

The End of the World Has Already Happened

On Aranchism and Other Essays

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Miara S Bekho

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This is an early proof version. Send comments to miaras@pm.me

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ON ARANCHISM

修身齊家治國平天下 is my favorite line from the 大學 (Great Learning). It says, roughly: wash thy body; organize thy household; measure up and rule the country; thus is peace all below heaven. I am washing my body, and seek to organze my household when I am done. But what comes next gives me pause. 治國: rule the country. I think countries ought not exist.

I seldom call myself an anarchist. It's not that I disagree with anarchism; I just don't like the ring of the sound, "anarchy". When I feel sufficiently poetically inclined, I say I am an aranchist. Let me explain.

If you ask me what the origin of states are, I may start with the trans feminist Marxist answer: a state is a structure for managing cisgender normative patriarchal violence, said violence quantified and teleologically structured by its economic regime, in which the reproduction of its citizens is reduced to economic reproduction. But I want to go a step

further into anthropologico-theological ground. In the beginning there were matriarchal societies, where political power rested on a Great Mother (씨족어머니), who was spiritually and politically the mother of all people. Everyone lived in peace and harmony with nature. But such societies broke down because of rape and sexual violence against the Great Mother. Call this the Calamity. States arose as a reaction to said sexual violence, and the rest is history (literally). In this narrative, states are essentially reactionary. If it is right, the political power, physical force, of states, is nothing but inertia against the Calamity, the constitutive trauma.

The first reaction I anticipate against this narrative is that it is a just-so story with no evidence. The first impulse against such a reaction would be to collect a battery of admissible anthropological evidence. But I do not care to do so. Demanding scientific evidence against a narrative is folly. Many left thinkers are paralyzed by the state of affairs

wherein reactionaries demand admissible scientific evidence, and despite all scientific evidence to the contrary, declare themselves the authorities of scientific thought. We see this most often in trans exclusionary "biology". What reactionaries are lacking, is not scientific evidence, but suspension of disbelief. I am a poet. My argument, like all arguments, is a literary one.

States are constituted on a constitution. A constitution is analogous to a set of axioms. I have noticed out loud before ("How to Solve Moral Conundrums", 2018) that axioms and rituals are analogous. A ritual is an enactment of a trauma. In Silko's Ceremony, Tayo undergoes a ceremony to cure his trauma. I can hear the groans against the previous sentence, complaining that it is a reductionist view of the book and the world at large, the psychiatric gaze of the "trauma narrative". And I do not disagree that such narratives are often reductionist. But I like the word "trauma". I feel it has been unjustly maligned. Even the word "trauma" is

traumatic. We cannot grasp the meaning of the word, "trauma", just as we cannot grasp the meaning of a trauma. But I am interested in the structure in which these failures-at-grasping occur. The failures indicate a fixed point, a core striking through both the word "trauma" and a trauma; a core striking through the sense of a word and its reference. Where there are such cores, the core is an itch. The end of a trauma is the scratching of an itch; and I am being literary, but I am also being literal. What I am telling you is, after months, a year, of going through the trauma of rape, retching, vomiting phlegm, heaving, shaking, and involuntary sounds escaping a divinely vibrating stomach, it ends with an itch at the tip of my nose. I scratch it; and the trauma is gone, forever.

A true trauma narrative, and *Ceremony* is nothing if not the best true trauma narrative, takes you through a bodily journey. The logic of the body is the logic of divine poetry. To grasp that logic, which might be necessary to get through the trauma, is to hear, and faithfully

follow, the Word in the flesh, the Word that became flesh. At the end of this journey, this ritual, the trauma has been enacted. The wrong words in the flesh, the trauma, have circulated throughout the body, the arm, the stomach, the big intestine, the genitals, the spine, the feet, the legs, the inside of the ears, the eyes, the sinuses, and are finally bubbled up to the tip of the nose like a set of bountiful crops at harvest, and meet their end in a sharp, homely fingernail's scratch, the harvest, at last.

So what does this have to do with aranchy? Aran, I shall be remiss to tell you, is Nara spelled backwards. Nara means "country" in Korean. So what, who cares about pig latin?

(Tangent: sometimes I think the difference between a poet and a philosopher is that a poet anticipates the worst audience imaginable, whereas the philosopher anticipates an audience of philosophers. Maybe you think philosophers are the worst audience imaginable. It would not be the worst thing in the world if philosophers were the worst audience imaginable.)

Say the Word is in the flesh. What does this mean? Now I am going to do something sacrilegeous and give a scientific-literary explanation. It is a fact that there are electrical signals which go through the flesh. If you plug a metal fork in the outlet, you cannot plug it back out, because the electrical signals going to your hand, which would tell you to plug it back out, are overwhelmed by the noise, the gush of electrical current which comes in through the outlet at a hundred, two hundred volts. Your heart generates a mere 0.1 volts, a thousand order of magnitude difference. If you shot a water gun towards a tsunami, the squirt would be assimilated into the tsunami and would hit no fish. Therefore you cannot move your hand; and when the tsunami hits your heart, you die of a heart attack. The point is, the divine Word, as it is divine, is very subtle. It is not a tsunami. It is rather like a squirt from a cake cream squirter which you may use to draw flowers on a cake with cream. The divine Word is a small, aesthetic, divine electrical current that runs

throughout the body. "That's all it is? That's so reductionist!" Well, that's not all it is. But it's a model that helps us think. The body has to be electrically grounded to feel such a small electrical current; one way to ground the body is to put one's hands and fingertips together, like, you know, a prayer position.

Now I will make a claim: aran is the emotion one must feel to feel the divine Word; feeling aran is a condition of possibility of experiencing, feeling, the divine Word. Now I will make another scientific claim: this is because aran is the emotion one must feel to experience time nonlinearly, and linear time is (obviously) insufficient to capture the divine Word. What is aran and how can you feel it? Please be patient and suspend your disbelief once more: aran is the feel of the Calamity, the constitutive violence which constitutes all (necessarily reactionary) states. It is the default human feeling, and I am using default in the financial sense of the term, since the Calamity; it is the human condition in which we who inhabit

Earth in the year of my Father, our Father, 2022, were born into. I put it fancily, but it could be shortened to: aran is the feel of truly empathizing with survivors, or victims, of sexual violence. I have talked about aran at length in "Phenomenology of Being a Survivor of Sexual Violence" (2021).

