world], which is in-itself null and void for it as null and void" (Enc I §224, p. 295/S.8:378 [my underline])

⁴³² Much like Abraham, as I am about to show, Cassandra is hearing the "voice of god" directly, rather than via god's representative or mediation/omen.

⁴³³ As the Chorus, quoted above, tells Cassandra, hers are but words that neither ease the pain they tell of nor heal any wounds.

⁴³⁴ Euripides, 'The Trojan Women,' *The Complete Greek Tragedies: Euripides III*, ed. David Greene and Richmond Lattimore, trans. Richmond Lattimore (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2013), lines 252-253.

⁴³⁵ Noteworthy in this respect is Krista Ratcliffe's "re-versal" of the Cassandra myth, positioning the prophetess as an embodiment of a materialist feminism that is left unheeded by a predominately patriarchal order. This materialism will pay heed to Cassandra's historical contingency itself as the "message" that she is trying to impart to an unbelieving audience; a certain respect to what I here call Cassandra's 'vanity.' In Ratclif's words: "Cassandra's truth proves to be grounded in her own experiences, with(in) her body, her intellect, her intuitions, her culture, and her language" (Krista Ratcliffe, 'Listening To Cassandra: A Materialist-Feminist Expose of the Necessary Relations Between Rhetoric and Hermeneutics,' *Studies in the Literary Imagination* 28.2, (1995), p. 64).

⁴³⁶ As another element of the myth goes, had Cassandra been able to *fully* maintain her refusal, Apollo could not have cursed her: Apollo asked for a small kiss to compensate him for the denied coitus, a request to which Cassandra agrees, with Apollo then using this opportunity to spit in Cassandra's mouth (thus cursing her to never be believed again).

⁴³⁷ In Anouilh's version, Antigone replies to Creon, who asks to understand her refusal: "[...] Je suis là pour vous dire non et pour mourir"; cf. Jean Anouilh, *Antigone*, <http://french.chass.utoronto.ca/as-sa/editors/antigone.htm>, accessed 16 Nov. 2016.

⁴³⁸ Enc III §489-490; PR §35-37

⁴³⁹ On the one hand, this kind of "*idée fixe*" comports utterly to Hegel's definition of insanity: "engrossed with a single phase of feeling," Cassandra's refusal to give up on her negative ideal – by allowing its externalization and mediation with the outside world – "fails to assign that phase its proper place and due subordination in the individual system of the world which a conscious subject is. [...] This is insanity or mental derangement" (Enc III §408, p. 123). But, on the other hand, she sees everything quite clearly, and is not given to the "error" regarding the "objective interconnection of things" as is also the mark of insanity for Hegel (*ibid*, *ibid*).

⁴⁴⁰ Cassandra here undergoes an "objectification" which is more radical than the reduction of the feminine to its sexual, maternal, or even "economic" (from the Greek *oikos*) function; it denotes another glaring difference between mine and Hegel's heroine: between Antigone – who wilfully sacrificed herself, with complete composure, on the altar of familial kinship – and Cassandra who is led by an external fate, kicking and screaming, to her death. What does the priestess of Apollo care about kinship? In the *Troades*, Cassandra rejoices when being taken away from her family, her mother and brother, to be married off to the enemy and exiled to Mycenae. Despite having borne two children to Agamemnon, she refers to him as a master and not a husband: "My lord... I must wear his yoke, I am his slave" (1235), and, once again, *complains* of the fate that this, her passivity, had won her: "He brought me home [to Mycenae from Troy; SC] and we will pay in carnage" (1276-1277 [my underline]). She makes no mention, in her indignant exclamations towards her own death, of their children together (Teledamos and Pelops) and their fate – they are later murdered by Aegisthus, Agamemnon's brother and Clytaemnestra's lover, something surely not beyond Cassandra's prophetic reach.

⁴⁴¹ This is a small allusion to a stereotype/slug directed by contemporary Iranian speakers towards Jews (though, as all stereotypes, it has a longer history); they refer to the latter as '*joon doost*' (جون دوست): 'doos' meaning to like or to love, and 'joon' meaning 'life' but *particularly the life of the body* (the word for 'prostitute,' for example, is '*jen-deh*' (جنده) "jen" being directly derivative of "joon" – she who gives her body) [the Farsi spelling might not render correctly due to the occidentally-oriented code of Microsoft's 'Word' processor]. '*Joon doost*' can hence be used to antipathologically depict something essential in the perception of the coward by the victims of her betrayal.

⁴⁴² PR §140A p. 102n.

⁴⁴³ "The Kantian philosophy needed to have its spirit [*Geist*] distinguished from its letter [*Buchstaben*]" (G. W. F. Hegel, *The Difference Between Fichte's and Schelling's System of Philosophy*, trans. H. S. Harris and Walter Cerf (Albany: SUNY Press, 1977), p. 79).

⁴⁴⁴ Cf., for example, Hegel's mention of Kantian philosophy is his 'Spirit essay, and then in his Faith and Knowledge text, written 4 years after the 'Spirit' essay (the latter was never officially published by Hegel):

[...] this type of expression (a type inappropriate to life): "Love God above everything and thy neighbor as thyself" was quite wrongly regarded by Kant as a "command requiring respect for a law which commands love." And it is on this confusion of the utterly accidental kind of phraseology expressive of life with the moral imperative (which depends on the opposition between concept and reality) that there rests Kant's profound reduction of what he calls a "command" (love God first of all and thy neighbor as thyself) to his moral imperative. And his remark that "love," or, to take the meaning which he thinks must be given to this love, "liking to perform all duties," "cannot be commanded" falls to the ground by its own weight, because in love all thought of duties vanishes ('Spirit,' ETW, p. 213 [my underline])

The following paragraph from Hegel's Introduction to his 'Faith and Knowledge' (its title already an allusion to Kant's famous statement in his First Critique, "I had to deny knowledge in order to make room for faith"; CPR Bxxx), summarizes both the "spirit" of Kantian philosophy and its "rise" to the universal, and, most importantly, this spirit's frustration; its being placed, artificially or spuriously, "on hold." Hegel, of course, wants Reason to attain its fullest Truth, its highest glory; no holds barred. This next quote places the previous one in a more comprehensive metaphysical structure of Hegelian thought; but still recognizing its suffering, its frustration, with Difference, with limit(ation)s:

The one self-certifying certainty, then, is that there exists a thinking subject, a Reason affected with finitude; and the whole of philosophy consists in determining the universe with respect to this finite Reason. Kant's so-called critique of the cognitive faculties [...] amount[s] to nothing but the absolute restriction of Reason to the form of finitude, [an injunction] never to forget the absoluteness of the subject in every rational cognition; [it] make[s] limitedness into an eternal law and an eternal being both in itself and for philosophy. So [this philosophy has] to be recognized as nothing but the culture (*Kultur*) of reflection raised to a system. This is a culture of ordinary human intellect which does, to be sure, rise to the thinking of a universal; but because it remains ordinary intellect it takes the infinite concept to be absolute thought and keeps what remains of its intuition of the external strictly isolated from the infinite concept. It does so either by renouncing that intuition altogether and sticking to concept and experience, or by keeping both [intuition

and concept] although unable to unite them – for it can neither take up its intuition into the concept, nor yet nullify both concept and experience [in intuition]. The torment of a nobler nature subjected to this limitation, this absolute opposition, expresses itself in yearning and striving; and the consciousness that it is a barrier which cannot be crossed expresses itself as faith in a realm beyond the barrier [i.e., presupposing a faith while designating a realm immune to it, which is contradictory; SC]. But because of its perennial incapacity this faith is simultaneously the impossibility of rising above the barrier into the realm of Reason, the realm which is intrinsically clear and free of longing. (G. W. F. Hegel, *Faith and Knowledge*, trans. Walter Cerf and H. S. Harris (Albany: SUNY Press, 1977), pp. 64-65 [my underline])

⁴⁴⁵ Cf. in Hegel's late *Lectures on the Philosophy of Religion*, where he speaks of the movement of dialectics (as it shows itself in 'religion') as a "necessary elevation" (LPR, p. 669; Hegel himself makes the connection to dialectic when he says of his sketch of the "pre-true" religions that they "are definite stages of the consciousness and knowledge of spirit." (Ibid, p. 517)). This directionality is almost omnipresent in Western metaphysics, grasped "intuitively" as a thought's reach toward the beyond, or the moral agent's reach towards the good or of spiritual goodness' self-elaboration *as, and via*, the "higher good" etc.

Yet, for Lévinas' metaphysical concerns, the "good beyond being" is never as passive or accepting (or, for that matter, as self-fulfilling) as it formerly was. The direction suggests an interruption of the Good in 'me' just as much as it might signify inspiration or elevation. The direction, as Lévinas says, is rather "From the good to me" (OB, 123), a relation wherein the Good chooses the Subject so that Subject is already born as hostage to its responsibility before the Other (OB, 122). Also cf., "[t]he relationship with exteriority is "prior" to the act that would effect it." Lévinas calls the relationship with the Other an obsession, which is betrayed by consciousness (insofar as it is thematized ontologically as "experience"), tracing a movement which operates "countercurrentwise." (OB, 101)

⁴⁴⁶ In the 'Spirit' essay, Hegel's subsequent disdain for the emptiness and vanity of what he termed the first negation – the negation of 'reflection' that positions a "for itself" (like the Kantian 'Subject,' self-regarding empty and formal), against the "in itself" of *everything else* (e.g. Kant's 'Thing in itself') – betrays a *hatred* that, if not underwrites it, at least "runs" with it. I made this point concerning Hegel's and Kant's "kindred spirits" in my chapter on Skepticism, see above, but for now I will only elaborate slightly on this connection vis-à-vis Kant and Hegel's shared project of "making metaphysics scientific," if you will.

In thinking the way of *Geist* through religion, and armed with the specific metaphysical insight, not to say imperative, of negating the (first) negation, Hegel's astute mind realized that if metaphysics were to *both* break free of dogmatic shackles, *and* be attain the *status* of a 'Science' (the "spirit" of Kant's metaphysical critique), it must "sublate" itself into something else, something higher. Higher, for Hegel, meant something fuller, closer to the Truth's final embodiment as AK, which meant that the first negation itself needed to be negated; this gave both to Hegelian 'reconciliation' (*Versöhnung*), a process whereby the Absolute loses, or, more precisely, *qualifies all* of its negations, all differences; no Difference is (to be) "privileged" over another when it comes to the Whole. This included the 'Subjective' or 'Transcendental' limit (to pure/speculative Reason) that Kant had insisted on as a *critical* element, what Hegel saw as Kant's "letter."

The oft-remarked Jewish-Kantian link is formed here, and yet it is important to hone-in on that "spiritual" link that Hegel insists on: Kant had only suggested *one* "letter," one 'scandal' or obstacle on the way of *Geist* to full reconciliation of Reason with itself (i.e. as Absolute); yet sharing with Hegel the assumption concerning the "drive" or "instinct" of Reason as directed towards the Truth and Reconciliation to be found on what Kant had called "the royal path to a Science." Setting the categorical limits to Reason was, for Kant, a way of achieving this goal, a goal wholeheartedly shared by Hegel. Hence, while Kant's critical "letter" blocked, in Hegel's view, this "spiritual path" that *both* had been travelling, its "Judaic" connection was itself only a "letter," formal one.

⁴⁴⁷ Karl Rosenkranz, *Georg Wilhelm Friedrich Hegels Leben*, (Darmstadt: Wissenschaftliche Buchgesellschaft, 1969), p. 49.

⁴⁴⁸ Here I am in complete agreement with Hamacher's exemplary *Reading in Hegel*: "Hegel's speculative idealism [...] finds in 'The Spirit of Christianity and its Fate' its first, still sketch-like elaboration [...]" (Werner Hamacher, *Pleroma: Reading in Hegel*, trans. Nicholas Walker and Simon Jarvis (Stanford: Stanford UP, 1998), p. 47)

⁴⁴⁹ "[...] the structure of the best tragedy [τραγωδία] should be [...] one that represents incidents arousing fear [φόβος] and pity [ἔλεος] – for that is peculiar to this form of art" (Aristotle, *Aristotle in 23 Volumes: vol. 23: Poetics*, trans. W.H. Fyfe (Cambridge, MA: Harvard UP, 1932), 1452b32-33).

⁴⁵⁰ As argued in the chapter on skepticism, this was a maneuver more "to the point" than Kant's merely leaving the skeptic outside the airlock to, *eventually*, die of asphyxiation.

⁴⁵¹ PR, 'Preface' pp. 5-6/S.7:14, 'Introduction' §15, p. 39/S.7:67 (respectively).

⁴⁵² Hegel uses ‘Abraham’ at the time where this Biblical figure was named *Abram*, not having been initiated into the covenant of God (i.e. circumcision) at the time of his departure, and thus still not having been marked by the divine. Cf. Genesis 12:1.

⁴⁵³ “With Abraham, the true progenitor of the Jews, the history of this people begins, i.e., his spirit is the unity, the soul, regulating the entire fate of his posterity.” (‘Spirit’ ETW, §i, p. 182)

⁴⁵⁴ Hegel notes, nevertheless, that “of the important period in which men strove by various routes to revert from barbarism [...] only a few dim traces [*dunkle Spuren*] remain” (ibid, ETW, p. 182). His interpretation of the Biblical Noah and Nimrod, and his choice of them as the pulsating repetition that Abraham was to *inaugurate as (Jewish) Spirit*, indeed finds the Abrahamic spirit in them regardless – but is it really without regard, without *hindsight*, that Hegel makes this claim? – of this admitted paucity of evidence, this “dimness” of historical traces. I do not aim to dismiss Hegel’s insights here as “mere speculation;” indeed, as shown in the previous chapter with Nietzsche’s appeal to “historical sense,” this speculation is always already a part and parcel of any historical narrative, underwriting the latter both ontologically and methodologically. My entire point here is to call Hegel himself – through but also beyond his self-absolving System – to responsibility for this speculation, specifically the hatred that, as I will show, pulsates beneath it like the pistons of an – however ‘spiritual’ – engine.

⁴⁵⁵ Cf. LPR, p. 208 and *passim*.

⁴⁵⁶ Cf. “The victory over them [the chthonic gods; SC] is of the kind in which they nevertheless still retain their rights and their honor. They are powers of nature, but they are not the higher, ethica l, and true power, the spiritually essential forces. Nevertheless there is still a natural moment contained in those forces themselves” (LPR, p. 334).

⁴⁵⁷ Cf., LPR, p. 331:

[...] Because ethical life constitutes the essential foundation here, what we are dealing with is the initial [mode of] ethical life so to speak, ethical life in its immediacy. There [simply] is this [social] rationality, the rationality or ethical life being wholly universal, being therefore in its substantial form. The rationality does not yet subsist as a subject, it has not yet raised itself up out of this unalloyed unity in which it is ethical life, into the unity of the subject, nor has it deepened itself inwardly. For this reason I the spiritual and essentially ethical characteristics appear as a mutually external [complex]. It is a content most full of import, but [its elements are] mutually external.

⁴⁵⁸ Cf. Hegel’s comments in LPR:

[...] “We find it in our heart” -that is the point it is important to consider, because in recent times it has been declared that we must consult the human heart in order to learn what is just and ethical. The opinion is that we discover within our hearts what God is. The heart is alleged to be the source, the root, and the justifying [factor] for this content. How are we to evaluate this opinion? Is this religion of feeling the true religion? Is it feeling that justifies our acting in this way or that?

