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On Emily Dickinson

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Throngs — Dusters and Robbers

Such is the power of the Yea that it adheres everywhere, that it contains unlimited possibilities of reality. It is the arch-word of language, one of those which first make possible, not sentences, but any kind of sentence-forming words at all, words as parts of the sentence. Yea is not a part of the sentence, but neither is it a shorthand symbol for a sentence, although it can be employed as such. Rather it is the silent accompanist of all parts of a sentence, the confirmation, the “sic!” the “Amen” behind every word. It gives every word in the sentence its right to exist, it supplies the seat on which it may take its place, it “posits.” The first Yea in God establishes the divine essence for all infinity. And this first Yea is “in the beginning.” ¹

Behold, Oh, Starbuck! Is it not hard, that with this weary load I bear, one poor leg should have been snatched from under me? Here, brush this old hair aside; it blinds me, that I seem to weep. Locks so grey did never grow but from out some ashes! But do I look very old, so very, very old, Starbuck? I feel deadly faint, bowed, and humped, as though I were Adam, staggering beneath the piled centuries since Paradise. God! God! God! — crack my heart! — stave my brain! — mockery! mockery! bitter, biting mockery of grey hairs, have I lived enough joy to wear ye; and seem and feel thus intolerably old? ²

The processes and experiments in this essay stress Adam as a protruding, effusive personality.

We can't conduct a clean excavation of the piled centuries, so he stays under. We feel for nerve and pulsation, feeling to him in the earth - sound tactics. I can't recover Adam so I re-cover him like Picasso's rayonism. Despite the great bulk of hour and sediment between us and Paradise, the gusts are stronger than ever.

But a storm is blowing from Paradise; it has got caught in his wings with such violence that the angel can no longer close them. This storm irresistibly propels him into the future to which his back is turned, while the pile of debris before him grows skyward. This storm is what we call progress. ³

¹ Rosenzweig, *The Star of Redemption*, “the archetypal word,” p. 27.

² Melville, *Moby-Dick*, “The Symphony,” p. 406

³ Benjamin, *Theses*, pp. 257 - 258. The angel is Paul Klee's “Angelus Novus.”

Words like islands of debris: they get *carried away*. Once they called themselves peninsula, but that is long gone. Progress is commonly thought as what preserves the species. The writers - here and there - even when they are too close to the lightning - putting out their feelers for what perishes and goes unseen. Sometimes even progress becomes unthinkable so long as the species is considered and considerate.

Authenticity: An <i>object is authentic</i> when the subject pays for this construction (x is y) by being all-too-generous – brutal and prime complacency. The construction is accusational and always at once description and metaphor.	Event [<i>Ereignis</i>]: Good immanence, the kind that does not repeat in blind sequences. Bad immanence : routine thinking, the same old boundary stones every time, dwelling under the seal of the <i>it was</i> .
Coincidence: An absence of distance and difference. Synonyms: identity, equivalence, prelapsarian, oneness, equality.	Justice: The many becomes the one. How can x justify y? – an indecent question. Sum: A sum is a sum — of its parts.
De-cision: A choosing that becomes a criterion only after The Fall. Differentiation motivates the act of decision. There are no decisions in coincidence.	Metaphorology: Substitution. No word suffices alone. It will call to another word, to argue with it, to stand beside, to accuse and love.
Deviation: This throwing way. Of (de) movement (viation). Every movement is sacrificial.	Plasticity: Words and grammars with vertical potential. Heaps and Bounds. ⁴ Word banks have never been such a mistake.
Distance: The space between subject and object, reader and text, relation in general. Antonym of coincidence.	Suddenness: The moment or object that flares up like Benjamin writes. We perceive history in images that flare up. – Aesthetic materialism. ⁵

⁴ “The syntactic rules organizing words into higher units are lost; this loss, called ‘agrammatism,’ causes the degeneration of the sentence into a mere ‘word heap,’ .. Word order becomes chaotic; the ties of grammatical coordination and subordination, whether concord or government, are dissolved.” - Jakobson, *Aphasia*, p. 126. So loss, degeneration, and dissolve - words setting a particular tone. With Dickinson syntactic rules become stylistic decisions. Word heaps - never mere ; grammars - like knots [line] , not ties.

⁵ See Thesis VI in Benjamin’s *Illuminations*.

The Fall as if into Multiplication and
Responsible - Sacrificial⁶ Language // Over Against
Emily Dickinson

The trust in life is gone [*dahin*]: life itself has become a *problem*. Yet one should not jump to the conclusion that this necessarily makes one gloomy. Even love of life is still possible, only one loves differently. It is the love of the woman that causes doubts in us.⁷

Distance out-distances itself.⁸

Go out into the highways and hedges and compel them to come in.⁹

As if the oakum picker — Emily Dickinson genuflecting: pulling filaments and fibers off frayed line. But there is bashfulness in her, self-assigned and dutiful. She does not always [repurpose] those remnants to caulk the ship. She'll let the ship go under . . . And sometimes we look away, not seeing her still tinkering with a something other than the oakum - but! tinkering nonetheless, head down — something pulverized and scintillating in her hands. She has been engaged by meteoric bulk. This is her choosing. Giddy and ferocious, exuberance.