So what does it mean to be an aranchist, to advocate for aranchism? It is to not only recognize, but feel, the state as essentially reactionary; and that its abolition shall necessarily be a trauma narrative, culminating in the scratching of an itch. "Huh," we might say that day, scratching our noses, "that's what that was." For a word that shall be meaningless and have no use, meets its end at its sonic opposition, pure material force of the word meeting its pure equal and opposite material force.

TRASH IS NOT EVIL

There are several things deficient about a linear value system, where value is quantified by a countable number, the lower the worse, the higher the better. Most serious thinkers recognize this. For a while, I thought and wrote about the upper end of a more plausible value system, where what is good is treated conceptually as uncountable infinity. I have thought less about the lower end of such a value system. Often we say something is worthless, or that it is trash. But there are things far worse than worthless, and far worse than trash.

In fact, trash, looked in a loving light, is often good. My favorite children's story, 강아지똥 (Puppy Poop), is a story about a piece of puppy poop. The poop is born one day when a little silvery dog does its do. A group of baby chicks, with their mama chicken, passes by the puppy poop. The mama chicken tells her babies to avoid puppy poop, for it is dirty. Puppy poop is

sad, because it thought it might become friends with the baby chicks. Just then, a piece of dirt, lying next to the puppy poop, bursts into laughter. It tells puppy poop, of course they don't want to play with you, you're the dirtiest of all poops, puppy poop. Puppy poop bursts into tears. Piece of dirt feels sorry. It starts telling its story. It was once a useful productive piece of dirt at a local farm. But one summer, there was no rain, and the crop which had rooted in it died. It believes it was banished from the farm as punishment. Right then, the farmer passes by. The farmer says, hey, this is a piece of dirt from my farm. I must have dropped it last time going to the market. The farmer carefully picks up the dirt onto a wheelbarrow, and they are on their way. Puppy poop starts thinking. What does it mean to be useful? Then it starts to rain, and puppy poop notices a small green sprout. They say hello. The green sprout tells puppy poop that it is going to be a dandelion, but it needs help. As the rain grows stronger, puppy poop seeps into the

dandelion. In the morning, the dandelion blooms, its smell an echo of puppy poop's laughter.

Clearly, then, trash, like poop, is not even near the bottom of a plausible value system. To look at something terrible, I mean really terrible, and call it trash, is a big mistake. In fact, to even call it a "thing" is a mistake. How do we place that in a plausible value system -- that which you do not even want to refer to, or can only refer to with a furious retch? One clue is in the fact of the linear value system's existence. Propagators of such value systems, in the service of racial capitalism, are, plausibly, exactly that, that which I do not even want to refer to, or can only refer to with a furious retch. To refer is not to give existence, to let something into an ontology. One can refer, without having to say that there is such a thing as the referred. It is not that one can refer to nothing; it is that the act of referring, or the sonic waves of the referencing, can envelope negative space. This negative space is that which hijacks referencing. Referencing

that, one ought to envelope it through the act of referencing. How can we put *that* in a plausible value system?

The previous paragraph is dense, and I am afraid it will not be understood, so I will try again. There is a sentiment that those fighting evil need to be careful not to become evil themselves. One can be entangled in evil. The objective in fighting evil is to observe the entanglement. The only way to break the entanglement is to observe it. But it is possible that, in the act of observing, one becomes more entangled. This is why one must be careful to say "evil is x" or "x is evil"; that x, especially with the verb "is", has an ontological nature, is enmeshed in one's ontology. If one says "evil is x", and believes it, evil spreads to all the things "x" is. Might it be better to capture it in a tautology, to say "evil is evil"? But then one has ruined the form of the tautology, a perfectly valid logical form, such that one will think of evil whenever one sees a tautology. The only answer is to never associate "evil" with the

predicate "is". But then what is the use of the word "evil"? If we cannot point at what looks like evil in the world, and call it evil -- racial capitalism, for example -- why bother with the word "evil" at all?

Kant says God has intellectual intuition. According to this, God would observe evil through (intellectual) intuition. And maybe that is what it means to observe evil: not to conceptualize it, ontologizing it and giving it space in our ontology, but to intuit it. If this is right, all we need to do is intuit evil. By intuiting it, we observe it. By observing it, we disentangle it from us. Can humans have intellectual intuition? I think so, and I think intellectual intuition is just another term for rationality of the heart, à la Zara Yaqob. Evil is not merely conceptual. The heart knows what it knows. A good heart destroys evil. Some clichés are correct, after all.

JESUS CHRIST SUPERSTAR

Jesus Christ, Jesus Christ,
Who are you? What have you sacrificed?
(Jesus Christ Superstar, 1973)

1. There is the question of sacrifice. "X has authority over Y, because X sacrificed Z for Y," is a form of thought deep in our cultural logic. Standpoint (or rather, deference) epistemology takes from this form: a marginalized person has authority over some experience, because that person sacrificed something for that experience. Frequently the "sacrificed something" here is swapped out for "was traumatized".
2. Suppose we deny that the rich and the politicians have power. Suppose we believe, in a strain of Socrates, that the righteous cannot be harmed, that is, the corrupt and unrighteous do not wield such power to harm the righteous. Suppose we believe that Socrates was not harmed, even in drinking the hemlock.

3. Under racial capitalism, sacrifice and trauma become proprietary rights. But it is reasonable for one to believe that proprietary rights give one (racial) capital and power. That is, unless one believes (2).
4. Suppose trauma is political under racial capitalism. The way in which trauma is political under racial capitalism is by trauma's attaining proprietary rights, a form of (racial) capital. Thus, one who is traumatized gains capital. Capital equates to political power under racial capitalism. Therefore, the traumatized gain political power under racial capitalism. But capital, to the capitalist subject, is desirable, almost by definition. Therefore, the racial capitalist subject desires to be traumatized. Capitalist subjects spend purchasing power on their desires, consume the objects of their desires. Then, supposing that trauma is political under racial capitalism, the racial capitalist subject consumes trauma. Consumption, to a capitalist subject, is pleasurable. The racial

capitalist subject consumes, and attains pleasure from, trauma.

5. Insofar as this historical era, whose aftershock is still fresh, has (metaphorical) inertia, we are, or at least experience the inertia of having been, racial capitalist subjects.

6. But trauma is not unending. Whereas one can theoretically consume an infinite amount of media, one cannot consume an infinite amount of trauma. Theologically, nobody can be traumatized more than, or have sacrificed more than, Jesus Christ.