I can even grant that for me the heart is the seed, root, and source of this content, though that is not saying very much. Calling it the source amounts to saying the heart is the initial mode in which such content appears to the subject. In the first instance the human being perhaps has religious feeling, but perhaps not. To that extent the heart has, to be sure, the significance of the seed. But, just as in the case of a single vegetable seed that is the first mode of existence of a plant, feeling is also this enveloped mode. The seed with which the life of the plant begins is the first [phase] only in the empirical mode, or only in appearance; for it is just as much a product or result, the final [phase]. It is therefore a wholly relative moment of origin (as we have already seen in the case of immediate knowledge). (LPR, p. 141)

⁴⁵⁹ Cf. LPR, pp. 416-417 n. 67.

⁴⁶⁰ Just in case one might think at this point that Hegel is merely describing the Christian religion in spiritual terms that have no bearing on his philosophical thought, I bring in brief the comments he made just following the ones just quoted: “These are not external distinctions, which we have made merely in accord with what we are; rather they are the activity, the developed vitality, of absolute spirit itself. It is itself its eternal life, which is a development and a return of this development into itself [...]” (LPR, p. 416)

⁴⁶¹ It is, as Hegel put it, only with Christianity that this “extraction” betrays a *direction*, or that this elevation “reveals” or “actualizes” *Sittlichkeit’s immanent teleological coherence*.

⁴⁶² Cf. “[...] ethical life is the concept of freedom developed into the existing world [...]” (PR §142).

⁴⁶³ Miriam Leonard summarizes this predicament quite well when she writes that Hegel,

[...] offers [the Jews] the promise of “reconciliation,” but it is a “reconciliation” that can only be achieved through complete self-denial. Ultimately, the Jews will never be able to survive the dialectic. In their opposition to the Greeks they cannot hope for recuperation in the synthesis.” She continues by showing that, for Hegel, in direct implication, “Christianity [...] is not the fusion between the Hebraic and the Hellenic. Christianity’s triumph is to liberate itself of Judaism by revealing itself as always already Greek. Just as Deucalion and Pyrrha discovered in their reaction to the flood that they were already Christians, Christ realizes that he is still a Greek.” (Miriam Leonard, *Socrates and the Jews*:

Hellenism and Hebraism from Moses Mendelssohn to Sigmund Freud (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2012), p. 92)

⁴⁶⁴ It is interesting to note the relation of the Jewish spirit to what Hegel calls here “love.” To recall, Noah’s and Nimrod’s hostility and hatred towards Nature were themselves merely reactions of a betrayed faith; they were injured and wished to assure that this injury not happen a second time. In Abraham, on the other hand, this becomes an active, volitional force: “[...] he tore himself free altogether [...] [...] without having been injured or disowned, without the grief which after a wrong or an outrage signifies love’s enduring need” (‘Spirit,’ ETW, p. 185). In Abraham, then, Jewish hostility and hatred become *active*; almost a willful attack on ‘love’ *tout court*.

⁴⁶⁵ As is well known, Immanuel Kant’s summary of the principle of the Enlightenment was “*Sapere aude!*”. The Jews, in this respect, show precisely a lack of the “courage” (*Tapferkeit*) necessary for elevating themselves, as “human beings” from their subjection, their “self-incurred minority.”

Enlightenment is the human being's emergence from his self-incurred minority. Minority is inability to make use of one's own understanding without direction from another. This minority is self-incurred when its cause lies not in lack of understanding but in lack of resolution and courage to use it without direction from another. *Sapere aude!* Have courage to make use of your own understanding! is thus the motto of enlightenment. (Immanuel Kant, ‘An Answer to the Question: What is Enlightenment?’, PP, p.17 [my underline]).

As is slightly less well known, the way Kant had treated of one prominent Jew – who tried to debate transcendental philosophy with him – was also a rejection that implied the semi-conscious judgment of a kind of “spiritual parasitism;” he saw no reason for Solomon Maimon’s attempted correspondence with him other than using Kant’s celebrity to make a name for himself: “as regards the “improvement” of the critical philosophy by [Solomon] Maimon (Jews always like to do that sort of thing, to gain an air of importance for themselves at someone else’s expense), I have never really understood what he is after and must leave the reproof to others” (Immanuel Kant, ‘Letter To Karl Leonhard Reinhold March 28, 1794,’ *Correspondence*, trans. and ed. Arnulf Zweig (Cambridge: Cambridge UP, 1999), p. 476).

⁴⁶⁶ Of course, as I have argued in the previous chapter, this infinite *Distanz* that refuses to get “aufgehoben” in “the Jewish spirit” is precisely what allows them the unique (non-)position of being witnesses to the violence of any *Distanz* whatsoever; and, moreover, be the physical markers – proves by millennia of *Christian* persecution – of all metaphysical “power grabs” that strive to self-absolve by effacing (or “digesting” every Otherness, every height that they do not already appropriate. In this sense, the Christian *Aufhebung* of Judaism is precisely where the Jews’ *ethical mission* is usurped, or, worse, abused.

⁴⁶⁷ I will show below how this non-position also confounds the definition of ‘Man’ as separate from ‘Animal;’ mainly for Hegel, but, if you read closely, you might catch a glimpse of a certain Kant between the lines.

⁴⁶⁸ Cf. *Dark Riddle*, p. 94; also cf. Shlomo Avineri, ‘A Note on Hegel’s Views on Jewish Emancipation,’ *Jewish Social Studies* vol. 25.2 (1963), p. 47). The following is in substantial agreement with Miriam Leonard’s concise summary of the problematic, and owes it a great deal. Nevertheless, the following discussion of the passage she cites from Hegel’s *Philosophy of Right*, as well as my claims to Nietzsche’s relationship with the Jew as an ethico-metaphysical traitor or nomad (*vis-à-vis* Christian morality/*ressentiment*) are my own. Cf. *Socrates and the Jews*, pp. 92-94.

⁴⁶⁹ For example, I suggest to read the following – seemingly benign and tolerant – comment in Hegel’s *Philosophy of Right* in precisely such an antipathological manner:

It is part of education [*Bildung*], of thinking as the consciousness of the individual in the form of universality [*Allgemeinheit*; a form that is presupposed as justified in Western metaphysics; SC], that the I comes to be apprehended as a universal person [*Allgemeine Person*] in which all [*Alle*] are identical [*identisch*]. A human being counts as a human being in virtue of his humanity, not because he is a Jew, Catholic, Protestant, German, Italian, etc. This consciousness, for which thought is what is valid, is of infinite importance. (PR §209/S.7:360-361 [my underline])

That which is of infinite importance, but cannot account for its own Law, its own force as such (since the latter is always attributed to Reason and Spirit), leaves open the door for an unchecked and irresponsible violence. As in the case of BLM, the above passage attests to what I called in the previous chapter the (irresponsible) ethico-metaphysical violence of the “all.” Moreover, Hegel’s examples are quite telling here, since ‘Jew’ is mentioned first, and is *substantially* different (using Hegel’s definition of ‘substance’) from the others: Catholic and Protestant belong to the highest form of *Sittlichkeit* (Christianity), and ‘German’ and ‘Italian’ already presuppose membership in *Sittlichkeit*’s highest rational expression, the State.

‘Jew,’ in this case, since s/he has neither state nor possessed of a proper ‘*Sittlichkeit*,’ undergoes a far more drastic – not to say violent – process by the force of this “*Bildung* of the *Alle*”. Hegel’s *Philosophy of Right* here shows itself to have moved from the explicit and aggressive hatred of the Jew, to the systematic, passive-aggressive one that can “tolerate” the Jew’s ‘rights’ and treat of her nominally as an ‘equal,’ but already presupposing, perhaps even unconsciously counting on, the violence of this, merely nominal, equality. This was precisely in conformity with the Protestant form of antisemitism: either the Jew will become worthy of this (ethico-metaphysical) “equality,” or perish by its comprehensive rule.

⁴⁷⁰ I can only cite what is still the cogent analysis of Yirmiyahu Yovel, whose forays into German Idealism vis-à-vis Nietzsche, and Judaism, wrote the following in conclusion; my only disagreement being, of course, that what Yovel calls in the following a “personal anti-Jewish prejudice,” is a ‘spirit’ much more rife in Western thought, particularly Philosophy, that being only “personal” without also being *systematic*:

[...] from the depths of Nietzsche's Dionysian humanism (which rejected liberal humanism and the Enlightenment), a much more emphatic, clear, almost noble acceptance of the Jews emerged than anything that came from the great rationalists and lovers of universal reason, Hegel and Kant, who allowed their doctrines to systematize their personal anti-Jewish prejudice in varying forms and degrees. At the same time, they condemned antisemitic practices in a cool, gentlemanly way characteristic of many liberals—a way that Nietzsche called “merely political” (today one would call it “politically correct”) – whereas Nietzsche opposed antisemitism with all the passion of his being and saw the liberal way as superficial and too weak to withstand its enemies. (‘Sublimity and Ressentiment,’ p. 22 [my underline]).

⁴⁷¹ Cf. Hegel’s relevant comment in the *Philosophy of Right*:

[...] For the state has a life-giving soul, and the soul which animates it is subjectivity, which creates differences and yet at the same time holds them together in unity. In the realm of religion too there are distinctions and finitude. God, it is said, is three in one; thus there are three determinations whose unity alone is spirit. Therefore to apprehend the nature of God concretely is to apprehend it through distinctions alone. Hence in the kingdom of God there is finitude, just as there is in the world, and to hold that the worldly spirit, i.e. the state, is only a finite spirit, is a one-sided view, for actuality is not irrational. Of course a bad state is worldly and finite and nothing else, but the rational state is inherently infinite. (PR §270A, p. 254)

⁴⁷² Also etymologically related to *Langfinger* – thief.

⁴⁷³ As I will show below, such an “extension of courtesy” bears many similarities to the way Hegel’s Christian Hero – Martin Luther – had treated the Jews: interpreting the Jewish old Testament in the original Hebrew, Luther then tried to convert the Jews through convincing their Rabbis that their Testament is none but a prefiguration the New one (and Jesus Christ), only to finally – after the latter had shown the characteristic stubbornness with regards to Messiahs – he went on to recommend, amongst other things, their synagogues burnt and their rabbis persecuted. Hegel’s “desire” here does not show any difference in its logic; nor does German history and/or the particularly antisemitic history of Protestantism. It is the same hostility, as Nietzsche was so astute to note, that animates these “outstretched hands.”

⁴⁷⁴ Cf. Richard Wagner, ‘Siegfried,’ *Der Ring des Nibelungen*, Act III Scene III. After Siegfried had broken the spear, Gungnir, which is the source of the Wotan’s power, the force of His Law as the ruler of the (pagan) gods, the stage is set for the next opera which Wagner will aptly title *Götterdämmerung*; the twilight of the gods (not to be confused, though certainly to be related, to Friedrich Nietzsche’s *Götzen-Dämmerung*). Brunhilde, Wotan’s favorite daughter, immediately understands the ramifications of this act and cries out in ecstasy, together with Siegfried (whose love for her will also be his downfall), “*Lachend laß uns verderben/Lachend zu Grunde gehn!*” (‘*Laughing let us (go to) ruin/laughing let us perish!*’).

“*Zu grunde gehn*” here bears the double meaning of going to the root of something (its “ground”) and dying – doing both in an heroic fashion, laughing and showing no fear. Furthermore, this Opera was written by the German Wagner – a known and unabashed antisemite – as a tragedy, which he held to be the greatest form of artwork.

⁴⁷⁵ I am following Hegel’s logic here; a different, more metaphysically sensitive approach would insist, as Nietzsche did, that the Greeks extolled ‘Man’ only insofar as he possessed the appropriate *Distanz*, a value-forming nobility that both promoted a selection of the Greeks vis-à-vis the rest of the “barbarians,” and within Greek society itself, between the citizen and those who were not (child, woman, merchant, slave, etc.). No generalized “Man” or “Humanity,” hence, but only what Hegel interprets as their prefiguration. On the ethico-metaphysical violence of prefiguration, see below.

⁴⁷⁶ That the ‘Truth’ of this ‘Why?’ can be revealed in/through ‘world history’ – and that its question could thus be put to rest or work (but at any case, keep from *interrupting* the narrative) was the way Hegel had translated the Christian idea of Revelation into a Philosophy. Of course, in order for this revelation to occur, various historical and philosophical contingencies and vanities had to be left behind, there where their ‘Why’s’ had been intermixed with and compromised by this or that ‘particularity;’ but a principle that upholds the separation and inaccessibility of its ‘Why?’, a ‘Why?’ that deifies particularity itself above all else, had to be *directly attacked*. Only, of course, attacked out of ‘love.’

⁴⁷⁷ “[...] the indigence of the Jews was such that, when they looked into their own hearts, there was nothing left there to see: they had renounced all nobility and all beauty” (‘Spirit,’ ETW, p. 241)

⁴⁷⁸ Cf. Amy Newman, ‘The Death of Judaism in German Protestant Thought from Luther to Hegel,’ *Journal of the American Academy of Religion*, vol. 61.3 (1993), pp. 455–484.

⁴⁷⁹ The Jews, as Hegel observes, “[...] had no share in anything eternal.” (‘Spirit,’ ETW, p. 195)

⁴⁸⁰ This is why Hegel refers to the first and third religions – the Greek and the Christian – as redeemable:

[...] The determination that spirit is present in humanity, and that human self-consciousness is essentially the presence of spirit – this is a conjunction we shall trace through various religions; it belongs necessarily to the first and oldest determinate

religions, and we shall see that it is also present in the Christian religion, but in a more exalted fashion and transfigured” (G. W. F. Hegel, *Lectures on the Philosophy of Religion* vol. 2: *Determinate Religion*, trans. R. F. Brown, P. C. Hodgson, and J. M. Stewart, ed. Peter Crafts Hodgson (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 2007), p. 293).

A methodological comment is perhaps apt at this point: the Hegelian dialectic, by its very revolutionary structure – taking after the form of the revolutionary just as, say, a Cross takes after the form of a person – can always be subverted from its “middle term.” Such a maneuver here would suggest – which is why I must break company here with those who hold this position – that Abraham was in fact the greatest hero, and even the greatest hope for ‘Mankind.’ Such an argument relies on the indeterminate nature that both ‘Absolute Subject’ and the ‘formal Subject’ share (which is precisely this empty formality; for Hegel leaves us in the dark as to the *content* of the Absolute Subject). And yet the way Hegel thinks – and uses – time in his dialectic will always make the recuperation of some future Absolution possible, nay, *necessary*, thus again recuperating the entire trajectory, as only Hegel can and does and will.

And yet it is precisely *the abject nature* of one “formality” that is absent(ed) from the other; the Abjection of Abraham’s separation is completely transubstantiated in Christ, becoming the infinitely comprehensive span of his arms’ universal embrace. Even the most “indeterminate negation” with which Hegel often accuses the Jews – ‘animal nature;’ ‘bodily/bare needs’ – is indeed transubstantiated for perpetual spiritual sustenance in/as the Eucharist (unlike cannibalism – which would still have a place of honor in Hegel’s system of religion – for there it is merely ‘natural’ whilst the Eucharist *spiritualizes* it).

Here, in view of our consideration of the Coward’s betrayal, it is most prudent to stay away from this “heroic” interpretation, for it will inscribe Abraham in *another* tragedy, another closure wherein it is a “new” totality that ultimately prevails. As if this was his purpose – but this is precisely the Christian hermeneutic violence of the figura (as I am about to show) – as a prefiguring of something “fuller” to come. In the words of the immortal Tina Turner: we don’t need another hero. We will come back to this below.