Recommencing the incommensurable — this is the reading process. So The Fall appears in *Genesis* as a fall into differentiated knowledge. This knowing startles us: unready for but at

⁶ The sacrifice of the fall is the pure and true knowledge that we relinquish. What comes in as substitution for this loss is a differential knowledge, and so also one of limitation: we now expect death — we expect and suspect ourselves and objects. This suspicion is the force in the will to power “and verily wherever there is perishing and a falling of leaves, behold, there life sacrifices itself — for power.” - *Zarathustra*, “On self-overcoming,” p. 115.

⁷ Nietzsche, *The Gay Science*, Preface, p. 36-37. Nietzsche's emphasis.

⁸ Derrida, *Spurs: Nietzsche's Styles*, p. 49.

⁹ Luke 14:23.

the altar of incumbency and de-cision.¹⁰ Applying ourselves, pressing upon this new ability, a new sense of attachment percolates - feeling responsible for this new and refreshing ability.

The Fall is an event and this startles us, giving us a start (in the sense of a jolt like cold bath), a moment shaking us from docility or some other occupation. It makes no difference at this moment, since that other occupation has already gone under *since* the start.

Before this event, the ability to differentiate is possessed only by the gods.¹¹ Despite their prohibition of the tree of knowledge and despite their promise of death to the transgressors, Adam and Eve take from the tree – Eve first – from what should not be transgressed. The compulsion toward the tree’s knowledge¹² overrides and ignores the threat of death. It goes overlooked. The threat does not go far enough, so the compulsion focuses otherwise and elsewhere. Adam and Eve experience a moment of disregard. Yahweh’s test (or taunt) is to a great degree provocation, an irresistible force that provokes this overlooking. So the compulsion is a swift untimely force unfit for death. “Nothing dies; all is transformed.”¹³ The event is an attitude, always ready for realization.

¹⁰ At this moment we consider the “starting from which.” See pp. 50 - 51 of *Thinking Biblically*. What is the difference between beginning and continuing? We can only point to a beginning after-the-fact, never at one (contemporaneous ; co-incidental) with a beginning. De-cision is always *de* (of) cision.

¹¹ I write “the gods” because the Elohim creation narrative, where Adam and Eve are created in His image, is actually a creation in the image of a divine council, multiple gods deliberating, multiple images. See also p. 177 of *Weakness of God*. One of the most powerful moments in this text is its rejection of *creatio ex nihilo* (creation from nothing), probably the most dangerous complacency in monotheism. This doctrine gives monotheism pure sovereignty to the point of tyrannical dogmatism. It’s a “strong theology,” believing that God has a plan, a reason for everything, justification - everything. A “weak theology,” otherwise, believes “God cannot love if God cannot make himself vulnerable . . . The word by which God lets the world *be* must also be the word by which God lets the world *go*, letting Godself in for something that God did not bargain for or see coming.” p. 85.

¹² For what is pleasing to the senses: taste; sight. A theology of sight when God is hidden and infinite — what?

¹³ Balzac, *Pensees*, p. 46.

The tree of knowledge is the only object in the Garden of Eden that is strictly prohibited. This prohibition is necessarily provocative. We move into this object of prohibition only to then leave it. The only taboo, what is off limits, is breached, new limits and openings entering and exiting. This is thinking. We desanctify and deviate as soon as possible — why are we inclined to do this? Because prohibition itself is a concept [*Begriff*], like any other, belonging to a tendency of decision and, consequently, change. No concept settles below or at the brim of its container. There is overflow.

Friedrich Nietzsche's reading of monotheism and polytheism leans into this question of decision, its immense reverberations in subjectivity, and the complicated processes in reading. Complication means more than one: something, a word, that comes in as either pollutant or adulteration (depending on the mood), the risk of compromise: being found out ; *made*, like the undercover, plainclothed agent who loses his cover.

Complication leads to the possibility of arrangement. The Fall inaugurates the possibility of arrangement.¹⁴ Monotheism and polytheism spread out beyond a theological discourse into the space of what is one and more than one. Plurality does not need numbers to be heard.

Monotheism, on the other hand, this rigid consequence of the doctrine of one normal human type — the faith in one normal god beside whom there are only pseudo-gods — was perhaps the greatest danger that has yet confronted humanity. It threatened us with the premature stagnation [*vorzeitige Stillstand*] that, as far as we can see [never around our own corner ¹⁵], most other species have long reached; for all of them believe in one normal type and ideal for their species, and they have translated the morality of mores [*Sittlichkeit der Sitte*]¹⁶ definitively into their own flesh and blood. In polytheism the free-spiriting and many-spiriting [*Freigeisterei und Vielgeisterei*] of man attained its first preliminary form — the strength to create for ourselves

¹⁴ Deleuze and Guattari point out that to arrange in French is *agence*. See p. 55 of *On the Line*.