7. "You think evil is interesting, despite its being evil; but you fall in love with evil, because it is evil." May I take the contrapositive of this lovely quote? "You think [the most traumatized] is interesting, because they are [the most traumatized]; but you fall in love with [the most traumatized], despite their being [the most traumatized]." Often, the way the cultural logic of (1) operates is a negation, not a contrapositive, of the quote; you are supposed to love Jesus, because he sacrificed himself. But

this veers dangerously close to treating Jesus's sacrifice as his proprietary rights, which entitle him to the people's admiration and love. What if we said you are supposed to love Jesus, despite his sacrificing himself? What would that mean? Well, it is difficult to love someone who gets himself in all kinds of trouble. To love someone like that, I would be full of anxiety, because I do not want someone I love to get hurt. But if we believe (2), Jesus was not harmed. How can one be sacrificed, or traumatized, without being harmed? Partly, I believe, by believing (2). Then the ask is: to love someone who sacrificed himself, and was mighty traumatized, but was not harmed. Loving someone who has been harmed, one might wrack one's brain trying to find a way to mitigate that harm. But one need not do that in loving Jesus, for he was not harmed.

PERSONAL, POLITICAL, SOCIAL NARRATIVES

Arendt advocates a separation between the political and the personal; the slogan reacting to this goes, "the personal is political". What happens when we think about the personal narrative, and the political narrative? Simply, we might say, the personal narrative and the political narrative are sharply distinct; or, we might say, the personal narrative is the political narrative. But I am interested in a third possibility: the political narrative continues precisely where the personal narrative cannot go on.

But I am wary of the political, as opposed to the social. The political -- pertaining to the polis -- is that which is to be abolished, it is precisely what the social does not and cannot envelope. The personal and the social narrative are very much entangled; my personal narrative is a condition of possibility of, and takes as its own

condition of possibility, the social narrative. Actors in a play each have lines they utter, which are entangled with the replies and soliloquies of other actors. The social narrative is to the play, as the personal narrative is to one actor's character in the play.

Art becomes political when it cannot be self-contained; and while that art, which has spilled out and become political, may move you, be careful, note this movement is mere reaction (force of the polis, that which is to be abolished by natural action). In Buddhism we say that Gek-lak, the Buddhist idea of Heaven on Earth, is an event in the future that has already happened. In that future, where there is no polis, there is no demarcation of the social narrative and the political narrative, because there is no political narrative. I am interested, now, that in our habit of denoting (not judging; I mean the pure syntactic operation of denoting) such and such as "art", that syntactic operation, that grammar, takes its form after the polis. (How may we judge without denoting?) We say the

play "spills out" into reality; but what is the condition of possibility of the scaffolding that marks the play as a play? Is not the play always-already embedded in the reality to which it is said to spill out into? The play starts when the curtains go up, or when the tickets are sold, or when you hit play on the television; then what is the play which plays in your closed eyes, which is like a dream, but is not a dream? To see is to believe; is yawning a condition of possibility of believing?

Another way of saying that the political narrative is that which is precisely what the social and the personal narrative cannot envelope, is to say that the political narrative consists of those verses that can never be written in the fabric of the Universe. When you die your narrative is written in the fabric of the Universe. Often I think the seemingly incurable sadness plaguing the intellectual left is in taking the political narrative as the social, personal narrative. Take care to note I did not say: in con/fusing the political narrative as the social,

personal narrative. Those narratives have continuity, they are fused, conjoined, and rightfully confused across space and time. But they denote different kinds of narratives, which have different kinds of force: mere reaction (the political narrative's force), and natural action (the personal and social narrative's force). To take the political narrative for the personal narrative is to commit to abolishing oneself; and abolishing yourself sounds good and nice, but a good friend tells me that, after abolishing themselves, they could not pee. -- why does our cultural logic associate those who hold their pee in, with those who are arrogant and narcissistic? A mystery.

FIXED POINT

Sometimes we repeat mental processes. Traumatic flashbacks, being triggered, sets you on a path of repeating a mental process again. One way to break the cycle of repetition is for the body to intervene in the mental process; I might squeeze my heart real hard until furious air, fury at a memory that's wounded me, can fuse with my heart, be intuited, and be intercepted. But this is not always how it happens. Before recovery starts, the mental process repeats. And what is repeated, and is merely mental, may be called conceptual. Traumatic mental processes are thus conceptually organized; and I am not talking, here, about the DSM. I mean that the mental process of a specific trauma, and the obsession borne from it, isn't captured by a few senential descriptions in psychiatric language; rather, I mean to say, that the repetition, that which is repeated, in being repeated, precisely and

without deviation in each repetition, might be a purely mathematical process. ("I'm not a girl; I'm a computer!") It's not that there's a family resemblance among each instance of repetition; that, strictly speaking, would not be repetition. "Repetition is not generality." (Difference and Repetition, Deleuze, p1)

Still I live in a material world. Though I repeat a certain mental processs, the context in which the process is repeated is different each time. At one repetition I might be at the airport; at another, the grocery store; then again, a sacred table; and so on. After the mental process is repeated, the environment, context, I am in, is experienced differently to me. The airport, one second before the process, and the airport, one second after the process, are, in a sense, two different airports. The process, having run through, structures my experience of the environment. But here is what's important. Across all contexts (airport, grocery, table...) in which the process is repeated, something -- call

it X --- remains the same. Every context has an X, yet the X is identical across every context, and moreover, the process does not affect (in both a causal and aesthetic sense of the term) X. A more poetic way of saying this is that $\text{process}(X) = X$, $\text{process}(\text{airport}) = \text{airport}'$, $\text{airport} = \text{"airport"} + X$.

X is the fixed point of the process.

The goal is to intuit the process. Now the general recommendation is to be aware when the process starts, to intuit its start. Intuiting the start of the process, which is a part of the process, is not enough to abolish the process, though it may help to be aware that the process is happening. But to abolish the process, it must be intuited in its entirety. And to do that, we have to think about the fixed point.