⁴⁸¹ Cf. PR § 340, p. 315:

[...] The principles of the spirits of peoples are in general restricted on account of their particularity, for it is in this particularity that, as existent individuals, they have their objective actuality and their self-consciousness. Their deeds and destinies in their relations to one another are the manifest dialectic of the finitude of these spirits, and out of it arises the universal spirit, the spirit of the world, free from all restriction, producing itself as that which exercises its right – and its right is the highest right of all – over these finite spirits in world history as the world’s court of judgement. [my underline, Hegel’s Italics]

Hegel’s English translator, T. M. Knox, going to specific trouble to correct the false impression that this line was Hegel’s, whilst in fact it should have carried quotation marks as the original quote is from Schiller’s poem ‘Resignation’ (Ibid, p. 375 n. 83), can only be seen here as a kind of “copyright” defense of Schiller, for Hegel *repeats* this phrase (*again* with no quotation marks) in the very next paragraph (the first paragraph of the ‘World History’ section).

In the 2008 version by Hegel scholar Stephen Houlgate, this apologetic remark is replaced with a merely factual one concerning the origin of the phrase; but Knox’s original “[...] it may be for that reason that the phrase is sometimes falsely attributed to [Hegel]” is curiously missing. Cf. Georg W. F. Hegel, *Outlines of the Philosophy of Right*, trans. Thomas M. Knox, and Stephen Houlgate (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2008), p. 362; and Georg W. F. Hegel, *Philosophy of Right*, trans. T.M. Knox (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1962), p. 375.

Perhaps such a double erasure – a barely tenable “apology” and its subsequent erasure – is coincidental to this place where the most blatant of Hegel’s justifications of (world-historical) violence culminates his political theory. But to believe this one must, like Dante entering Hell, leave all suspicion behind.

This kind of “argument according to History” (as reified in ‘fate’) is neither unique with respect to Hegel nor with respect to the Jews. I can only imagine that this “compromising” of Hegelian genius is what drove the famous H. S. Harris, to call his philosophy of history “speculative in the bad sense.” Indeed, Harris says this precisely at the moment of trying to distance Hegel’s ‘Science’ from Hegel’s “religious extension” or superstition (H. S. Harris, *Hegel: Phenomenology and System* (Indianapolis: Hackett, 1998), p. 5).

Perhaps related to this “apologetic drive” by the aforementioned Hegelian scholars (and many more), and regardless giving another indication of the work that antipathology performs as a methodological *force*, compare the above with the following quote from Martin Luther’s 1543 *Von den Juden und ihren Lügen* (‘Of the Jews and their Lies’), here in the context of trying to convert, or “talk some sense” to the misguided Jew, who, quite literally, “didn’t get the message:”

[...] They have failed to learn any lesson from the terrible distress that has been theirs for over fourteen hundred years in exile. Nor can they obtain any end or definite terminus of this, as they suppose, by means of the vehement cries and laments to God. If these blows do not help, it is reasonable to assume that our talking and explaining will help even less” (*Luther’s Works*, vol. 47, p. 138/ *Luthers Werke*, vol. 53, p. 418).

⁴⁸² Except the “fray,” of course, in the fray of a Christian System of thought, not the futurity discussed above with Levinatzsch, precisely for Hegel’s theodical philosophy of history and his telos of reconciliation-of-narrative(s).

⁴⁸³ Peter Szondi, in his work on the philosophy of the tragic, comments that the “philosophy” – as opposed to the “poetics” – of tragedy started with Schelling (Peter Szondi, *An Essay on the Tragic* (Stanford: Stanford UP, 2002), p. 1), and is the *culmination* of his entire system (ibid, p. 10). In it one finds the indifference of freedom and necessity as actualized in the entity [of the tragic, beautiful hero], corresponding to a kind of self-congealing [*Ineinsbildung*] of the real and the ideal, which is for Schelling, moreover, the *beautiful* as such (ibid, p. 9; cf. F. W. J. Schelling, ‘Philosophie der Kunst,’ *Werke: Teil I* bd. 5, ed. Walter Schieche (Stuttgart: Frommann-Holzboog, 1988), p. 383).

⁴⁸⁴ F. W. J. Schelling, *The Unconditional in Human Knowledge: Four Early Essays (1794-1796)*, trans. Fritz Marti (Cranbury: Associated University Presses, 1980), pp. 192-193.

⁴⁸⁵ One need not necessarily agree with Hegel and Schelling’s “spiritual interpretations” of Greek tragedy and the reduction which would always be the (they would say necessary) price of their account. Yet it is interesting to juxtapose here the tragic figure with which Hegel champions Greek tragedy’s constitutive contradiction for the emergence of the first proper community (the quintessential Hegelian figure of ‘ethical life,’ or ‘*Sittlichkeit*’) – that is, its immanent redemption – is Antigone. Without entering into the specifics of Antigone’s dialectic with Creon, in Spirit’s dialectical passage from Family life to Ethical life (i.e. the emergence of – a quite Aristotelian – community), I will just quote what in our context I see as the crux of Hegel’s infatuation with Antigone, as well as her ‘tragic insight,’ when Antigone says “Because we suffer we acknowledge we have erred” (PS, §470).

What Hegel says of the Jews and their spirit, not to say their fate, is precisely the opposite; the Jewish cowardice, his metaphysical betrayal, would be based on something like “because I am in the right, I suffer” (Derek Barker points out that Hegel perverts the original Greek (which was in the first person singular), rendering it as a ‘we;’ cf. Derek W. M. Barker, *Tragedy and Citizenship: Conflict, Reconciliation and Democracy from Haemon to Hegel* (Albany: SUNY Press, 2009), p. 79. This perhaps only betrays Hegel’s force of desire in elevating the Greek to the ‘reciprocal’ level, while Abraham would always be the self-serving, etc.).

What is interesting to note in passing here, is that Nietzsche’s own *The Birth of Tragedy*, with its still Manichean duality between, roughly, Apollo as the god of harmony and rational order and Dionysus and the god of intoxication and ecstasy, he would pit Attic tragedy against itself – *thus* effectively resisting its Hegelian *Aufhebung* – in an unresolved tension wherein it is precisely Antigone which takes the role of the Apollonian, and the tragic *Cassandra* who takes the role of the Dionysian. This example is all the more striking since Cassandra was a priestess of Apollo, and whose curse came to her when she precisely betrays his lecherous nature (which, I believe, brings to *unrelief* the hypocrisy of his ideality and reason), by agreeing to receive the gift of prophecy in exchange for sexual intercourse with the rational god, and then, at “the moment of truth,” reneging on her promise. One might even call this the betrayal of a coward, provided one does not assume that when giving her promise Cassandra had already planned this betrayal. Cf. Friedrich Nietzsche, *The Birth of Tragedy and The Case of Wagner*, trans. Walter Kaufman (New York: Vintage, 2010), §4, p. 47.

⁴⁸⁶ In addition to the obvious connotations – like Peter Greenaway’s early short film (cf. Peter Greenaway, *A Walk Through H: The Reincarnation of an Ornithologist* (Berlin: Absolut Medien, 2005 [1979])), which already contains the ambivalence of ‘H’ as either ‘Heaven’ or ‘Hell;’ as well as the famous line from Psalms 23:4 (Vul.) about walking “through the valley of the shadow of death” (a passage to which I will return) – let me suggest two more: one is *the famous ‘H’ with which Hegel used to sign his texts*, and the second is the form of that letter itself. Renown Hegel scholar H. S. Harris’s whose 2 volume opus magnum on Hegel’s dialectical flag-ship – *The Phenomenology of Spirit* – is titled ‘Hegel’s Ladder:’ and *the letter ‘H’ itself has the form of a ladder’s rung*. As Werner Hamacher sums it up neatly in his reading in Hegel’s *dialectical-speculative* philosophy: “[e]very further stage would belong to the already completed ladder of history, every additional step from which knowledge might relate to itself and to the ladder as a whole would constitute, as it were, the H with which Hegel occasionally signed himself.” (*Pleroma*, p. 2).

⁴⁸⁷ Cf. G. W. F. Hegel, *Aesthetics: Lectures on Fine Art* vol. I, trans. T. M. Knox (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1975), p. 544; ibid, vol. 2, p. 1103.

Both these citations are from Hegel’s direct treatment of Dante’s *Commedia* as a Catholic epic poem; its “catholicism” accounts for the objectivity he sees depicted in it. It is important to keep in mind that for Hegel’s view of ‘Science,’ “objective” is good, but not holy, not enough for the spirit; it must be sublated in/as absolute (knowledge) – and this, in a condensed form, is also the basis of Hegel’s critiques against Catholicism’s Dogma: infused with the right spirit, and yet remaining too external, too formal.

The Hegelian implications I have just delineated will recur in various forms in the following section, which is indeed located in the shadow of a certain “systematic-drive” at work in both Hegel and Dante, to which I am trying to attune our ears. Hegel indeed admired Dante’s epic, and would go so far as to say that the *Commedia* is a “strictly regulated, even almost systematic, poem [...] least lacking in the firmest articulation and rounded completeness” (*Aesthetics* vol. 2, p. 1103), with a “strict organization of the whole” (*Aesthetics*, vol. 1, p. 589).

Also cf. Shapiro's 'Rejoinder': "The Comedy is richly Hegelian in its depiction of the attained unity of hero and narrator, object and subject. It prefigures Hegel's own voyage of discovery through *Erinnerung* in the *Phenomenology* as well as the modern novel of the artist who finds his own identity by dissolving his past into art [...]" ; cf. Gary Shapiro, 'Hegel on the Meanings of Poetry' in Warren E. Steinkraus, Kenneth L. Schmitz (eds.), *Art and Logic in Hegel's Philosophy* (Atlantic Highlands: Humanities Press, 1980), p. 66. Cf. also, Anna Paolucci, 'Dante, Hegel, and the Marian Inspiration of the "Commedia",' *Dante Studies, with the Annual Report of the Dante Society*, vol. 95 (1977), pp. 95-118).

⁴⁸⁸ I will give but two of the more obvious examples, though there are many: the first is Dante's quarrel with Filippo Argenti, in the fifth circle of Hell, devoted to sins of anger, where Argenti is a mud-sucker, drowned in a swamp created by the river Styx, and torn apart by other souls therein (Dante is said to have known Argenti, and that the latter had a "beef" with Dante and his family, supposedly even slapping Dante once; see below), to be read in Canto VIII.31-57; and far down in lower Hell, at the eighth 'bolgia' – the second to last subsection of the 'Malebolgia,' the 8th circle of Hell, devoted to sinners of "simple fraud" (the 9th is that of "treacherous fraud") – where Dante "praises" Florence, his native city (that had him exiled), as famous in Hell, and having many representatives "in low places" as it were, throughout it (*Inferno* XXVI.1-12).

⁴⁸⁹ Hell is closed to its inhabitants – as I will show, it is imperative to Dante that they are literally "stuck" there; this while Purgatory opens to Paradise, and Paradise's inhabitants, as Beatrice shows the *Commedia's* reader at the beginning of the *Inferno*, can travel anywhere; cf. *Inferno* II.52-54

⁴⁹⁰ The Roman poet commonly called "Virgil" was, in fact, spelled *Vergilius*, as indeed the Roman poet's oldest surviving manuscript confirms. Throughout the years, the "i" had replaced the "e," both because the spelling "Virgil" had also existed at the time in Rome (another name to be pronounced differently), and, as explained here: "[...] due to the influence of *virgo* and *virga* (a magician's rod), the former on account of the Messianic interpretation of Eclogue IV by Christian writers and the latter on account of the magical powers that came to be attributed to Virgil" (Roy C. Flickinger, 'Vergil or Virgil?', *The Classical Journal*, vol. 25.9 (1930), pp. 658).

⁴⁹¹ To my purposes here, a "strengthening of faith" and a "conversion" are conflated, since both indicate an inner transformation that follows a (Christian) narrative; it matter little, in this regard, what length of this "road" (to Salvation) was passed.

⁴⁹² At one point in their journey through Hell, Vergil describes this as "the full experience" (*Inferno* XXVIII.48)

⁴⁹³ Hegel, by the way, was a great fan of Luther's maneuver, and perfectly understood the radical metaphysical gesture whereby the text is made accessible to "all," for thus the distinction of value, of height, is potentially annulled, which was, and is, perhaps the most radical of Protestant "Crusades." In this sense it might be illuminating to see what Hegel and Nietzsche thought about this move. First we find it in one of Hegel's Letters:

[...] Luther made the Bible speak German, [...] the greatest gift that can be made to a people. For a people remains barbarian and does not view what is excellent within the range of its acquaintance as its own true property so long as it does not come to know it in its own language. [...] I wish to try to teach philosophy to speak German. Once we get that far, it will be infinitely more difficult to give to shallowness the appearance of profound discourse." (G. W.F. Hegel, 'Letter to Voss, 1805,' *Hegel: The Letters*, trans. Clark Butler and Christiane Seiler (Bloomington: Indiana UP, 1984), p. 107)

Then, Hegel, from his LHP, writes of the principle of/in Luther's Reformation:

[...] [O]ne can only be with God [*bei Gott*] when one is at home with self [*bei sich selbst*]. I must [*muß*] be at home [*Hause*] in my conscience [*Gewissen*]; this right of mine as the householder [*Hausrecht*] is not to [*soll nicht*] be disturbed [*gestört; stören*] – to prevent a peaceful progression, interfere], no one else [*kein anderer*] shall presume to have a say [*gelten*] in it. There all externality [*Alle Äußerlichkeit*] with reference to me is banished [*verbann*], [...] Only in communion and in faith [*Genuß und Glauben*] am I connected with something divine. The distinction [*Unterschied*] between laity [*Laien*] and priests [*Priestern*] is sublated [*aufgehoben*] [...]" (LHP III:96/GW 9.4:63-64 [translation modified, my underline])

And now, Nietzsche, who writes:

[...] The Lutheran Reformation was, in its whole breadth, the indignation of simplicity [*Einfalt*] against 'multiplicity' [*Vielfältiges*] [...] [...] [it] [...] surrendered the holy books to everybody until they finally got into the hands of the philologists, who are the destroyers of every faith that rests on books (GS §358, pp. 310-311/KGW 5.2:284 [my underline])

⁴⁹⁴ Here it is far from incidental to point out that in Dante's poem we are positioned in a unique Christian space: on the one hand the *Commedia* is almost unanimously a work that showcases Thomist and Scholastic Catholicism (cf. Philip H. Wicksteed, *Dante & Aquinas* (Honolulu: University Press of the Pacific, 2002), pp. 126, 187-265; and compare *Inferno*, IV.131); yet, on the other hand, the *Inferno* shows a great disdain to (certain) popes – something which Catholic dogma will consider a blasphemy of the (almost) highest order. I say it is far from incidental here because, as pointed out, the "tourist visa" through the Divine that the metaphysics (and theology) of Dante's poem grants Dante (and, arguably, to Dante's reader as well) shifts to the narrator whose only "merit" was that he was loved on Earth by (a woman who proved, subsequently, to

be) a saint (Beatrice). Divine election here seems far more gratuitous and “open” than the theological mechanics of pope-election; it would seem that with this poem Dante, *de facto*, usurps papal power in the name of a “personal” love and a “personal” testimony.

While the “singular” element of the Catholic confession still remains, we are well under way to Luther’s *individuating* principle of “justification by faith alone.” Cf. Dante Alighieri, *Monarchy*, trans. Prue Shaw (Cambridge: Cambridge UP, 1996) I, xiv, pp. 23-25; there, in Dante’s “political” treatise – though it is my sincere hope that by now the essentially political/polemical nature of the (always Christian) ‘theological’ (which insists on both Carl Schmitt’s famous insight – that our political concepts are translated theological ones) *reversal* of Carl Schmitt’s famous insight – and on its *reversal*) has become clear enough – where Dante “borrows” Thomas Aquinas’ argument for the unique authority of the *Pope* in order to apply it to the (all too human) *emperor*. Also cf. *Dante & Aquinas*, p. 134.

⁴⁹⁵ This last line is quoted by Freccerri from Dante’s *Convivio*; cf. John Freccerri, *Dante: The Poetics of Conversion*, ed. Rachel Jacoff (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard UP, 1986), pp. 2-3 [my underline]; hereinafter cited as PC.

⁴⁹⁶ This is also accords with Thomas Aquinas, who maintained that sins differ on account of their voluntary element, which is the essential one, rather than their effects or grandeur, which is secondary (in compact form, one could find here the kernel of what I alluded to very briefly as “Hitler goes to Heaven,” so long as his will can be converted, and he truly repents, Catholic Dogma must excuse all the death and destruction he had caused. Now, Protestantism, in its Hegelian/Philosophical heterodoxy at least, does not share this theodical institution – that of the “confession” to the Church – but instead placed the work of redemption on world history itself. The will that matters is that of God, of “spirit,” and hence still allowing Hitler, in principle, an Absolution). cf. ST 2.72.1.

⁴⁹⁷ This structure itself already suggests an asymmetry that is, literally, buried in Dante’s narrative, a narrative built to reflect the holistic harmony of Aquinian theology’s view of the universe (following Aristotle’s): on the one hand, the story proceeds from bad to good (hence “*commedia*”), and one must first go through Hell, then Purgatory, and then finally be redeemed in Paradise. And yet, Hell is still the odd one out: while both the Purgatorio and the Paradiso are ascensions in good, rising up the ladder towards God, the pilgrim find that he must make the opposite journey, from bad to worse, when going through Hell. In this sense, when the gates of Hell bid one to “abandon hope,” they precisely mean this is a trip that can only end badly, whose only direction is down.

Both theologically and metaphysically, this makes perfect sense; after all, if it were not for this “one-way” vector that defines Hell, the Devil – by which I mean here the *violence* towards ‘evil’ that the Christian theologico-moral structure (i.e. resentment) *holds down* there, what I called above a suppression – would be able to come back out, to come back to the surface. The symmetry that belies this, fundamental asymmetry – the “exceptional” status of ‘evil’ – that is buried under the perfect harmony of God’s Love/Reason is also illustrative of what Nietzsche called the “democratic prejudice” of equality/symmetry between souls; that is, until one of these souls, like Lucifer, “falls” from God’s grace, and is now forever placed in an asymmetrical relation that keeps citing the above symmetrical justice (of Reason or Love, take your pick – Hegel chose both), and forever denied responsibility to the violence that they incur. What these unfortunate “souls” get – *as ‘souls’* (and this “egalitarian” reduction, this assumption of equivalence, is the key to this justification of violence, the justification of another’s pain/“fate”) – is only “pity,” and even that is, as Dante shows us, giving them too much.

The same justification of violence operates with regards to the Jews: if God had abandoned them – which is clear from their rejection of the Messiah, if not from their exile and systematic persecution – what can “we,” as good Christians, show them but the occasional pity, and even that – only as a surplus of generosity. When some disaster happens, when that surplus is “used up,” these same good Christians had neither a moral nor a religious problem with lynching them at will. Hence, heeding the asymmetry that the harmonious symmetries of “equivalence” and “souls” – the “all men are equal (i.e. born guilty) in the eyes of God – is heeding this potential violence before it happens, before it erupts due to this or that historical contingency, or this or that “individual gone insane.”

⁴⁹⁸ Of course, strictly speaking, the first division is the one where Hell begins (although, as I will show, this threshold is itself rather robust to justify the name of “division,” based on the theological/Aquinian division between ‘Mortal’ (Hell) and ‘Venial’ sins (Purgatory). To get a rough sense of what this division entails, I can use an analogy that St. Thomas avails himself to very regularly, and that is to see the sin as a disease, not on the body, but of the spirit. Hence, a venial sin would be like a minor condition/disease with which one can live, say, a flat foot or a poor eyesight (except with regards to “spirit”); a mortal sin would be one that leads to the death (of the soul), like terminal cancer or Ebola (once again, of the “spirit.”). Cf. ST 2.88.1.

⁴⁹⁹ Dante mentions a third sin here, “mad bestiality” (*biasimo accata*), about which scholars are still divided. Some maintain that it is unique to the excesses of the 9th Circle (thus making Hell’s structure: incontinence, malice, mad bestiality); many refer this to sins of violence, in which case the division would become: incontinence, violence, and malice. However, as Robert Durling notes, both interpretations are guilty of overlapping categories. Cf. *Inferno*, p. 182n.

⁵⁰⁰ The Italian ‘*dritta*’ shares the – semantic and etymological – connections with the German *Recht* (as well as the French ‘*droit*’: right-hand side; law/right; straight direction; proper)...

It is also worth noting that this ‘way’ is not just Dante’s way, or direction, for the beginning of the poem states clearly ‘*cammin di nostra vida*’ (“journey of our life;” *Inferno* I.1). This is the first of many indications that Dante’s narration here is meant to include the reader as well (the poem’s vast use of the first person precludes this being something like a manner of etiquette or a “royal ‘we’”).

⁵⁰¹ The mention of pity is fundamental here as well, especially when recognizing the formative/pedagogical character of Dante’s text. The Italian *pietate* of course relates to Christian piety, but also presaging the conflict that Dante is about to endure for seeing so many eternally damned/suffering souls. The word *pieta* itself relates to the moment/state of doubt – which, I maintain, is Dante’s own “cross to bear” through the *Inferno* – as the panicking fear that one who lost his bearings (which also means, considered theologically, lost his piety). That is why in the opening verses of the first canto, Dante’s puts his initial fears and uncertainties in the context of *pieta* (although the English translation translates here ‘anguish’: “Then was the fear a little quieted that in the lake of my heart had lasted through the night I passed with so much anguish” (*Inferno* I.19-21). The ‘anguish’ is the weight of the fear, and this choice of ‘*pieta*’ is, I maintain, deliberate on Dante’s side. The journey through Hell will precisely prove to be a combating of doubt in the Divine plan, a veritable moral education, that will begin with Dante’s doubts and fears – not being able to traverse the damned realm; not to be able to affirm and comprehend some cruel fates of the soul therein – and end with the proper moral sentiment. In a way, the *Inferno*’s journey is a *Bildung* of justified strife.

⁵⁰² Note how, in Italian, *ritrovai*, a *passato remoto* conjugation of *ritrovare*, suggests that this “self-retrieval” is *also* a leap of memory, as the Italian verb relates to a distant – *remoto* – past. Indeed the sense of (self-)retrieval is strengthened further by Dante’s qualification: “the thought [*pensier*] of it renews [*rinova*] the fear!” (*Inferno*, I.6) [translation modified; Dante writes ‘*rinova la paura*’ – renews the fear – which already adds to the exemplary, or edifying nature ascribed to this fear as an experience/testimony – already exceeding the “merely biographical”]. The revisiting of the narrative self is also the revisiting of a deep fear, thus further suggesting the setting-up of the *Commedia* on a whole – for this motif of fear will return throughout key moments of the *Inferno* – as a test or example for precisely the lost.

⁵⁰³ Dante also directly refers to his own mental state as a lake; “the lake of my heart” [*lago del cor*] (ibid, I.20)

⁵⁰⁴ The Latin, ‘Vulgate’ Book of Psalms is always one chapter “behind” the later, “Standard” versions. Dante, at the time, was using the version completed by St. Jerome in the year 404 AD, a version where the (now famous) “shadow” – i.e. “the shadow [*umbræ*] of death” does not (yet) appear. The Latin version Dante had read goes: “*sed et si ambulavero in valle [valley] mortis [death] non timebo [fear] malum [evil]*” (Ps. (V) 22:4). The Original Hebrew reads “גֵּיאַ צִלְמוֹת” which indeed includes both valley and “shadow-of-death” (as one word).

⁵⁰⁵ There is, however, a difference to be noted here, which perhaps Hegel is the most equipped to help us understand. There is also a reflection, in the very beginning of the poem, that actually “renews the fear” (*rinova la paura*; *Inferno* I.6). The only difference between the two reflections is the difference between Dante the pilgrim, within the experience, and Dante the narrator, recounting the experience. And yet the poet’s reflection includes memory of “the good [*ben*] that I found there” (*Inferno* I.8), and it is this “anamnesic” good that drives Dante to narrate his exploits. This memory of something past is, indeed, the consolation of/in the narration, the fuller consolation of the narrator: “to treat of the good that I found there I will tell of the other things I saw” (*Inferno* I.9-10; Dante refers directly to memory (‘*la mente*’) as primary guide (that is, furthermore, unerring (*non erra*)) – in the beginning of the second canto; cf. *Inferno* II.4-9)).

This privilege of the narrator, the privilege of a remembered/retained ‘good’ that presides over the narration – such, I will claim, is the bliss of Hegelian comprehension and reconciliation. Despite the Christian-moralistic aspects of the poem which Hegel resented so much – see, for example, his third Foreword to the *Encyclopedia Logic* – it is the motive-in-structure here that he would agree with; what some commentators call the “epimetheic” character of his ‘*das absolutes Wissen*.’ Hidden within an almost imperceptible interstice of a difference between the narrative (the narrator’s memory) and the spirit of the narrative (embodied as Dante the pilgrim/hero) is the difference of which Hegel spoke so much starting with his famous *Differenzschrift*: the difference between the philosophy of reflection and that of speculation. The latter, to use the Derridean translation we proposed above, *relieves* the former of its imperfect duties.

The “spirit” of the journey – the ‘good’ in Dante’s poem; ‘fate’ in Hegel’s language – is only there in retrospect. This 20-20 hind-sight – for which I wish to keep all the connotations that the word ‘hind’ suggests in English – is what Lévinas, in his bitter struggle with Hegel, will call time and again egology, or the return of Self to Self. As I will show through Lévinas’ treatment of the interruption of transcendence as an escape from the totality of ‘Being,’ the fear that requires one to close the circle of com-prehension (the *encircling seizure* performed by the Hegelian *Begriff*) is precisely that which Dante sets out to disabuse himself of in the *Inferno* (consider the suggestive use of *punto* and *com-punto* – especially in light of the English ‘compunction’ – as the rendering-intelligible (or, should I say, ‘spiritual’) of the cowardly fear; cf. *Inferno* X.109).

Cf. Hegel: “Only so far as reflection has connection with the Absolute is it Reason and its deed a knowing. Through this connection with the Absolute, however, reflection's work passes away; only the connection persists, and it is the sole reality of the cognition. There is therefore no truth in isolated reflection, in pure thinking, save the truth of its nullification.” (Hegel, *The Difference Between Fichte's and Schelling's Systems of Philosophy*, pp. 97-98);

Also cf. Lévinas:

[...] 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. And, seemingly, it would be a matter of understanding all alterity, which is brought together, welcomed, and synchronized in the presence at the interior of the I think, and which then is assumed in the identity of the Ego-it is a matter of understanding this alterity assumed by the thought of the identical-as its own and, then still, of leading its other back to the same.”; and “[...] this egological significance of intentionality, the egology of synthesis, the gathering of all alterity into presence, and the synchrony of representation [...]” (Emmanuel Lévinas, ‘Diachrony and Representation,’ in *Time and the Other*, trans. Richard A. Cohen (Pittsburgh: Duquesne UP, 2013), p. 99, 100).

⁵⁰⁶ The Italian *vilta* or *viltade* is striking, first and foremost, in its absence: the “lower part” of Dante’s *Inferno* – what is called the ‘City of Dis’ and will house the most heinous crimes against Divine Love (Cantos X-XXXIV) – will no longer contain this word/disposition.

⁵⁰⁷ Once again, let me state that to see this as a moral accusation on my part, or even on the part of Judaism, towards Christianity would be a gross error. I mean to point to an ethical problematic that comes out of the Judaic-Christian knot here, and, furthermore, acknowledge that the only tools I/we have to work with are, and should be, these Judeo-Christian tools. There is no “going back,” and, furthermore, there is no simply “going out.” A moral rejection always only comes from some *presupposed outside that is appropriated by the accuser*; betrayal, on the other hand...

⁵⁰⁸ Immanuel Kant, *Lectures on Ethics*, trans. Peter Heath (Cambridge: Cambridge UP, 2008), p. 146/Ak. 27:371, 150/Ak. 27:376 (respectively)

⁵⁰⁹ LPR, p. 373 n.492

⁵¹⁰ This is how Beatrice is depicted in Dante’s *Paradiso*; cf. Dante Alighieri, *The Divine Comedy of Dante Alighieri: Volume 3: Paradiso*, trans. Robert M. Durling, Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2011), XXIII.106.

⁵¹¹ Here the Italian word for “coward(ly)” is “cattivo,” sharing an etymology with “captive.” The translators’ choice to translate “cowards” here is neither accidental nor random, but makes perfect sense with regards to what I will discuss in the following as the *Commedia*’s “figural” nature, and what I have been discussing up to now as the dialectical “drive” of Hegel’s ‘spirit.’ First, the cowardly chorus of angels appears in close proximity to the Italian word for cowardice “*viltà*,” where Dante sees “he who in his cowardice [*viltà*] made the great refusal” (*Inferno* III.60) before proceeding to describe others within the same “sect of cowards [*cattivi*]” (ibid, III.62).

Second, since this afterlife is presented to us as an immutable structure – in eternity all time is meaningless (i.e., *makes no difference*) – the *cattivo* of the angels and the *codardo* (the more common Italian word for “coward”), share a similar position: *codardo* is derived from the Latin *coda*, meaning the extreme back-end of something, or the tail of an animal (suggesting a back-vs.-front opposition; while *cattivo* derives from the Latin *capere*, meaning held, or seized).

Since Dante’s journey, as well as Hegel’s spirit, is a progression (upwards/forward), being held in place is the dynamic counterpart to the static “back.” Perhaps it is more appropriate to combine the two and say that the coward is s/he who is “held back” with regards to Divine Justice/Truth/Salvation. On the connection between state and dynamic in Dante’s *Inferno*, see below – in the sub-section on the *figura* that closes this section.

⁵¹² The role of cowardice (‘*vilta*’) in Dante’s *Inferno* is central and telling. The word itself appears only in three cantos: II, III, and IX. In such a highly structured realm as Dante’s *Inferno*, I believe that the inference that this ‘challenge’ is raised by Dante only at the thresholds of Hell, bears great significance. Canto II – where Beatrice, Dante’s divine protector and inspiration, almost rebukes him for his ‘*vilta*’ reaction to the prospects of the journey ahead of him – and canto III – where cowardice is indeed the (logically, if not chronologically) “original sin:” the gates of Hell, as Vergil explains, tell of the necessity of *vilta*’s death (‘*morta*’). Canto IX appears once again in a liminal space, this time of the entry to ‘lower Hell,’ the ‘City of Dis.’ The *Inferno*’s *vilta*, in other words, could be interpreted as a moment of doubt in the divine plan, for Dante exhibits both its appearance and the necessity of its demise. Indeed, as the very progression through Hell would be impossible without answering the challenge of *vilta*, which, as Beatrice, the poet’s divine benefactor exhorted to him – she sends an angel to help her hero-pilgrim to enter the city of Dis in canto IX – he must disabuse himself of and have faith in the blessing he receives (in Canto II) from her and two other divine figures (the Virgin Mary and Saint Lucia). Faith in the consistency of the divine blessing is to guide Dante through the *Inferno*, whose foremost challenge to the believer is the paralyzing effect of doubt.

⁵¹³ Here I believe Dante’s use of ‘*sorte*’ to designate fate – as opposed to *fortuna*, *destino* or *fato* – suggests that, since already in Hell, these concepts of a *future graced by the Divine* had already been revoked at the entry to Hell.