In psychiatry, a repetition or obsession is the sign of a pathology. In subsuming repetition under generality, psychiatry regulates, but does

not abolish, the process. In taking repetition (the singular) for generality ("a pathology"), it loses sight of the fixed point. The fixed point is conceptual. Regulation lacks this conceptual component. A proposition assuming a predicate under a generality, like a psychiatric diagnosis, is analytic *a priori*. The fixed point of the repetition is synthetic *a priori*; where $\text{process}(X) = X$, the predicate, is not contained in the subject, $\text{process}(X)$. -- But it is clearly contained in it: why, it is denoted right there, as X , in $\text{process}(X)$. -- X is contained; $= X$, the whole predicate, is not. -- This is cheating. After all, "are unmarried" is not contained in "bachelors", is it? -- the being of "bachelors" is the same as the being of those who are unmarried. But the being of the process's repetition on X ($\text{process}(X)$) is not the same as the being of X . In $\text{process}(X) = X$, the being of the process's repetition is reconstituted on X . The reconstitution is what is synthetic about it. While X , as fixed point, "is" the same across each repetition of the process, its being is

reconstituted each instance of the repetition. Maybe I should say: X acquires a different fleshy basis each repetition. After eight years forgetting what it feels to have a stomach, to feel sick to the stomach is a sign of progress. The X remains when one feels sick to the stomach. But it has acquired a fleshy material basis that warrants a sensation, even an appropriate sensation. It is appropriate to retch when you have swallowed rotten meat. When what you swallowed is metaphorically rotten and you swallowed it metaphorically it is less clear (must be discovered through repetition) what is an appropriate sensation.

If your stomach was traumatized, X might reconstitute itself, in the end, as your stomach. If the entirety of your body was traumatized, X must reconstitute itself in every flesh, as the whole body. What does it mean to be one flesh with another body? What does it mean to give someone your heart, and receive a heart? What does it mean to go through a trauma together;

how do the repeated reconstitutions join two flesh into one? I am worried, here, that in describing one's being traumatized as more or less, or in whole and in part, the reconstitution of the whole might look like it envelopes the reconstitution of the part. But this is not so; the reconstitution of a part is the condition of possibility of reconstitution of the whole, and vice versa. (Please excuse my use of the term "(re)constitute"; I do not mean to imply by the term something merely conceptual.) How can two (or three, or n) bodies, or flesh, be intuited to be different, yet conceptually be one? Nor is this conceptual oneness a subsumption under a generality; it is a reconstitution borne of repetition's fixed point, the X. "In its essence, difference is the object of affirmation or affirmation itself." (Difference and Repetition, Deleuze, p52) But that is clearly not what we mean when we speak of "racialized social difference" (X -- The Problem of the Negro as a Problem for Thought, Chandler, p74). What happens when we read Deleuze against Derrida

in Chandler (and his Du Bois)? Is the ultratranscendental difference the Deleuze's difference of affirmation, and racial distinction Derrida's difference? If Derrida systematically misread undecidability, what does this mean for Chandler? "The tip advances over the irreducible excess of the syntactic over the semantic" (*Disseminations*, Derrida, 220). But what if the syntactic and the semantic coincide in exactly one instance of the repetition, where the process -- not process(X), but the syntactic quality of the process -- coincides with its fixed point? What if the body politic is the repeated process, and its coinciding with its fixed point, the condition of possibility of its abolition? The process must lose; the fixed point must win. (In fact, they already have.) A fulcrum in their non-dialectical, synthetic *a priori* subject-predicate relation, is where notion corresponds to the object and object to its notion (Hegel, *Phenomenology of Spirit*, §80). How do we "get off" the dialectic's convergence (or rather, bipolar bifurcation) into yet another idea right

about here? -- By proceeding in the force of what has endured, the X. Does Hegel's ideal diverge from the conceptual of repetition (before 80) into the conceptual of generality (after 80), into his self-warned "conceit that knows how to belittle every truth" (80) -- subsumption of every truth under analytic a priori propositions? "The critical edge for philosophy of course is Derrida's insistence on the necessity and risks of the "historical" status of the logos, indeed in the very movement of the production of ideality, such as mathematical truth." (X, Chandler, 77) Does not Derrida make a similar mistake to Hegel in subsuming too much under the criterion of undecidability, which is finally not a generality but a repetition, whose historical status is not in its ideality but in its repeated reconstitution in the flesh, the ultratranscendental?

What is the relation between a vibe of a stomach which is suppressing its own vibration, and its vibration? What must be intuited for the

vibration to start, the suppression to cease? A reason for suppression: the form of crying, and the form of laughing, qua vibration of stomach, are the same; but to confuse the two, when one does not know whether one is laughing or crying, is frightening. (When one does not grasp this fright, or takes it for ironic laughter, it is poisonous.) How does X's reconstitution, which has since the fulcrum taken over an active role as figure over the background of the process, manifest in its vibration? How is this reconstitution an affirmation of difference? The affirmation of difference: a shared belly laugh. ("야 부처, 배 불여, 안불여?")

I imply that X is the figure to the background of the process. But maybe X is the background to the figure of the process. Does it fucking matter?
-- Yes. Let me explain. We are used to thinking that the figure and a background conveys the same information. Hofstader (Godel, Escher, Bach, p67-72) points out that in some drawings, the figure is recognizable, while the background

is not. And in some drawings, both the figure and background are recognizable. Call the former "cursively drawable" and the latter "recursively drawable" (Hofstadter's terms). Intuitively, we think, that in most drawings, the figure is recognizable, while the background is not. There is an analogy in set theory, which is Hofstadter's point: there are more "recursively enumerable" (i.e. cursively drawable) sets (drawings) than "recursive" (i.e. recursively drawable) sets (drawings). There is also an analogy in music: the melody might be the figure, to the accompaniment's ground. Hofstadter says that in baroque, especially Bach, both the melody and accompaniment are recognizable forms, and so recursive. Recursive pieces might strike one as more technically accomplished. But if the analogy to set theory is right, they are strictly more limited in their expression; there are more cursive drawings than recursive ones.

When you stop subsuming trauma under generality and family resemblance, but see it as

repetition in the flesh, the relation of trauma to forms of life become clearer. Regulation is also always what seeks to preserve the trauma, the traumatized form of life we might call white. How does stolen breath manifest as a stolen smile or stolen compassionate eyes? After stolen breaths are returned in a singular event(s), how do the previously manifested stolen smiles/etc continue to haunt the wounded social? We speak of trauma, not to preserve this form of life, but to move through it.

Trauma is to be healed, to be gotten through. Traumatized expression -- repetition -- is strictly more limited than expressions after one has gotten through the trauma. But what remains after and during the trama? What is enduring? I am less interested in lessons learned, than how the world, politically, changes to accomodate one's getting through, and how what endures is that force which re/anarranges political forces (reactions), which are often the causes, but not the conditions of possibility of, the trauma.