⁵¹⁴ John Freccerero sees the Vestibule Angels as nothing less than “the axis of Dante’s cosmos” (‘The Neutral Angels,’ PC, p. 113)

⁵¹⁵ Here I will repeat an important point about the similarity, and the difference, between Nietzsche and Hegel. Nietzsche, like Hegel, found this situation of such *principled* doubt, of being “stuck” at the level of justifying the action before embarking on it (and, hence, not embarking on *any* action), unbearable: “I know not which way to turn; I am everything that knows not which way to turn” (AC §1, p. 127), Nietzsche writes, in ridicule and contempt, as the “motto” of “modern Man,” the weak and pathetic product of millennia of *ressentiment*.

There are, however, two key – and, again, *metaphysical* – differences between Nietzsche’s disdain, and Hegel’s. For one, Nietzsche’s relation to doubt itself is always very positive, as seen above in his relation to the skeptic and to his own “experimental position” or what Ronell refers to as “test drive;” Nietzsche loves it when doubt “comes about” (e.g., “the Nietzschean experiment”), which is precisely why he disdains most of all when this arrival is made into a principle, into a system, into a universal or general presence, rather than, as he (and Lévinas) would like it to be, an event, a break, an *épreuve*. Hegel, of course, assumed this principle and erected a counter-principle so as to lead his System out of this state/stasis and allow it to move – except that by this he created a circle, an ‘Ouroboros’ that consumes itself, utterly indifferent to Otherness and hence blind to the ethical commands that issue from *encountering* the Other (like encountering doubt; think of this system as someone who pays a (sustainable) percentage from every paycheck to “charity,” and hence can glide by any *particular* beggar on his path with glib indifference).

Second, in Nietzsche’s “overcoming” of doubt, in his push towards action and movement and against the aforementioned *stasis* (put roughly: a philosophy of *becoming* over one of Being), the result is never, ever certain, never redeemed or absolved. Only the event, the act or the break – the *encounter* with the Other (as an-archival will-to-power) – is being put forward. But, of course, this encounter does not, or at least not necessarily/on-principle, issue forth any higher or richer comprehension or convergence: Nietzsche’s encounters burst forth a singularity, akin to the Lévinasian ‘me’ that the Other recalls as the “genealogy” of every “I,” which amounts to a dispersion of singularities, *a nomadic dissemination rather than a sedentary, property-oriented cultivation (Bildung)*. In Hegel’s ladder, as stated repeatedly above, such idiomatic particularities must be brought back under the ambit of the universal, so as to be ripe for “cultivation” in the world/history, and lead to a richer Concept that eventually redeems/absolves itself as *absolute Wissen*.

This difference – metaphysical, and hence, to those that systematically deny their own metaphysics, imperceptible – precisely touches back on the ‘Why?’ to which I have been, somewhat obsessively, referring; as can be well shown in this example (and in others throughout my dissertation), even though both Hegel and Nietzsche seem to share the same *position* with regards to doubt, they do so *from entirely different ‘Why’s*.

⁵¹⁶ Derrida’s ‘*relève*’ holds within it many of both the explicit and the implicit claims of the Hegelian *Aufhebung*. For example, he notes that ‘*relève*’ is chosen for its containing the *élève*, the student, the one to-be-educated (Hegel’s long-term aspiration to be an educator (*Volkserzieher*) is attested to by H. S. Harris. Cf. *Hegel’s Development*, pp. xxii, 4)).

This semantic choice also suggests the *élévation*, the meritorious upward movement of the Concept as self-knowledge (Hegel’s “necessary elevation;” cf. LPR, p. 669), as the French relief from responsibility (the *absolution* that comes with the Absolute), to sack/fire or promote, and, relatedly, the *relevant*, as that which presides over the essential (what is to be kept in the elevation of the Concept). Cf. Jacques Derrida, *Glas*, trans. John P. Leavey (Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press, 1990), pp. 15, 23; Jacques Derrida, ‘The Ends of Man,’ *Margins of Philosophy*, trans. Alan Bass (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1992), p. 121; as well as, in the same volume, ‘The Pit and the Pyramid,’ *ibid*, pp. 88 ff.

⁵¹⁷ John Freccerero writes in this context:

[...] For the angel, to avert from the vision of God is to ignore not only Him, but the self that depends upon Him. The rebellious angel will act on the basis of that aversion, but the ‘per se’ angel, having turned from the roots of his own being, refuses even this negative affirmation. It remains, locked tightly in the self, an irreducible negation, meriting not even classification among the damned, having done nothing to distinguish itself from the void out of which it was created. It [...] stood, undecided, as if it could really forge a destiny for itself, somehow different from the one God intended. [...] because of [that hesitation], the ‘per se’ angel was spewed forth from the supernatural cosmos. (PC, pp. 117-118; my underline)

⁵¹⁸ Martin Luther, ‘Concerning Christian Liberty,’ trans. R. S. Grignon, *Project Gutenberg*, <http://www.iclnet.org/pub/resources/text/wittenberg/luther/web/cclib-2.html>, accessed 13 May 2017.

⁵¹⁹ ‘Spirit,’ ETW, p. 247

⁵²⁰ Many commentators have noted that in Vergil’s Aeneas, the work which is most often referenced in the *Commedia*, Aeneas indeed cannot penetrate the lower gates of Hell. Aeneas and the Sybil cannot enter the walls of Dis (‘*moenia Ditis*’ Virgil. *The Aeneid*. trans. Robert Fitzgerald (New York: Vintage Books, 1990), Book 6 ln. 531-540, p. 173]), beyond which lies the pit of Tartarus, where the worst sinners and criminals are punished (*ibid*, 6.562-627, pp. 174-176). If in the Aeneas “not even the power of the heaven” can enter the Tartarus, the fact that Dante does enter – Vergil having failed – suggests a

priority that Dante establishes between the limits of Vergil's imperfect paganism and Dante's own Christianity. Consider Beatrice's very precise praise of Vergil, spoken at the moment of his recruiting to Dante's cause: "O courteous Mantuan soul, whose fame still lasts in the world and will last as far as the world will go" (II.58-60), suggesting that the full limit/scope of the pagan's wisdom and claim to greatness/fame (*fama*) as precisely limited "the world" (*mondo*) and its duration (*dura/durera*); but not beyond. Cf. Robert Durling and Ronald Martinez's comments in *Inferno*, p. 137 n.82-117.

⁵²¹ Cf. *Inferno*, p. 143: "they beat themselves with their palms and shrieked so loudly that for fear [*sospetto*] I drew closer to the poet" (my underline).

⁵²² As discussed in the chapter on Skepticism, following Wittgenstein's precise formulation of the problem: to define a limit one must be able to think both its sides; hence, the limit of thought, once defined, already presupposes such a (as Hegel well knew – contradictory) com-prehension.

⁵²³ It is important to note here that Hegel did not agree with the assertion I am making here. In his *The Scientific Ways of Treating Natural Law* Hegel specifies precisely his issue with Dante's mythical-epic account, precisely in terms of its missing incarnation in world history, which Hegel sees as the disappearance of "fate:"

[...] Dante's Divine Comedy is without fate and without a genuine struggle, because absolute confidence and assurance of the reality of the Absolute exist in it without opposition, and whatever opposition brings movement into this perfect security and calm is merely opposition without seriousness or inner truth. [...] Indeed it cannot as a whole take its movements to be movements against a fate, but only to be chance events, because it regards itself as invincible, counts loss as nothing, and is certain of its absolute dominion over every singularity and wantonness [...] (G. W. F. Hegel, *The Scientific Ways of Treating Natural Law, its Place in Moral Philosophy, and its Relation to the Positive Sciences of Law*, trans. T. M. Knox (Philadelphia University of Pennsylvania Press, 1982), pp. 105-106).

And yet, my *Levinatzschean* witness maintains that this difference is *vain*. Hegel saw the Absolute (as 'world spirit') moving in opposition to earthly "fate" as a tragic movement – "the tragedy which the absolute eternally enacts with itself" (ibid, p. 104), over and against Dante's *Comedy* – since it requires and presupposes the fatalities that history provides; those actual (*wirklich*) victims that must pass, in "reality" as opposed to in Dante's "wanton" imagination, and give "fate" the actual fatalities that make up the meaning of Natural Law and History as the movement of that Law through, its actualization in, the world. This difference, in Hegel's mind, is what makes Dante's individual fancy inferior to that of Socrates, since Dante's was "without risk of fear" (ibid, p. 106), and Socrates, well, he had to become an "actual" *fatality* of his principle.

A *Levinatzschean approach to methodology*, which takes the witness as the kernel and center of all signification, including that of Hegel himself as himself, as himself a witness of the "world spirit" or the "Absolute" – something Hegel would avoid precisely as 'vanity' – would remark that this difference makes no difference insofar as the ethico-metaphysical decisions of the narrators, as such, exonerate their own narratives of the Absolute. Whether logical or theological, the theodical 'spirit' is identical in Dante and Hegel, except that the latter claimed to be writing a philosophy or history, while the former merely an edifying poem.

The "fear" that Hegel would ascribe to, say, an actual battle, an actual Socrates about to swallow the poison or an actual soldier in Napoleon's army about to take the first leap into the fray, has to presuppose that "fate" is something actual and real apart from the one who is writing its Absolute narrative. In Dante's *Comedy* this distinction was more obvious, in Hegel's *Philosophy* – not so much. Both, however, are engaged in a theodical praxis of their own narratives and, in that sense, each is to be made responsible for the kind of "fate" that this position affords; a singular position first, and only then, if at all, a universal one. Even for Hegel, there is no risk of fear or envy, except insofar as they are experienced by the "Absolute" – which is possibly why Hegel says that its movement is one of courage, of succumbing to death so as to be reborn: in Dante this had only an individual-psychological manifestation; Hegel's narrative pretends to something far higher and more comprehensive, the high-est and the most comprehensive narrative possible. But if the Absolute is there at first, and will there at the last, what is the meaning of maintaining "fear" (or "courage," for that matter) in narrating its nature?

⁵²⁴ Some early commentators maintain that Argenti had runnings with Dante when the latter was magistrate in Florence, another says he had slapped Dante once (G. A. Borgese, 'The Wrath of Dante,' *Speculum* vol. 13.2 (1938), p. 187), and already despises, "with weeping and mourning, cursed spirit, now remain" (*Inferno*, VIII.37-38).

As Donno explains in a 1965 paper, "[...] many of Dante's interpreters - doubtless the majority of them - have found the Argenti episode somewhat embarrassing to deal with. Many have not hesitated to condemn it, in fact, as a deviation from high purpose and a lapse from strict justice" (Daniel J. Donno, 'Dante's Argenti: Episode and Function,' *Speculum*, vol. 40.4 (1965), p. 611). Once again, these commentators – like Nietzsche's philologists and psychologists – did not approach the story with antipathological (or at the very least Hegelian dialectical) eyes.

⁵²⁵ This statement can be compared to another of Dante's exclamations concerning Divine Justice, where, in the last subcircle of the 7th circle, he speaks of God's "horrible art of justice" (*Inferno* XIV.6). Though "horrible" denotes an affective, rather than judgmental, response, it still betrays a decidedly different affect than this praise.

⁵²⁶ This is another indication of Dante's own sort of "prefiguration" of Protestantism, as this critique of the Catholic Church was one of its most famous point of contention (money, power, were all external things that harm the faith for distracting the believer from what is truly important, etc.). Of course, this claim of mine – like all speculative, "figural" claims (as I will show below), derives of the singular 'Why?' (the antipathological 'Why?' of the coward's betrayal) that drives me and my inquiry here.

⁵²⁷ Cf. in the *Nicomachean Ethics*, a book that was indispensable for Christian theology at that time, and to Dante as well (as was Aristotle more generally, usually referred to by a reverent Aquinas as "the [only worthy] philosopher"):

[...] the person who enjoys facing up to danger, or at least does not find it painful to do so, is courageous, while he who does find it painful is a coward. [...] It is for this reason that we need to have been brought up in a particular way from our early days, as Plato says, so we might find enjoyment or pain in the right things; for the right education is just this. (Aristotle, *Nicomachean Ethics*, trans. Roger Crisp (Cambridge: Cambridge UP, 2014), Book II, ch. 3, 1104b [my underline])

To which Aristotle adds a little later: "[t]he person who exceeds in fear is the coward, since he fears the wrong things, in the wrong way [...]." (Ibid, Book III, ch. 7, 1116a [my underline])

⁵²⁸ In this context, a text like Wendy Brown's *Regulating Aversion* would supply an apposite historical/political study of what I am here looking at from an ethico-metaphysical perspective; cf. Wendy Brown, *Regulating Aversion: Tolerance in the Age of Identity and Empire* (Princeton: Princeton UP, 2008).

⁵²⁹ Martin Luther, 'On the Jews and their Lies,' *Luther's Works* vol. 47, p. 200

⁵³⁰ Adolf Hitler, *Mein Kampf*, trans. James Vincent Murphy (London: Hurst and Blackett, 1938), pp. 60, 61

⁵³¹ Kant, *Lectures on Ethics*, p. 27/Ak. 27:61

⁵³² G. W. F. Hegel, 'Letter to Tholuck [514a] Berlin, July 3, 1826,' in Hegel, *The Letters*, p. 520/Briefe IV, p. 9.

Noted Hegel scholar, and an expert on Hegel's theology, Cyril O'Regan, argues that this statement by Hegel "cannot be conclusive" and that Hegel often departs in the details of Lutheran theology (hence O'Regan naming his opus on Hegel's theology 'The Heterodox Hegel'); and yet O'Regan also admits that "the plethora of passages extolling the pneumaticism of Lutheran Protestantism are not easy to ignore", and, hence, accepts a continuity between Luther and Hegel "in broad terms" (*Heterodox Hegel*, p. 16).

⁵³³ It is only in addressing the latter, in the passivity of a "me" that responds to its urgent command, does a "will" (Nietzsche), or an "I" (Lévinas), come to present itself, and the world, in terms of Being, Truth, etc. This process of meaning-creation, this "an-archy" of sense, holds the very impetus, the *pathos der Distanz* (between the "I" and the Other, between my "will" as an unstable derivative – owing its very Being and Truth to the "pre-historical" becoming of power-struggles, where the dominated forces still plot their revenge).

⁵³⁴ The term "second order" is taken from the field of philosophy, but for the sake of brevity (and clarity) I will give a short example: a person could want, have a will towards, say, smoking crack. This will is present, and undeniable. But, as happens in many cases, the person ceases to be satisfied with this, hiw own, desire. She develops a "second order" will towards the first, a will not to will the usage of crack. Cf. Harry G. Frankfurt, 'Freedom of the Will and the Concept of a Person,' *The Journal of Philosophy* vol. 68.1 (1971), pp. 5-20.

⁵³⁵ Jews at the time (1-2 Century AD) treated "Hellenism" with suspicion, if not disdain; cf. 1 Maccabees 1, and 1 Maccabees 7. Also cf. Carl Siegfried and Richard Gottheil, 'Hellenism,' *Jewish Encyclopedia.com: The unedited full text of the 1906 Jewish Encyclopedia*, <http://www.jewishencyclopedia.com/articles/7535-hellenism>, accessed 6 May 2017,

⁵³⁶ Eric Auerbach, 'Figura,' *Scenes from the Drama of European Literature: Six Essays* (Gloucester, Mass: Peter Smith, 1973), p. 12.

⁵³⁷ Cf. John O. Ward, 'The Medieval and Early Renaissance Study of Cicero's *De Invention* and the *Rhetorica ad Herennium*: Commentaries and Contests,' in Virginia Cox and John O. Ward (eds.), *The Rhetoric of Cicero in its Medieval and Early Renaissance Commentary Tradition*, (Leiden; Boston: Brill, 2006), pp. 3-75.

⁵³⁸ This logic can, furthermore, be extended, from then, throughout Centuries of European theology (and later – Philosophy), through Marx and Hegel, all the way to today: the argument between realism and idealism always presupposes this same license, the justification of this same "motivation," this same 'spirit.'

Now, this last statement, though resting in part on Auerbach's findings, is decidedly more Hegelian than his; or, to be precise, more wary of both possible and ongoing Hegelian recuperations of what he calls "modern science" or "modern history." In the same text, Auerbach is trying to make a distinction between the myth's use of symbols and figures, and historical narratives usage of them. Here is Auerbach's viewpoint, as gleaned from this text:

With relation to history, Auerbach notes, the figure plays a double, or ambiguous role: on the one hand, it arrives on the discursive scene as "youthful and newborn as a purposive, creative, concrete interpretation of universal history"; on the other, it is "infinitely old as the late interpretation of a venerable text, charged with history, that had grown for hundreds of years"

(‘Figura,’ p. 58). It is already plain that what Auerbach takes a hermeneutic-theological approach to figura as “encumbering” the historical appropriation by virtue of its theological appropriation.

More particularly, he says, it gave the “historical understanding” of “the people of the West and the North [...] a peculiarly puzzling quality” (ibid, ibid). The issue is that in the Church Fathers’ usage, “[f]igural prophecy implies the interpretation of one worldly event through another” (ibid, ibid), not denying the actuality of the events themselves, but leaving their meaning, as events, open to one another (though, I hasten to add here, *not* symmetrically: one “foretells” what the other “fulfills”). This entails that, as Auerbach says, “there is something provisional and incomplete about them” (ibid, ibid; n.b. until Salvation is finally achieved, and the “Kingdom come,” Auerbach notes that even in the prefiguration-relation the Biblical events still maintain their openness as themselves prefigurations of this, ultimate, future event). Now Auerbach articulates the crux of his claim with regards to history, showing precisely what Nietzsche called “bad historical sense:”

[...] the tentativeness of events in the figural interpretation is fundamentally different from the tentativeness of events in the modern view of historical development. In the modern view, the provisional event is treated as a step in an unbroken horizontal process; in the figural system the interpretation is always sought from above; events are considered not in their unbroken relation to one another, but torn apart, individually, each in relation to something other that is promised and not yet present. Whereas in the modern view the event is always self-sufficient and secure, while the interpretation is fundamentally incomplete, in the figural interpretation the fact is subordinated to an interpretation which is fully secured to begin with [...] (ibid, pp. 58-59 [my underline])

How “fundamental” is this “fundamentally different” tentativeness? Auerbach spares us a lot of elaboration and uses precisely the proper simile with which I have been engaging throughout my Levinatzschean encounters: the horizontal and the vertical, that which admits to an egalitarianism (purportedly – the “historical fact”), and that which commits to dominance or absolution (the figural interpretation). But if the historian does not approach past events from above, from where does she approach them? Even had she participated in the event itself, been a “part-and-parcel” of it, as it were, how could she speak of, represent this event, as is? The problem – described in the beginning of Chapter I as/in “Russell’s paradox” – is the problem of comprehending a limit, or the logical possibility of something contained within a certain group also comprehending or representing this group as a whole. Here I will briefly point out that the historical event, no matter how much evidence there is to its occurrence, does not speak for itself, nor do any of its observers or even main actors (is Napoleon’s account of his battles more reliable than that of one of his (or the enemy’s) soldiers? Is there an absolute manner in which to settle contradictory accounts that, absolutely, does not involve *speculation*?).

The approach “from above” is a necessity for every construction of narrative; what the figural interpretation, *in its Monotheist iteration/use*, had done was to *explicitly and unabashedly* impose a single direction of interpretation, an absolute criterion – presumably assured by God and evidenced by His Son (God descended into history/world) – that locks this “above” position permanently, once and for all (that was the ethico-metaphysical meaning of Catholic Dogma, not to say its *naïveté*/susceptibility, as Luther would soon prove beyond reasonable doubt). Furthermore, since for modern science, and *a fortiori* modern history, all accomplished representations of “facts” or “laws” are “wanting” *by definition* – hence their status as “*hypo*-theses” – the “unbroken horizontal chain” must always admit to a different possibility of its interrelation, even a different makeup of its links; an “above” approach that redefines the entire narrative, and, hence, also redefines the “evidence” used, its meaning, or both. The “event” is not secure, but always dependent on evidence, which can always change meaning, since they are always only appearances whose “essence” depends on the framework with which they are defined: perhaps one day it will be discovered that History follows a law that is more directly related to people’s shoe sizes and the amount of cats they have seen in their lifetime..? (A similar argument can be found in Michel Foucault’s *Les mots et les choses*).

What is “promised and not yet present” is precisely a narrative device for which a similar ethico-metaphysical responsibility is assumed, whether at the hands of the Church Father or the supposedly “secular historian” (once again I recommend Fasolt’s *The Limits of History* for a grasp of what is, metaphysically, at stake here). The historian assumes this “above” position by a logical necessity; the only difference is that, unlike the Church Fathers, she isn’t happy about it, trying to justify it by communal agreement and the current state of science/technology (and there is much to say about the decisive impact that the latter has over historical understanding). In short, while not admitting the speculative, “top-down” act that any interpretation of signs, any signification, entails, Auerbach’s historian still wields it in her very methodological, not to say ontological, assumptions.

⁵³⁹ This frustration and its origins was also recognized in Gritsch’s (rather apologetic) *Martin Luther’s Anti-Semitism*. Gritsch tells a narrative whereby Luther starts out by returning to the Old Testament, thus encountering Talmudic Judaism – that had its own tradition of interpretation – head on, and, initially, lashing out against them. Then, around 1520, Luther becomes more amenable, visibly attempting to encourage the conversion of the Jews to Christ (‘That Jesus Christ was Born a Jew’). In 1524-25 with the peasant revolts (supposedly prompting Luther to the world’s imminent end), he goes back to his accusations. In the 1526 Psalm of Comfort – *frustrated from previous attempts* – he starts mentioning the uselessness of

trying to convince the Jews to convert, using the metaphor of an oil that was absorbed by the Jews' very *bones* (Eric W. Gritsch, *Martin Luther's Anti-Semitism: Against his Better Judgment* (Grand Rapids: William B. Eerdmans Publ., 2012), p. 67), at times accusing the Jews of "pretending to have our faith" (ibid, p. 68).

Gritsch mentions this frustration again for 1538 (ibid, p. 71). In *Against the Sabbatarians* he quotes Luther's argument that "it is nonsense to accuse God of not keeping his promise" (ibid, p. 72). There Luther also explains the "New Covenant" with the *Jewish failure to keep the Old one*, hence God giving them (and the rest of the world) one they *can* keep – except now it is only the Jews that *won't* (ibid, pp. 72-73); which leads Luther to say "you may in good conscience despair of them" (ibid, p. 73). In his *Bondage of the Will*, as well, he furthers a *Deus Revelatus* theology, that God reveals Himself fully in the world (through incarnation), and rejects the "negative theology" of the *Deus Absconditus* (which was closer to Judaism's idea of *separation* – since the Jews did not believe that the Messiah had come), arguing that, "to the extent that God hides Himself it is no business of ours" (ibid, p. 74). Gritsch said Luther's "hope" for the Jews finally died in 1538 (ibid, p. 76) and adds the apologetic note that it was then that Luther finally "fell for the temptation of speculating about God's mystery" (ibid, p. 77). It would seem that Hegel, who saw his philosophy "confirmed" in Protestantism, also "fell" for the same temptation.

Brooks Schramm's account offers a less apologetic view, and maintains that Luther's theological evaluation of the Jews remained unchanged throughout his life, and essential for understanding "the heart and building blocks" of his theology (Brooks Schramm, 'Introduction,' in *Martin Luther, the Bible and the Jewish People: A Reader*, eds. Brooks Schramm and Kirsi I. Stjerna (Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 2012), pp. 3-4). Schramm, furthermore, confirms that throughout Luther's entire career, he also held the conviction (though I am trying to show it is the very same conviction) *that biblical texts should only have one proper meaning* (ibid, p. 12).

⁵⁴⁰ The Jew that refuses to be converted or convinced – who in all arguments over the meaning of God's Law, over the Good and the True, *escapes* to a different area, a different meaning (a frustration shared, as the above epigraphs show, by both Luther and Hitler), opting, instead, for a kind of "*any meaning but that meaning*," never offering a concrete and stable counter-position/meaning (what might have made them appear less contemptible) – shows, indeed, a "dialectical perfidy;" and this precisely because of the aforementioned dialectical fulfillment that the Jews could never accept. Yet the resulting "metaphysical antisemitism," as Nietzsche was unequivocal about, would still necessitate that this, dialectical, kind of "Love" carry this hatred in its bosom, like a ticking time-bomb; when it explodes, hence, it categorically cannot be resisted: after all, it is only rushing further ahead towards *what had already been decided* is God's will. This Salvation narrative necessitates, in its very logic, that so long as there is 'figure' and 'Law' and letter, there can be neither Salvation nor Absolution; if only they (the Jews, the Cowards) had invested in some concrete position behind which they could stand to the end, in which they can incarnate an ultimate principle/Truth...

It is because this Salvation-system/-narrative *assumes* a passive *position* towards this violence, cannot see or acknowledge it as part-and-parcel with its own ethico-metaphysical decision ("Love") – the violence/destruction is always due to "fate," "God" or "*Weltgeist*," i.e., the metaphysical violence in the presupposition/direction that *coheres* its narrative – its violence can erupt and catch it off guard; which also means, since this is, fundamentally, a self-directed violence (directed towards the "Jew" *within* the Christian) by what Nietzsche called a "grand politics" that had been, as he says, "victorious," also potentially deadly, annihilatory on an ever-expanding, potentially global (perhaps even universal) scale.

⁵⁴¹ Indeed, Hegel's teachings on the history of philosophy, when it came to the Middle Ages and the philosophical import(ance), not to say viability/legitimacy, of Catholicism and the Protestant Reformation, many Catholic students had complained of Hegel's acerbic views towards Catholicism (indeed following Luther's own bitter attacks of the Papacy). Another letter, that he wrote in response to a colleague's concern over this friction, Hegel writes:

[...] In the interest of science, which I have exclusively in view in my lectures, I did not leave the matter at the level of generalities of either a mild or timid nature, or of a purely condemnatory, deprecatory nature. I have, on the contrary, had to interpret the Catholic doctrine at its very center – i.e., the Host, to speak of it, and to speak of it with scientific definiteness. I have therefore explained and expressed Luther's teaching as true, and as recognized by philosophy as true. Moreover, I would believe it to be disrespectful in the present clarification if I were to try to have explicitly reserved to me the right – due to me as a Lutheran Christian – to declare the Catholic doctrine on the Host to be mere papistic idolatry and superstition. (Letter to von Altenstein, Berlin, April 3, 1826, *The Letters*, pp. 531-532)

Then Hegel goes on to call himself "[...] a professor who prides himself on having been baptized and raised a Lutheran, which he still is and shall remain" (ibid, ibid)

The substance of his view of Catholicism, I will cite briefly from these same Lectures, in an acerbic passage that pokes fun and ridicule – not to say insult – on the Catholic Sacrament of the Eucharist; which is deemed, as all things Catholic (by both Luther and Hegel), as mere externalities, "outward things" rather than 'objectivities' of the faith/spirit. As the editors of the Lectures point out in a footnote, this passage was the one that had attracted the aforementioned complaints, as one the Church chaplains reported Hegel to the government ministry:

[...] In the mass individuals are related to the mediating element as something objective, and they are to partake of it in such a way as to acquire the certainty that they are sharing in the Spirit, that the divine is within them. This objective element is the host, which is on the one hand the divine as objective, and on the other an outward thing as far as its shape is concerned, but a thing that, in its complete externality, is supposed to be worshiped. Luther changed this practice. He fully retained the mystical element in what is termed the Lord's Supper, the fact that the subject receives into itself the divine, but [he added] that the sacrament is only divine insofar as it is consumed in faith, that is, insofar as in faith and in the partaking the divine ceases to be an outward thing. This faith and partaking is the beginning of subjective spirituality; and the sacrament is 'spiritual' to the extent that it takes place with faith and participation and does not remain an outward thing. In the medieval church and in the Catholic church generally, the host is venerated even as an outward thing, so that if it has been eaten by a mouse, both the mouse and its excrement are to be venerated (LHP III (1825-1826), p. 47 [my underline])

As for the "scientificity" that Hegel, in the quote above, uses to defend his remarks on Catholicism, we can look at his friend Victor Cousin's account one of their outings together, where, in a rather Jesus-like manner (cf. Matthew 21:12-13), Hegel simply, for lack of a better word, "lost it." Recalling a trip he took with Hegel to Cologne in 1827, Cousin describes how Hegel railed against some Catholic women and old men selling "objects of superstitious worship" (i.e. more "unspiritual externalities"); as he writes to Hegel's wife (this was after Hegel had died): "Hegel believed that no reconciliation between religion and philosophy was possible outside Protestantism. As soon as it was a question of Catholicism he forgot our common principles and abandoned himself to flights rather unworthy of a philosopher" (Victor Cousin, as quoted in *The Letters*, p. 664)

⁵⁴² By now, I hope, that the moral judgment that underlies the following will not go uncritically noticed in the context of everything I have tried to show here concerning the workings of resentment and the hidden violence of its "humbling" morality, which is also an ethico-metaphysical violence towards height and distance tout-court:

[...] It is not coincidental to our topic that both [Hegel and Nietzsche; SC] were intensely conscious of their own equivocal relationship to the philosophical tradition, as well as their own importance for the future. Surely Hegel, just as appropriately as Nietzsche, could have thought himself "a destiny" (EH, IV), even while he had the better taste not actually to say so. (Daniel Breazeale, 'The Hegel-Nietzsche Problem,' *Nietzsche-Studien* vol. 4 (1975), pp. 146-64 [my underline; Breazeale's italics])

⁵⁴³ Cf. Nietzsche's comments in *Daybreak*, where he identifies the gods Eros and Aphrodite precisely in their susceptibility to being Christianized, as, "great powers capable of idealisation" (*Daybreak* I §76, p. 45). Also see Nietzsche's comments that explain some "subtleties" in Christianity as necessary tools to seduce the Pagans, specifically through the Christian appropriation of "love." Hence,

[...] So that *love* shall be possible, God has to be a person; so that the lowest instincts shall have a voice, God has to be young. To satisfy the ardour of the women a handsome saint is moved into the foreground, to satisfy that of the men a Mary. This on the presupposition that Christianity desires to become master on a soil where the worship of Adonis or Aphrodite has already determined the concept of what religious worship is. (AC, §23, p. 145 [my underline])

⁵⁴⁴ This is not an empty allusion to one of Nietzsche's favorite metaphors for his philosophical style (i.e. "to philosophize with a hammer"; cf. the subtitle to his *Twilight of the Idols* in AC, p. 29), but also a very direct citation of the way Jewish wisdom relates to the Torah it obsesses over. In the Babylonian Talmud, as a "midrash" (elucidating discussion) on the Biblical "Is not my word like fire, says the Lord, and like a hammer that breaks the rock in pieces" (Jeremiah 23:29), it reads:

"[...] Just as a hammer splits a rock into many pieces, so a verse of Scripture may yield a number of arguments", and "[Abbaye adds:] One verse of Scripture may yield a number of arguments, but one argument cannot derive from a number of verses of Scripture" ('Tractate Sanhedrin,' Ch. 4:XI.U-V [34A], in *The Talmud of Babylonia*, vol. XXIII.B, trans. Jacob Neusner (Atlanta: Scholars Press, 1992), p. 20 [my underline])

⁵⁴⁵ Franz Kafka, 'In the Penal Colony,' *The Metamorphosis and Other Stories*, ed. and trans. Malcolm Pasley (New York: Penguin Books, 2000), pp. 111-136. The German edition used was: Franz Kafka, 'In der Strafkolonie,' *Die Erzählungen und andere ausgewählte Prosa*, Hrsg. Roger Hermes (Frankfurt: Fischer Taschenbuch Verlag, 1996), pp.164-198. All subsequent citations, from the story will be structured in-text as the following: "p. [English edition page number]/[German edition page number]", except when no German is quoted, in which case only the English edition's citation will appear.