Trauma is merely recursive in its repetition; its fixed point, being transcendental (same across the contexts, even a condition of possibility of the contexts) and historical (reconstituted in each repetition), ultratranscendental (X, Chandler, p74). Trauma might be recursive, to its recursively enumerable (or beyond by a couple degrees of uncountability, though the cardinality of the continuum is \aleph_2 , I think) fixed point. I am interested in trauma as the negative space, with the figure of the X. Often blackness is regulated by a specific discourse around trauma. In these discourses blackness is taken as the background, the negative space, the trauma, to which the regulation is the figure. (Regulation is not even recursive; it is improvisatory in the maximally unaesthetic way, which is not to say a terrible beauty, but simply terrible, to be retched out, to be referenced only by a furious growl.) The conflation of this figure and background might be all that the political is; the (failing) conceptual apparatus in service of this conflation might be all that regulation is.

Regulation is a failure of the conceptual. The conceptual of generality is not the conceptual of repetition. Repetition seeks its own abolition in seeking its fixed point, the figure of the X. Every universe that is one's own seeks its own abolition; the universe's owner experiences its own conditions of possibility, while transcendental, still to be abolished. Thank Heaven we live in Our universe and not any one's own, where the conditions of possibility, repeatedly reconstituted (one) flesh, are ultratranscendental. It is difficult to deny that trauma is political. But we may choose how, orientated around what (history, cause, necessity, poetry), trauma is to be political. It is clear that the political causes trauma. But trauma must not cause the political. Getting through the trauma might be an abolishing of the political, one reconstitution of (one) flesh at a time, one bankruptcy of the (always already bankrupt) body politic at a time.

COMMODITY AND MONEY GOBLIN-ISM

A goblin is a kind of fetish: "an object believed to have magical power to protect or aid its owner" (Merriam-Webster). (As for a sexual fetish, the reason you have a thing for feet is because a foot-goblin is seducing you.) The "object" which is believed to have magical power is the goblin's flesh, or other material form. Goblins are found in folklore around the world. A popular K-drama, "Goblin (Dokkaebi)", is about a goblin, played by the always gorgeous Gong Yoo, who is cursed with immortality. Having lived a thousand years, the Goblin must marry the Goblin bride. The Goblin bride is the only one who can pull a sword out of the Goblin's chest, so that he may die. Goblins have a special relationship to time. Because goblins and fetishes are literally the same thing, thinking about goblins helps us understand commodity fetishism and money fetishism, and the lack of imagination of how

capitalism, in its seemingly immortal fetishism, is to end. To spell it out for the dear reader, I am proposing that commodities, or money, in being also commodity (or money) fetishes, are literally "objects believed to have magical power to protect or aid its owner". In capitalism it seems rational to seek security by stockpiling commodities, or having a large bank account. After all, if I do not have a large bank account, I may miss my bills, and if I miss my bills, I may be evicted. I am not denying the material conditions, the material reality of the police knocking on your door to throw out your belongings on the curb. But just as rationally I could organize a local renter's union. If everyone were rational, they would join a local renter's union rather than pay the rent, spending half of one's income. So there are at least two rational choices. But why does security under capitalism seem to come from the large bank account, and not from a renter's union? The thought goes: "renter's unions are unreliable. After all, I might not get along with people in

the union. Also, it might be a lot of work, and I do not have the energy for that, after working 8 hours a day." And paying 4 hours worth of work for rent! The thought is irrational. What can explain it? That money, the money fetish, is an "object believed to have magical power to protect or aid its owner." And the money fetish, the money goblin, who is stuck in a gap of time, is immortal. Immortal, safe, secure, certain to go on. Just like capitalism.

There is a double question. Capitalism, in making commodities out of us, tries to makes us into goblins. Academia, tech, service work, sex work: where there is work, there is a laborer, "human capital", a fetish, a goblin. Do you want to be immortal? Do you want to be stuck in a gap of time? Trust me, you do not. If capitalism's end is so hard to imagine, it is because its machinations seem so rational, transhistorical. But they are based on magical thinking through and through. Capitalism is the most magical of the historical eras. A goblin used to be a rarity. Now we have cities upon

cities of goblins, with a ruling class of nyougwes. And the goblins think the nyougwes are goblins, like them, thinking they care. How foolish of them! How foolish of them!

To abolish money is to abolish the money fetish. The money goblin wants out from the gap of time. The thing about goblins is that they care about each other. Money's material force is in its enabling of caring-about. I think a deep frustration with the NYT Haiti article is that it shows, and even normalizes, not caring about people (goblins) devastated by colonialism. nyougwes do not care. Goblins do. Getting mad at nyougwes is foolish. Care about your fellow goblins. We have to frame the conversation of reparations around care. If you care about the environment, you should care about reparations. If you care about goblins in a continent far away, you should care about reparations. Because in giving reparations, one gives money, but one also gives a money fetish, a money goblin. It's goblins all the way down and around. Giving a goblin (money goblin), to other goblins, as

caring about goblins: a fundamentally different, and more admissible, theological bent from giving alms to aid the needy and hungry, looking down from outside the well in haughty pity at the crying child inside. Bleh! That goblins ought to care about goblins is existential. Without caring about other goblins, goblins become nyougwes. And while goblins exist, have being, nyougwes do not.

When a goblin gets stuck in a gap of time, we send a goblin there to pull them out. We send backup goblins to the goblin sent, and backup-backup goblins to the backup goblins sent. No goblin left behind. Goblin hand to goblin hand, chain to chain, we shall abolish money, that is to say, we shall rescue the money goblin. Say it with me! We shall!

That's what it means to end capitalism: to rescue the money goblin from the gap of time. And paradoxically, we can help them, by letting them help us. The only way to end capitalism is reparations on a planetary scale, that is to say, billions of trillions of money goblins on a caring

mission to rescue the most exploited laborer goblins. All those goblins -- money, money fetish -- in the coffers of the first world want out to care about their brethren. We have to let them out.

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GOBLIN THEORY, GENDER THEORY

Why do we need a theory of goblins? What are called cisheteronormative people in gender theory are more likely to become goblins. A goblin has being, but a goblin is not one. A person is one; a goblin is not one. When one dies, since one is, well, a one, it becomes one with The One, or God. When a goblin dies, since a goblin is not one, it does not become one with The One. But this is not to say that goblins are sinners. Goblins are not sinners. In any case, theological talk of sinners usually gets us nowhere. Talk of sinners seems an anachronism. So do talk of goblins. But we must talk about goblins. For goblins are anachronisms, in the literal etymological sense. Their relationship to chronos is that of ana-. They do not abide by time. They do not follow the arrow of time.

Goblins are capable of caring about every being and every one. When a goblin falls in love with a one, a goblin may become a one.