⁵⁴⁶ GM I §8, p. 35, and AC §51, p. 181 respectively.

⁵⁴⁷ Of course, this leaves the other Monotheisms in a problematic position vis-à-vis: Islam cannot be accommodated its own, post-Christ symbol of 'Muhammed,' and the Jews cannot be accommodated their continued separatism (and 'parasitism') owing to their "Messiah-less messianism" that insists that the Messiah had not yet arrived. When Christianity is forced to encounter these religious groups as some kind of challenge, as an irreconcilable difference, history teaches that the result was very, very brutal and bloody, something that runs counter Christianity's ostensible mission of reconciliation and peace.

⁵⁴⁸ Roberto Calasso, 'Veiled Splendor,' trans. Geoffrey Brock, in Franz Kafka, *The Zürau Aphorisms*, trans. Michael Hoffman and Geoffrey Brock (London: Harvill Secker, 2006), p. 119.

⁵⁴⁹ *The Zürau Aphorisms*, §33, p. 33/Franz Kafka, 'Hochzeitsvorbereitungen auf dem Lande: und andere Prosa aus dem Nachlaß,' *Gesammelte Werke Bd. 6*, Hrsg. Max Brod (Frankfurt am Main: Fischer, 1976), p. 32.

⁵⁵⁰ Kafka's prose has often been referred to as coded messages, especially due to its affinity with the form of the parable; a kind of *symptomatic* structure that – always mediated and indirect (hence, always at least maintaining a relation to its own exteriority) – sends secret messages, much like a spy, from a place where overt claims are, for some reason or other, suppressed (the question concerning this "reason" can be seen as a psychological one – often attributed to Kafka's knotted relationship with his domineering father – or more political – being a Jew in a Christian, exceedingly anti-Semitic Europe – but for my purposes here it will be left undecided). As I have been trying to establish above as part of my methodological critique, the question of Kafka himself "signing" on (my "discoveries" of "codes" in) his text is already interwoven with how and where it is *me* – as "witness" to his text – that, as an interpreting reader/witness, signs in Kafka's name.

The hermeneutic assumption I am making here – which amounts not to the 'Truth' of Kafka's text but to my response to its appeal (for a "just" reading) – is that Kafka's use of German is a traitor's use: his attention to German idioms, on the one hand, makes the text very "German" on the one hand, basking in the language's semiological intimacies; yet, on the other hand, it betrays so many etymological inter-connections that, coupled with the "parable-like" style of Kafka's writing, effectively opens both the story, and its language, to more readers than native German ones, those who can/must also observe the language, much like one reads a parable, from the "outside," finding meaning in structural homologies (rather than, say, 'analytic,' sense-based ones). In this way, the "meaning" that can be imputed to be residing "in" the words is destabilized, sometimes almost reversed, in accordance with the structure of the word – a general approach that applies to all parables (wherein meaning and structure feed off one another). In a way, which is also a traitor's way, Kafka is already in the process of translating his words, as if communicating with those who arrive at the language from its "outside" or "surface," from its formal appearance/surface and structure, those who are so *foreign* to the language that they *first* see *difference* and only then see identity/sense.

⁵⁵¹ Dante's important relation to Nietzsche should further be evidenced by the fact that Nietzsche feels the need to distinguish him from his Zarathustra (along with Goethe and Shakespeare) as a competitor for, say, "works written with the most Dionysian strength" (ibid, ibid). Furthermore, historically positioned at the cusp of Europe's emergence from the "Dark Ages" – noted Dante scholar Eric Auerbach dubbed him "poet of the secular world" – Dante allowed an expression of the play of forces, a snapshot of a "will to power" long since muzzled or made invisible by resentment's (and Protestantism's) victory over Europe. Cf. Eric Auerbach, *Dante, Poet of the Secular World* (New York: New York Review Books, 2007).

⁵⁵² The problematic of the empty symbol in this context fits well with Jacques Derrida's more thorough and rigorous elaborations of the relation between any structure and its "defining center." This center, Derrida shows, is one that the structure can never fully encompass, and hence always opens any structure to a radical difference (beyond its control); it is this difference that allows the structure both to wield the power of meaning/*sens*, and the futurity of its demise or radical shift; a kind of "freedom" enabled by the "play" that this "missing center" provides within the intimate cloisters of the structure. Something similar happens with betrayal here, in Dante's *Inferno*, since betrayal can always change its meaning, shift its blames, according to a certain historical narrative, a narrative exposed not only to the "hermeneutic futurity" of another reader/reading, but to the metaphysical futurity of an ("historical") event. That is fundamentally why betrayals and traitors depend so heavily on the historical narrative – with the 'law', the telos and origin, that binds it together – and why betrayal is both the best, most stable basis of Dante's *Inferno*, and the most risky, volatile one. The 'empty symbol of evil' only gives a content to this problematic, and may perhaps be seen as a bastardized example of Derrida's text. Cf. Jacques Derrida, 'Structure, Sign and Play in the Discourse of the Human Sciences,' WD, pp. 278-293.

⁵⁵³ *Natural Law*, p. 104

⁵⁵⁴ Epistle to the Galatians 2:19-21 [translation modified]

⁵⁵⁵ Lars von Trier, interviewed at a Press Conference at the Cannes Film Festival, 2011. For the full video documentation of this part of the interview, cf. Hammid, 'Lars von Trier -- "I understand Hitler..."', *YouTube* video, 04:25, May 18, 2011, <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=QpUqpLh0iRw>.

⁵⁵⁶ In this case, it is a 'captain.' The German handle, 'Hauptmann,' indeed means the military rank of 'captain,' but the word's form/etymology, however, is more generally applicable: 'Hauptmann' – "top man" (p. 116/171).

⁵⁵⁷ Walter Benjamin, 'Franz Kafka,' *Illuminations: Essays and Reflections*, ed. Hannah Arendt, trans. Harry Zohn (New York: Schocken Books, 1969 p. 129.

⁵⁵⁸ AC §34, p. 158

⁵⁵⁹ Galatians 6:14, 16-17

⁵⁶⁰ Admittedly, I am making a rather unorthodox interpretation of Kafka's story. Relatively few readers, until quite recently, had ever considered that there was such a strong theological/metaphysical element in Kafka's story, and, amongst

those who have noted this, none so far, that I know of (as a dilettante scholar), made the particular Nietzschean connection I am making here. The point of conflict, the way I see it, is the temptation to see the machine as Judaism's legal apparatus, and the officer and the Jewish priest, for example Moses, who works God's severe judgment upon all those brought to him, employing only Jewish hatred and producing nothing but corpses, dead letters, etc.

There is, however, one big problem with this interpretation, which precisely revolves around the *Schrift*; more precisely, the *Schrift*'s inaccessibility to anyone but the one priest that administers its justice. To this, millennia of Jewish scholarship, of interpretations of interpretation of interpretations of the Biblical *Schrift*, stand in contestation. Not only is the priest never the only one to be able to read the law, the Jews have become known as "the people of the Book" partly because, as a people commanded by a wrathful and image-hating God, had always maintained high literacy rates (admittedly, this honor was heavily biased towards Jewish men).

Moreover, Jewish wisdom never pretended to have reached any kind of single or dogmatic interpretation of Scripture – this was an invention of Christianity, that needed a stable core from which to *expand* (as opposed to *disseminate*) – but prided itself in wise men that were able to interpret and reinterpret the Holy text in many, many different ways (70 was the chosen number, but it was never binding). The idea of building one "machine" based on Jewish Law, through which one finally understands the meaning, the 'Why?' of the Law (i.e. where one finally fulfills the law and achieves its meaningful closure) – would be akin to Kafka's *Vor dem Gesetz* being renamed, after Saint Paul's converted words, "*Durchs Gesetz*:" the Jew never passes *through* the gates of Law, is never to arrive at its meaning; he never commits/sacrifices himself to the *Stichel* of the Christian Stigmata. It is only upon the arrival of the Messiah – that the Jews have, historically (and metaphysically) been very resilient towards – that the 'Why?' of the Law is to be revealed.

Hence, I believe it far more consistent to show that the colonial machine is *an appropriation* of Jewish Law, and the officer-judge – already a Catholic priest; one who applies a single Dogma, through visceral torture (another staple of the Catholic Church (e.g., The Inquisition), on the ignorant believer who must internalize it, always imperfectly, always suffering from this imperfection, until being *released* by death. The Judaic 'Law' is indeed, to my reading, "coded" into Kafka's story, but not in/as the "machine" as a whole, not as the "Old Commandant." It is rather in the Designer (*Zeichner*), as an intricate weaving of signs, that the impenetrable, but inescapable, God's Law resides. It is a mechanism that, apart from the rest of the apparatus, has not actual, incarnate meaning; it is, rather, more akin to a mystical arrangement of signs whose meaning can be, and was/is, pondered over endlessly by Jewish Talmudists and Rabbis, but, in the absence of a Dogma, and in following the Second Commandment's interdiction against the Law's/God's *physical* representation – and the apparatus is precisely such a representation – can only be offered hypothetical machines that are to be pitted against other such machines, a process that dismantles cohesion rather than preserves it. Hence I see the explorer, though European, placed in the role, the position of the Jew, and hence, finally, the machine (or the machine-assemblage as Deleuze and Guattari might say, e.g., the machine-officer-colony-new-commandant assemblage) breaks down upon sensing his presence.

⁵⁶¹ Here 'Man' is not identical to the Old Testament 'Adam' (meaning also 'Man' in Hebrew), and the koine Greek of Luke shows us that when 'Adam' is referred to, he is mentioned as *ἀδάμ* (Luke 3:38). There are many 'Son of Man' references in the Gospel, mostly spoken by Jesus of himself; I will cite only one that is, perhaps, more fitting for the context here, from Jesus' trial and conviction in front of the Jewish Sanhedrin (court), where he is admonished for claiming he is the Messiah and the Son of God:

[...] Then the high priest said to him, "I put you under oath before the living God, tell us if you are the Messiah, the Son of God." | Jesus said to him, "You have said so. But I tell you, From now on you will see the Son of Man [*ανθρωπου καθυμνον*] seated at the right hand of Power and coming on the clouds of heaven. (Matthew 26:63-64)

⁵⁶² Though I cannot go into this in more detail here, the fact that it is the second station when Jesus receives/*accepts his Cross*, and the fact that it is at the end of the second hour that the condemned placed within the machine no longer has the energy to scream, i.e., *complain of his pain* (p. 120) are connected in what I believe to be more than a coincidental manner.

⁵⁶³ Cf. in Romans 3:21-24, we find (the German is taken, deliberately, from the 1545 *Luther Bibel*):

But now, apart from law, the righteousness of God has been disclosed, and is attested by the law and the prophets, | the righteousness of God through faith in Jesus Christ for all who believe. For there is no distinction, | since all have sinned and fall short of the glory of God; | they are now justified by his grace as a gift, through the redemption [*Erlösung*] that is in Christ Jesus.

⁵⁶⁴ Though Kafka uses the German *Verstand* – which German Idealism, both "*vom Kant bis Hegel*," was careful to distinguish from *Vernunft*. In Kant, pure Reason was entirely speculative, leading, if unchecked, to antinomies it cannot resolve, thus requiring a Critique that will cut it down to empirical size through the pure concepts of the understanding (*Verstand*). Beiser's German Idealism confirms that for Hegel and Schelling, Kant's approach to Reason had "sold it out" (my words) to the 'Understanding,' not giving it the honor of what was sometimes called intellectual intuition – which to them was the hallmark of Reason in strict distinction from the Understanding (following upon and further improving/systematizing Fichte's pivotal use of the term in his *Wissenschaftslehre*) – and through which a part-whole

relation could be perceived/intuited. The intuition, however, cannot stand in itself – hence Hegel’s famous admonitions directed at the various “beautiful souls” of what was then called ‘Romanticism’ – but must be proved through a Systematic elaboration that should itself be made to correspond to empirical observations. Cf. Frederick C. Beiser, *German Idealism: The Struggle against Subjectivism, 1781–1801* (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard UP, 2002), pp. 580–582.

Now, Hegel always maintained the distinction between the ‘spiritual,’ *speculative* Reason and the “letter-like,” *reflective* Understanding (in/as representation, discourse, language); the former goes through a mediation to arrive at actual knowledge, while the latter remains hovering over the actual, locked in this or that position or opposition, not yet ready to make the leap of the *Aufhebung* and reconcile them in a higher “actuality” (*Wirklichkeit*). The moment of the condemned’s “understanding,” is decidedly not ‘reflective,’ since it is, by definition, an *incarnate*, and *silent* knowledge that he does not read as one reads a language but “deciphers” with his very pain/wounds (p. 120). Hence, in the Hegelian context I am imposing here, I will use *Verstand* to mean what Hegel calls ‘Reason,’ *Vernunft*.

⁵⁶⁵ Gerhard Wolf, ‘From Mandylion to Veronica: Picturing the ‘Disembodied’ Face and Disseminating the True Image of Christ in the Latin West,’ in *The Holy Face and the Paradox of Representation*, ed. Herbert Kessler and Gerhard Wolf (Bologna: Nuova Alfa Editoriale, 1998), pp. 153–179.

⁵⁶⁶ Once again, Kafka gives this interpretation another hint, if we only attend to his use of language in describing the machine’s operation (as described by the officer *as a man of faith*). Here is how the officer describes the process of the machine’s writing:

[...] Of course, this can’t be any simple script; you see, it’s not supposed to kill straight away, but only after a period of twelve hours on average; the turning point is calculated to come at the sixth hour. So the actual [eigentliche] lettering has [müsse] to be surrounded with many, many decorations; the text itself [wirkliche] forms only a narrow band running round the body [Leib]; the rest of the body [Körper] is set aside for the embellishments. (*Penal Colony*, p. 119 [my underline])

What ought to be noted here is, first, the logical necessity – or the one that pretends to be such – that is derived from the fact that the machine “is not supposed to kill straight away.” The German *müssen*, in this respect, is chosen instead of the ethical *sollen* (ought), to show that this necessity has no ethical component to it. And yet, as I have been arguing, this is precisely where an ethics as first philosophy would contend its primacy, in asserting that this “logic” already presupposes an ethico-metaphysical decision, and hence also a violence: the necessity to cover over the “unmediated murder” with a mediation of torture is an assumption of the (Christian) conversion machine as such, but this assumption is not without its own violence (as I argue above). The entire logic itself rests upon the belief that the true face of God is somehow made present or is witnessed (the moment of ‘Verstand’), or that true justice is finally made actual, and this logical necessity, of achieving this “turning point,” is itself imputed to be beyond ethical question.

Second, and most importantly, the wording Kafka uses for the depicting the body with regards to the text repeats this very gesture: if the “*wirklich*” text, the text that “matters,” that delivers the “point” of the judgment/justice, is inscribed on the *Leibe*, the embellishments, as the (logically?) necessary supplements that surround it, are written on a different body, the non-spiritual or irredeemable body, the *Körper*. This latter body is the mortal, “sinful” body, the vain excess that the machine needs to use up and then discard in order for the true Body – which is spoken of like the body of Christ (cf. the epigraph’s quote from Galatians 6:17 in *Luthers Bibel*) – is being shaped and prepared for its redemption, its *Erlösung*.

This separation between bodies – effected through torture and pain – is, once again, an internalization of the transcendent/exterior difference and separations that the Jewish “genius of hatred” had insisted upon in worshipping their “wholly Alien” God, what Hegel had disdained so much of as truly horrific and dialectically useless. Kafka’s machine, then, shows precisely how what had been separated off from the rest of the world, and forever kept at an infinite *Distanz*, becomes, in this Christian machinery, internalized; an internalization that now can afflict anyone and everyone, “all,” not just the chosen Jews, and, in the same gesture, become invisible.

Kafka’s play on bodies here, as I read it, a concise and brilliant depiction – both mechanically and linguistically – of Nietzsche’s analyses of resentment, particularly in its final operation of appealing to the “herd,” whereby the priest achieves the famous reversal of its direction: separation is no longer between me as a Jew and the outside world as Gentiles, but between “we” as good/redeemable Christians (part of Christ’s *Leibe*) and “we” as bad, condemnable ones (part of Earthly *Körper*). Here it is not insignificant that it is precisely at the “turning point” of the 6th hour that the condemned’s, as the officer explains, “loses his pleasure in eating” (p. 120). The sustenance of the *Körper* here indeed turns into “taking in” the sustenance of the “soul” that is redeemed through the – only “spiritually hungry” – *Leibe*. This is yet another example of how the Christian “we” covers-over the hatred of “Jewish nobility” that kept claiming – or, to use Luther’s phrase, “boasting” of – their own chosenness, their own, quite visible and obvious, separation.

⁵⁶⁷ What followed above are quotes from Hegel’s declared “introduction” to his System (though not its first part), and so, as many Hegelian scholars do, can be relativized to this specific stage of the system, and not to Hegel’s methodological “spirit” as a whole. Now, first, since here I am engaged in a phenomenology (of hatred), this would not detract from my claims. Second, and more importantly, this structure, including the Christian symbolism that goes with it (and the claims

about “humanity” “animal” “spirit” God, etc.) are to be found neatly summarized in the following, from Hegel’s account of World History:

[...] Humans have only the potential of being human when they are born. Animals are born nearly complete; their growth is basically a strengthening, and in instinct they have straight away everything they need. We must not regard it as a special benefit of nature for animals that their formation is soon complete, for the strengthening is only a matter of degree. Because humans are spiritual beings, they must acquire everything for themselves, must make themselves into what they ought to be and what otherwise would remain a mere potentiality; they must cast off the natural. Thus spirit is humanity's own achievement.

The most sublime example of this is the nature of God. It cannot, however, be called an 'example'; rather it is the universal, the true itself, whereof everything else is but an example. In our religion God is spirit; God is revealed as spirit, and this is the distinctive quality of the Christian religion. [...] [...] In the Christian religion God is first spoken of as 'Father': the power, the abstract universal, which is still veiled. In the second place, God, as object, is what cleaves or ruptures itself, posits an other to itself. This second element is called the 'Son'. It is defined in such a way, however, that in this other to godself God is just as immediately God's own self, envisioning and knowing godself only in the other; and this self-possessing, self-knowing, unity-possessing, being-present-to-self-in-the-other, is the 'Spirit'. This means that the whole is the Spirit; neither the one nor the other alone is the Spirit. And God is defined as spirit; God is for the first time the true, the complete. Expressed in the form of feeling or sensibility, God is eternal love, the Son, knowing godself in the other, having the other as its own. This characteristic is, in the form of thought, constitutive of spirit. This Trinity makes the Christian religion to be the revealed and only true religion. This is its superiority in virtue of which it stands above the other religions and by which it is distinguished from all the other religions. If the Christian religion lacked the Trinity, it could be that thought would find more [truth] in other religions. The Trinity is the speculative element in Christianity – the element wherein philosophy finds and recognizes the idea of reason in the Christian religion as well. (LWH, p. 151 [my underline])

⁵⁶⁸ I will come back to discussing the characteristics that Kafka exposes of in these values in the next section.

⁵⁶⁹ Here the German is very instructive, as the explorer’s relation to the machine is described as “*hatte wenig sinn*” – disinterested but literally meaning having little sense it; and “indifference,” which the German *Unbeteiligter* suggests taking no part (*teil*) in it (ibid, p. 111/p. 164).

⁵⁷⁰ Indeed, according to Nietzsche, this was mainly the influence of Saint Paul, with whom the Jewish hatred – that knows no ‘history’ (but that, within Judaism, had not pretended to any ‘history’) – has spread, *generalized*, across the world. Hence cf. also,

[...] On the heels of the ‘glad tidings’ [i.e., the Christian ‘*Gospel*’; SC] came the worst of all: those of Paul. In Paul was embodied the antithetical type to the ‘bringer of glad tidings’, the genius of hatred, of the vision of hatred, of the inexorable logic of hatred. What did this dysangelist not sacrifice to his hatred! The redeemer above all: he nailed him to his Cross. The life, the example, the teaching, the death, the meaning and the right of the entire Gospel – nothing was left once this hate-obsessed false-coiner had grasped what alone he could make use of. Not the reality, not the historical truth!... And once more the priestly instinct of the Jew perpetrated the same great crime against history – it simply erased the yesterday and the day before yesterday of Christianity, it devised for itself a history of primitive Christianity. More: it falsified the history of Israel over again so as to make this history seem the pre-history of its act: all the prophets had spoken of its ‘redeemer’ [this is what had happened through the Christian theology of the *figura*; SC].... The Church subsequently falsified even the history of mankind into the pre-history of Christianity.... (AC §42, p. 166-167 [my underlines])

⁵⁷¹ Cf. the famous lines from the Gospel of Matthew:

[...] Simon Peter answered, “You are the Messiah, the Son of the living God.” | And Jesus answered him, “Blessed are you, Simon son of Jonah! For flesh and blood has not revealed this to you, but my Father in heaven. | And I tell you, you are Peter, and on this rock I will build my church, and the gates of Hades will not prevail against it. | I will give you the keys of the kingdom of heaven, and whatever you bind on earth will be bound in heaven, and whatever you loose on earth will be loosed in heaven. (Matthew 16:16-19)

⁵⁷² GS §258, p. 312

⁵⁷³ Kafka, *The Zürau Aphorisms*, §29, p. 29)

⁵⁷⁴ ‘The Spinoza Case,’ DF, 106-107

⁵⁷⁵ LPR, pp. 194-195

⁵⁷⁶ *Penal Colony*, p. 112/166

⁵⁷⁷ It is not hard to see that Kafka’s parable of this “justice machine” can be well applied to the BLM situation as I have interpreted it above. The “apparatus” will, in this iteration, rely upon various statistics, relying on – through an apposite/characteristic disdain for historical elements (like the role of Christian theology in the appropriation of African

slaves in North America) – various statistical correlations between ‘color’ and ‘crime’ (as if the two were independent/a-historical factors) that would, in turn, justify a “lighter trigger finger” that can use this “probability” as a “measure of self-defense.” This kind of “machinery” works even without any ‘scientific’ empirical studies, since all they need is a *narrative* that the officers keep “encountering in the streets” and – since they are only justice’s bureaucratic executors (i.e., possessing no *sovereign authority*) – “prove” time and again that these correlations hold, and are not in a position to see whether this proof itself already serves to perpetuate itself (a “blame the victim” *logic*). It is thus also understandable that these “officers” – thrown into this impossible situation (i.e. responsibility without authority) – deeply resent the accusations against them, and, furthermore, it is understandable why the actual sovereign, as “enlightened” as he may be (and this is true, for example in the U.S., even when the president himself is African-American), prefers not to directly interfere therein; the police officers are hence the ones to suffer most of the brunt of this impossible situation, while the deeper problems behind this “racist police” linger on, unaddressed. Hence, to give a last example/allusion, the United States can boast a “black president,” and yet this, itself, only amounts to an “indication,” a “signal” – much like the new commandant’s – of an empty, and ineffectual, intention (like the policy of ‘affirmative action’ that always only pertains *after the fact*); empty, since the *problem* of anti-black racism is left untouched – and only its symptoms are treated (that is, if/when they become *loud enough* – then they can be suppressed, *again by police*, just like any other “disturbance of the peace”).

⁵⁷⁸ Here lies the fundamental valuation (claimed as ‘necessity’ of thought) that betrays Hegel’s “metaphysical anti-Semitism” most explicitly. Cf. Hegel’s *Philosophy of Right*:

[...] Infinity has rightly been represented figuratively as a circle, because a straight line goes on and on for ever and denotes the purely negative, bad [*schelchte*] infinite which, unlike the true infinite, has no return into itself. The free will is truly infinite, since it is not just a possibility and a predisposition. On the contrary, its external existence is its own inwardness, is itself. (PR Introduction §22A)

⁵⁷⁹ Once again, this is not to claim that Hegel’s assertions were wrong or illegitimate; but to insist that they be made responsible, precisely, for the height that they lay claim to. In his Early Theological writings, Hegel says this most clearly – presumably due to his antisemitism’s as-yet-unsystematized existence – when he talks of Jesus, who, over-and-against the Judaic “genius of hatred,” their absolute subservience to God’s *commands*, “set the higher genius of reconciliation (a modification of love)” (‘Spirit,’ §ii, ETW, p. 215 [my underline]). There is a power, a violence, to this claim of height; this is where Hegel’s ‘Science’ justifies its violence, and where it is, constitutively, unable to be responsible to it. Hegel’s very idea of “Right” and “ethical life,” in the very logic they proceed from, will only begin where Judaism *ends*. I showed a similar logic throughout Protestant theology, a logic already there, in kernel form, in Saint Paul.

⁵⁸⁰ To use a popular expression as a heuristic device, the Jew *can never be* “a man of his word” since the word is neither “his,” *nor meant to be*; never internalized and only to be read, obsessed over, and feared as the word of God. Just like the Jewish ‘(difficult) freedom’ or ‘(derivative) will’ – as depicted in the previous chapters – it is neither the Jew’s ‘will,’ nor his words, that are important; only *God’s*. Once again we foreground the indispensable role of the metaphysical *separation* (which Lévinas insisted upon as the ethical uniqueness of Judaism).

Concerning my spelling of ‘Abraham,’ I will be using the full or the initial forms throughout according to the chronological context in which the name appears. In this case, Abraham was still Abram when he first heard and responded to the voice of God, hence ‘Abram’ above. It is not after Abram is 99 years old that God makes the covenant with Abram and changes his name to Abraham (Genesis 17:1-5). When no particular period is referred to, I will use the common form of ‘Abraham.’

⁵⁸¹ A new arrival to Oxford English Dictionary, ‘post-truth’ was its 2016 “word of the year,” defined as “relating to or denoting circumstances in which objective facts are less influential in shaping public opinion than appeals to emotion and personal belief.” ‘Post-truth’ gained in popularity with the simultaneous rise of what is now called “fake news.” Both are seen as expressions of a certain embarrassment of riches of information, where official (i.e., professional and/or national) communication outlets were scooped or undermined by private and semi-private news sources, which now might include any person with access to the internet and possession of a ‘smartphone.’ While these alternative sources helped call several lies advanced by state and commercial officials, they are themselves open to be used for various purposes. Their independent methods do not rely upon conventional practices and institutions for verification of their content, and are free from their control – a freedom that “cuts both ways.” It might, thus, seem that the more pervasive and free communication is, the less ‘truth’ is present or relevant, thus inducing a quasi-totalitarian nostalgia for a time when the news was in the control of fewer hands enjoying institutional sanction. However, my approach does not necessarily conceive of these phenomena as an admonition of communication or freedom, but rather argues that the more we have of both the more questions can be asked about the ‘truth’; as a ‘what’ that calls the ‘who’ that’s behind it into question.

Cf. Oxford, ‘Word of the Year 2016 is...,’ *English: Oxford Living Dictionaries*, <https://en.oxforddictionaries.com/word-of-the-year/word-of-the-year-2016>, accessed 20 June 2017; Weizmann Institute of Science, ‘Quantum Theory Demonstrated:

Observation Affects Reality,' *ScienceDaily*, www.sciencedaily.com/releases/1998/02/980227055013.htm, accessed June 27, 2017.

⁵⁸² BGE §1, p. 9/KGW 6.2:9 [translation modified]

⁵⁸³ Aristotle, *Physics* Book IV 221b2

⁵⁸⁴ This approach had been more thoroughly discussed in the previous chapter (but, in truth, throughout the dissertation, including the chapter on Skepticism), but as an explanatory shorthand/marker I think it fitting to say that this is an approach that, by refusing to reduce thought to 'consciousness'/'will' or experience to Truth, also refuses to reduce temporality to chronology; in a way, interrupting the very 'logos' that is necessary to construct a narrative that ties particular temporal differences together in a causal chain of succession. This approach to history cannot, hence, afford any absolute status to what both Nietzsche and Lévinas insisted was only an effect; indeed refusing to deify the 'effect' itself as somehow absolving or fully comprehending (the Truth of) that which came "before." What Lévinas calls an-archy, what Nietzsche depicts as residing beyond the flimsy pale of the prudent's 'will,' is a before irreducible to the chronological before, a before whose narrativization will always be questionable, since it is demanded a justice that exceeds *its* power/control (but not that of what Nietzsche calls 'life' and what Lévinas calls 'the Other').

⁵⁸⁵ In other words, while for Hegel only 'spirit' is given full subjectivity, and hence obviates the through/by distinction (a metaphysics of will expanded to the Absolute will of God/"history"), in Heidegger the same obviation occurs – following, as I argued above, a similar 'spirit' – by 'Being' and its 'potentialities,' dissolving itself in the closure of *Dasein*'s self-regarding 'Angst.'

⁵⁸⁶ All this, of course, is, to my reading, already encapsulated in – though does not simply "exhaust" – Jacques Derrida's 'différance.' The connection I am claiming here between Derrida's *différance* and Lévinas' 'signification' is in their focus – a very "Jewish" focus in the eyes of Hegel/St. Paul/Theology – expressed succinctly in the very first line of Derrida's only text that bears this name: "I will speak, therefore, of a letter [*lettre*]." (Jacques Derrida, 'Différance,' *Margins of Philosophy*, p. 3; Jacques Derrida, '*la différance*,' *Marges de la philosophie* (Paris: Les Éditions de Minuit, 1972), p. 3.)

To choose a thicker/richer quote, the following will have to do, considering the time/space limitations of this dissertation. For example, I see in the following quoted passage – immediately following the first sentence cited above – a very clear connection between the first letter ('a') that Derrida inserts into '*différence*' – as an "impropriety, a mistake, literally a 'wrong *différence*,' one that comes first and hence "deranges" all "proper *différence(s)*" – and the Other (perhaps the 'a' of '*Autrui*' (Other)?) that always already holds me as responsible, a responsibility carrying the indelible urgency of one who arrives too late for this response. I would then show how this "writing within writing," as Derrida calls it, almost seamlessly maps onto Kafka's Penal-Colonial mechanism, a silent writing that – once aiming to fully *justify, through writing, its own writing* – reveals itself to undermine the machine's own 'writing,' that unravels once this demand is acted-out:

I will speak, therefore, of the letter *a*, this initial letter which it apparently has been necessary to insinuate, here and there, into the writing of the word *différence*; and to do so in the course of a writing on writing, and also of a writing within writing whose different trajectories thereby find themselves, at certain very determined points, intersecting with a kind of gross spelling mistake, a lapse in the discipline and law which regulate writing and keep it seemly. One can always, *de facto* or *de jure*, erase or reduce this lapse in spelling, and find it (according to situations to be analyzed each time, although amounting to the same [*même*]), grave or unseemly, that is, to follow the most ingenuous hypothesis, amusing. Thus, even if one seeks to pass over such an infraction in silence, the interest that one takes in it can be recognized and situated in advance as prescribed by the mute irony, the inaudible misplacement, of this literal permutation. One can always act as if it made no difference. And I must state here and now that today's discourse will be less a justification of, and even less an apology for, this silent lapse in spelling, than a kind of insistent intensification of its play. (ibid/ibid [my underline])

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