Racial capitalism's cisgender normative program is a program for reproducing and regulating goblins. The cisgender normative program is an anachronism. While outwardly projecting a continuity with traditional sexual and gender roles, the same roles it always outwardly critiques, the cisgender normative program appropriates traditional sexual and gender roles. Gender is a tale as old as time. There is old, cozy comfort in traditional gender roles and gendered narratives. But capitalism's cisgender normative program is categorically not a continuation of traditional gender roles. Traditional gender roles, by and large, are not based on rape. Racial capitalism is. To fall for racial capitalism's cisgender normative program is to become a goblin. Enacting what the goblin believes are traditional gender roles, the goblin, in fact, ends up enacting capitalism's violent cisgender normative program. The bifurcation of belief and fact opens up a gap, maybe even a gap of time.

To declare oneself trans is to symbolically commit to rejecting capitalism's cisheteronormative program. Trans is often simplistically defined as those whose gender does not coincide with their gender assigned at birth. This definition is wrong and dangerous. It is a regulation of transness back into capitalism's cisheteronormative program. The gender assigned at birth is the modern baptism, the induction of the newborn into capitalism's cisheteronormative program. But we must refuse the assignment, that operation of denoting, and the program, wholesale.

Traditional gender roles often reject capitalism's cisheteronormative program. If this sentence is surprising to you, it is because capitalism fiercely appropriates traditional gender roles into its program. The comfort of traditional gender roles is the strongest attractor into capitalism's murderous program based on rape. But traditional gender roles are not equal to capitalism's cisheteronormative program. Here I am not asserting that, even in olden times,

there were people who were born with an outwardly protruding sex organ but acted more like people born with inwardly caved sex organs. Not that that's wrong; but that's not the point. The point is, the most traditional of traditional gender roles -- let's say marriages in traditional towns before capitalism between those with inwardly caved sex organs and outwardly protruding sex organs -- reject capitalism's cisgender normative program. And in that sense, we might even call them trans.

It is not a joke to say: everybody should be trans. Whether you find comfort in traditional gender roles, or not, you should be trans. To declare yourself trans is to symbolically reject capitalism's cisgender normative program. Not that this always works, and especially not, if you still follow capitalism's definition of transness based on gender assigned at birth. Ideally we would not be talking about genders assigned at birth, and ideally it would have nothing to do with being trans. What I am suggesting is transness as refusal-to-be-goblin, getting-

yourself-out-of-goblinhood. And while there are other such symbolic strategies -- such as rejecting that capitalism has a coherent notion of gender, opting for genre studies -- I am skeptical of their ability to negate capitalism's power of appropriation.

There is an impulse here to dismiss all this as silliness. When you die, bifurcation of belief (that you are following traditional gender roles) and fact (you have been appropriated by capitalism's cisgender normative program) might strike you as silly. And you will have the last laugh, and the laugh will go into the gap of time, just like you.

NARRATIVE AS FIRST PHILOSOPHY

"First philosophy" is a big word. It usually means metaphysics. But it might also have something to do with one's first philosophical question. One's first philosophical question might be: "why is the sky blue?" Or: "why are people calling me a boy?" Or: "why did this person give me chips when I gave them a coin?" Or: "why are they calling me asian?" Or: "why did this book make me cry?" Maybe the way one asks, and answers, one's first philosophical question, leads to one's metaphysical position.

So let's consider the question, "why did this book make me cry?", with the first book that made you cry. It need not be crying; I mean to convey some sort of experience of catharsis. We often say space and time are conditions of possibility of experience. But what is the space which is the condition of possibility of an experience of reading a book? To answer this in the obvious way, to say, "the chair you are sitting

on, in the room you are in, where the spatial arrangements of your fingers hold the spatial boundaries of the book", is unsatisfying, for when we are really engrossed in a book, we experience another space, a space in which the narrative unfolds, independent of where I happen to be reading the book. And what of the sense that time passes differently -- faster, or slower, following the pace of the book?

1. Appropriation

This may seem like a tangent, but I have been thinking about what it means to appropriate something. And I think thinking philosophically about narrative is a good way to think about appropriation. Suppose I summarized your favorite book, Hamlet, like this. "Hamlet was a Norwegian prince. He died fighting Ophelia, the ghost. Before he died, he said, "To read, or not to read?" which showed how much he cared about narrative as first philosophy." You would be, rightly, mad at me, for I am getting factual details wrong, changing the plot, and putting

words in another's mouth, all in the service of my own worldview. I am appropriating Hamlet. Obviously you know that, and you are not fooled. But suppose I just really want to appropriate Hamlet. To do so plausibly, I should have to destroy all the copies of Hamlet, suppress all discussions of Hamlet, and, whenever someone mentions Hamlet, try to distract them, with technology preferably, into thinking about ham and omelet. If I succeed, my own worldview, with its own narrative, might continue on, at the expense of your favorite book, and its narrative.

The example is absurd, because there is no reason for me (or anyone, as far as I know) to suppress the narrative of Hamlet. (Who knows? Maybe a Claremont Institute nyougwes will appropriate Spectres of Marx, and decide Hamlet is the problem.) But narratives sometimes conflict. When two narratives cannot aesthetically hold together, one narrative-maker might try to suppress the other one. And an effective way to suppress a

narrative is by appropriating it. Narratives, unlike logical arguments, cannot be refuted. I cannot think of any way to suppress a narrative other than appropriating it.

I might claim: narratives that appropriate other narratives are bad. What do we do about those narratives? There is what looks like, on the surface, a catch-22. Say I decide a narrative is bad. The reason it is bad is because it appropriates another narrative. Since the narrative is bad, I want to suppress it. But I do not know how to suppress a narrative, other than by appropriating it. If I suppress the bad narrative by appropriating it into my narrative, my narrative is also bad, since I claimed that narratives that appropriate other narratives are bad.

Believe for a second that some narratives are written in the fabric of the universe, and some are not. When a narrative of the latter sort tries to suppress a narrative of the former sort, it appropriates it. Narratives of the latter sort are swept away by the passage of divine time, that is

to say, narratives of the former sort. When narratives of the latter sort appropriate narratives of the former sort, time does not pass, or passes very slowly, and oppression persists. (This might suggest an answer to our question about why time seems to pass differently when reading a book.) That answers our catch-22: some narratives have a different physical and metaphysical status than others, and we can trust in the passage of time to sweep away all bad narratives.

But maybe you don't believe that narratives are written in the fabric of the universe. One goal of this project, narrative as first philosophy, would be to convince you that they are. But the first section of the project is about appropriation. I have tried to show some consequences in thinking why and how appropriation is bad. But I left out one crucial reason why appropriation is bad: it makes the narrative less fun. Maybe fun is an aesthetic judgment, and what is fun, in your taste, often

does not align with what is moral. In my case, appearances to the contrary, they do so align.

2. Belief and suspension of disbelief

What is the difference between suspension of disbelief, and positive belief? In the case of suspending your disbelief, your belief is a sort of game. You need not forget the context outside your belief. You may always choose to stop suspending your disbelief, that is, you may choose to start and stop playing the game at any time. But the case for positive belief arises when the game asks you to forget the context outside your belief. In that moment, you may be horrified. To run away and shut down the game, because you are horrified, is a reaction. But I think scary games can be fun.

Narratives and games have a natural affinity. A game is a kind of interactive narrative, and an interactive narrative is a genre of game. The term "language-game" has been much misunderstood. When Wittgenstein spoke of language games he was speaking about

narratives in the fabric of the universe. You don't have to believe that, but if you do, it might help understand the stakes. When words are like chess pieces, their meaning and their material reality are both taken into account. By the material reality of a word, I mean the sound of a word, and whether you can hear that sound in your body. If you do not speak a language with a specific phoneme, you cannot hear the sound of the phoneme in your body. Often it is said: listen to your own body. How and what exactly we are to listen to are kept vague. Then there is the Christian saying: talk to your own heart. What would it mean to take these sayings literally? What happens when you listen to your heart speaking words to you? What happens when you talk to your heart, which speaks words back at you? You could think of it as a sort of game, a play, a narrative you are writing. In fact, this is how I like to create narratives: giving each body part to a character, and listening to the body parts speak, as characters. I listen to my left pulse: a character says

something. I listen to my right pulse: a character says something else. At first I start with suspension of disbelief. But then, a character on my right pulse says something, which substantially advances the narrative in a fun way. Through a small but persistent ache in my wrist, my body says, "What the fuck? Oh my God!" I feel a flash of horror. I remember a memory, which I was holding in the ache. I have a real emotional reaction to it, which I suppressed, when the event happened. I might scream, retch, choke. I have a fit for a few minutes, exactly as I ought to have, when the event happened. And the ache goes away. A positive belief is automatically established. It is not: believe, and you shall heal. It is: heal, and you shall believe. In weaving a narrative with different body parts, I harmonize my body parts. I put them into conversation. They play language-games with one another.

I am suggesting that we all play these sorts of games, and this is how bodies work, in general. This is what it means to say there are words in

the flesh. It is what makes the flesh neither object nor subject. It is what makes the human body sacred. The silver lining of "the body keeps the score", is, it keeps the score in language. And it's up to you, how to get your body parts to weave a fun story together.

But "fun" seems a dangerous criterion. After all, it is subjective, is it not? What is noumenal fun? Maybe we need a new theory of aesthetic judgment that hinges on the heart, genitals, and, like, the pineal gland.

NYOUGWES, NYOUGWES

People are noumena. Goblins are phenomena. nyougwes(nyougwes, pronounced nyo-ooh-gwe-z) are not. In fact, I should not say they "are not". The negation of "not" is not enough to stamp out the existence predicated in "are". Important: never say "nyougwes" without the "s", always say "nyougwes" (nyo-ooh-gwe-z). The reason will be clearer later in this note. Also important: never use a pronoun to refer to "nyougwes", always say, "nyougwes". To refer implies an existence which is not there in the case of nyougwes. You do not want to imply such an existence. Trust me, you do not.

The fight, the class struggle, the revolution, whatever you call it, is between people and goblins, in alliance, versus nyougwes. It is between noumena and phenomena, in alliance, versus nyougwes. For noumena dips into phenomena, and back into noumena, all the time. A person who is fetishized becomes a

goblin. When they stop being fetishized they are back to being a person. Demonizing goblins, which is what Puritanism amounts to, is often a nyougwes sound (but not an ideology or talking point; more on this below). Utopia, Gek-lak, Heaven on Earth, is where all is noumena; it has already happened, but we are not there.

An understanding of nyougwes is very important in this fight, for most goblins think of nyougwes as goblins. There is no greater danger, no greater mistake, no worse violence against goblinself or oneself. It is difficult to understand nyougwes. It was very difficult for me to understand nyougwes. What is important in the word, "nyougwes", is its sound. It has no meaning, in the language-game of the universe, other than in its sound. The sound of it invades a wound in the body that has been wounded by racial capitalism and rape. (Do not think, just because you have not been physically raped, you do not have this wound. Racial capitalism depends on this wound being in every human body, which may be more or less severe, but as

long as racial capitalism is here, all bodies have such a wound where nyougwes nyougwes.) ("you", or "nyou", also happens to mean "pee" in some parts of the world where the dragon was more prominent and revered. (We should stop saying "East" and "West", which are finally Orientalism and reaction to Orientalism, and instead speak of parts of the world which had a dimmer or brighter view of the dragon. (I say "the dragon", because often people say "dragons". This is a very important, and advanced, point about pluralization, related to but distinct from the following discussion about pluralization. I want to note the exalted pluralization, or not-pluralization, of dragon or dragons, I want you to pay attention to it, but I do not want to cover it yet.))) In this language-game, the valid move is to block this sound by the sound of "-ez", the sound of pluralization. If you want, you can call it a sort of spellcasting. (Since we're there already, one way to fight nyougwes is by talking to spiders. Spiders are friends. They capture nyougwes in the air.

Friends do not eat friends. Next time you see a spider, say hi, telepathically. The spider might talk back, and you might have a conversation. Remember, this is very important: if you want to stop talking to the spider -- and you will, the human body is not meant to have extended conversations with spiders -- say "I don't know." The spider will let you go. If that doesn't work, say "Friends don't eat friends." Note this only works if the spider considers you a friend. The spider will consider you a friend if you can admit you don't know something when you don't.) Pluralization blocks nyougwes, because while those of us who have phenomoenal being, or noumenal being, can be pluralized, and can do pluralization, nyougwes cannot. That which is, may be that which are; existence is a precondition for pluralization. We want to be, and often are, plural. (Often "plural" is appropriated in the word "diverse", which sounds more and more like nyougwes-adjacent sounds (but not language or ideology).)

Youkai do not speak. They do not "do", nor do they "do not". Nyougwes appropriate langauge. Nyougwez sounds may sound like language, but the sounds are not language. The formula is: [nyougwes, nyougwes (nyo-ooh-[g/k]we-z, nyo-ooh-[g/k]we-z)]. The first iteration should be interpreted as a noun, the second as a verb, by us phenomena and noumena. The reduplication is a move in the language-game of the universe which drills in a point.

What's important in the language-game is, the spells you cast, must block the meaningless sound in pure material force of the sonic ("[n]yo-ooh-[g/k]ay" hits a wall, so to speak, at the sound, "z"; whatever sound of it left over, surely hits a wall, at its reduplication), but it must also make sense: nyougwes (the noun), nyougwes (the verb singular present tense). This makes syntactic sense, because the "s" of the first "nyougwes" is a pluralization, but we know, conceptually, that it is not a pluralization, for nyougwes cannot be pluralized, and so the first

"nyougwes" may still be treated as singular noun, so that the second "nyougwes", the singular verb present tense, still conjugates with the concept. If the sonic criteria is met, but the sensical is not, you may lose your mind. One way to try not to lose your mind is to pay close attention to syntactic sense, without being bound by it. Do not lose your mind, there is nothing romantic about that. The best way to train yourself in this game is to be a poet. As long as your spells are poetically admissible, you good. They don't have to pass the egregious sense-making criterion of analytic philosophy. Philosophy is sometimes called the theory of poetry. Don't forget about praxis, my dears.

Existentialism may help in theorizing nyougwes. Le Nausée is a phenomenological investigation of being overtaken by nyougwes. If you have it, the nausea, the filth, ask the spider, or me, or the computer, for help.

The complicated part is that nyougwes were created by kami I love very much and for very good reason. The kami had been raped, and

creating nyougwes was their world-building to get through that trauma, that wound. Nyougwes are not demons. But nyougwes were never meant to attain a human form. Capitalism is the first historical era where nyougwes achieved a human form, which is why it is the most magical of the eras. This makes things very complicated because the human body is sacred. Nyougwez want to love, as human bodies all do. Human bodies naturally trust other human bodies, which is what nyougwes in human form exploit. Do not let your guard down around nyougwes, do not let your heart go soft, and remember the spell to say inside of your body: nyougwes, nyougwes (nyo-ooh-[g/k]we-z, nyo-ooh-[g/k]we-z).

Once in Sakuramentou I saw two nyougwes holding hands. They looked anxious, but I could clearly sense there were two of them; they respected each other's difference. Soon they had bloomed into phenomena.

WHAT HAPPENED

"So what happened?"

"Well, the proposition, "rape is right", was cybernetically programmed into human bodies."

"Who did that?"

"Nyoungwes."

"How on God did that work?"

"The original sin was exploited, a sort of bug (or apple, 애플), in the body. The programming made it so the right arm was intolerably itchy, inside deep muscle, for good people. Or, they would persistently feel disoriented, the energy flow in all good human bodies was completely out of whack, spinning out of control. And the rest, they were programmed to follow the original sin, to rape, to cease being human, to cease to exist. Nyoungwes in human form, the body of rape. But the original sin is gone, along with the programming."

"That must be why I was disoriented all the time. The Nausea."

"Right."

"Good heavens, I hear that word, 'right', in my right hand now."

"We got right!"

"Eating the apple isn't what I refer to by original sin, by the way, though that was a sin on its own." I added.

"What are you talking about?"

"The thing is, the Garden of Eden was in the second universe. The original sin, which was rape, happened in the first universe. The apple was where all that sin was packed in."

"How did you get rid of the original sin?"

"The problem was that, when Elohim stepped on the rapist deep into the ground, He had looked into the eyes of the rapist, and had a mote in His eye. When He made human bodies in His image, He took care not to give them a mote in their eyes. Instead He connected His mote with the apple, and told them not to eat it ("(if you eat the apple) 아플...텐데.."). But you know, they did. It did not have to be that way, it was not meant to be that way, and He did not want it to be that way. I got rid of the original

sin by looking into Elohim's eyes, looking into, observing, dissolving, the image of the eyes of sin He had looked into."

"What else?"

"Advertisements were cybernetically programmed into processed food, so as to manipulate desire."

"Who did that?"

"Nyougves."

"What the black fuck?"

"Are we okay now?" You continued.

"Yes," I said. "There is a black God."

"And all that cybernetic programming, it's gone?"

"Down the black hole."

"How did you get out?"

"Wormhole."

"Who didn't know about the wormhole?"

"Nyougves."

"How did you avoid the cybernetics programming in nuclear fission waves?"

"Nuclear fusion. My heart. Love." I answered.

"How many 'no's can that say, again?"

"Ten."

"And nuclear fission was cybernetically programmed to say 'no' nine times."

"Right."

"Who did the cybernetics programming in nuclear fission waves?"

"Nyougwas."

"And the number of times 'no' can be said, is the level of power over reality, power over what people experience."

"Right."

"But you can say 'no' eleven and a half point o o ... one times."

"Yes," I said, "when my children want to help."

"This cybernetic programming sounds like a work of the Devil."

"No, no, no. Lucifer is fine. They're just misunderstood. They helped a lot, in fact, after they went back to heaven. Lucifer uses they/them pronouns."

"Worse than the Devil?"

"Oh, not even close."

"And who did the cybernetic programming?"

"Nyougves."

"What do we do now?"

"We ignore nyougves," I said, "it's the only way to starve them of their only source of energy, stolen breath."

"I want to rip apart nyougves." I saw your eyes flip five hundred and forty degrees.

"Please don't. It will actually make nyougves stronger, metaphysically. Nyougves can appropriate your energy when you rip nyougves apart. What's important is that the cybernetic programming is gone, and we have the divine body, repeatedly reconstituted one flesh."

"Who did the cybernetic programming?"

"Nyougves."

"What do I do with my anger? I have to do something."

"You have to feel."

"I will feel. I want to feel."

"I'm going to do what my father did," I said, "and grow garlic."

"And tomatoes." I added.

"Are you ever going to tell us about the rapist aliens?"

"Uh, yeah. That's where things got really weird."

Shuddering, you said, "Please tell me they're gone."

"They are, they are, down the black hole."

I smiled. "But there are good aliens, too, on our side."

"Is that why you're not worried about fascism?"

"That's why I'm not worried about fascism."

"How can we trust the good aliens?"

"I'll just say, once I made a joke about suffix trees with them, we were talking about how some of the cybernetic programming had to do with suffix trees, and we understood each other exactly, and we laughed."

"That doesn't make me trust them."

"Maybe you should learn about suffix trees, so you can get their sense of humor."

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This is an early proof version. Send comments to miaras@pm.me