¹⁵ GS, section 374, “our new ‘infinite’ ” p. 336.

¹⁶ The shared stem *Sitt* collapses the divide. Nietzsche drops morality and mores into the same corridor. He then walks away from the scene laughing.

our own [*eigener*] new eyes — and ever again new eyes that are even more our own: hence man alone among all the animals has no eternal horizons and perspectives.¹⁷

Desanctification is a taking of matters into our own hands, “to create for ourselves.” This is why Nietzsche uses the phrase “luxury of individuals” in a sentence above this passage, describing our tendency to invent gods, heroes, overmen.

Is there something that blocks us from perfection - pure communion with ideal ; Singularity - in the act of reading, in the relationship between reader and text, subject and object? Why is a perfection taken for granted in the first place? Because the interpreter is generous with herself: this is complacency and necessity. A semblance of perfection - it can only come after projection. The taken-for-granted will only stay as such if there is deliberate forgetting. As soon as the projection is noticed, perfection’s license is too. The forgetfulness is also complacency and necessity, but more necessity than anything else. Every perspective is limited. Every corner turned is the introduction of a new perspective. Pure communion would result in the loss of relation. In this unthinkable space, complacency outdoes necessity.

Nietzsche is right to pay attention to the rigidity of monotheism, since this very rigidity has been slapped onto philosophical thought, smothering and giving it bad constraint. With and through monotheism, the cleaving to singularity / authenticity [*Eigentlichkeit*], we risk the loss of meaning, choosing instead stupidity and docility to take its place, choosing *Stillstand* instead of *Fluss*. The pseudo-gods are submerged since the logic of monotheism cannot account for more than one. More than one would flood the logical schema. Stupidity clings to the easiest, ready-made schema.

¹⁷ GS, section 143 “The greatest advantage of polytheism” A good example of Nietzsche’s perspectivism and plural style.

There is no strength in monotheism and yet strength has been assigned to it with the greatest degree of “manic fixity”¹⁸ and most terrifyingly this assignation is executed without noticeable hesitation / affectation [*Ziererei*].¹⁹ To be without hesitation is to be without distance from the object - a grave complacency. Time (hesitation) easily looks like space (distance). Things are close at hand - this does not mean they are possessed by virtue of their proximity. The subject that stands still has given up on meaning and relation, stuck in his corner. The denial or collapse of distance makes things easier. Hesitation is a reminder that we read *The Fall* as a myth without fixity, whether this implies the absence of authenticity or a logical schema that comes up short before the luxury of individuals. This luxury admits and celebrates forward and backward and sideward men, all wayward men.

When reading *Genesis*, or any text impressing us, there is sometimes a wish for comprehensive knowledge, a full access into what might be a kept secret (a perfection) or plainly be absent, outside the reach of intelligibility as it should be, within the play of meaning. A fulfilled reach or communion would corroborate the false presence [*Gegenwart*]²⁰ of a secret, ultimately resolving our distance from the text or object at hand, sacrificing depth because we simultaneously succumb to the sinister tide that draws us out, the tantalizing *have ye not heard?* Don't you already know this? Familiarity should never become an end in itself. Play is without purposive attributes and attitudes.

¹⁸ Adorno, *Minima Moralia*, section 45, “Wie scheint doch alles Werdende so krank” *How sickly seem all growing things*. The section title is taken from a Georg Trakl poem.

¹⁹ Writers like Saint Augustine are important exceptions to this rule. In his *Confessions*, we read a man struggling with his faith, sharing and confessing his suspicions, always with a voice passing through question marks and experimental allegories and analogies.

²⁰ The stem *Wart* almost always, *if not always*, indicates waiting, latency, holding pattern (aviat.). There is something more profound in the etymology: that waiting is wanting. There is some indication of presence as grave or tomb.

And then - you wished you had eyes - in your pages -
 So you could see - what moved - them - so - ²¹

What great corporeal combination, remembering that the text is material (surface, *temporary*, *Aus-sehen*), knowing that even this material object remains out of our juris-diction, at a distance. The text belongs to the present and temporary and yet (and yet?) there is this uneasy feeling: the inaccessible surface, the surface that we have forgotten and subordinated with dismissiveness to the profane.

Dickinson is convinced that pages move. And so we wish for and at times assume full access to the material page, to what has been decided as, if we succumb, a must-see, wishing for a quick and riskless communion between subject and object (reader and text) – an impatience we cannot afford. It is nonetheless bought. This purchase stuns movement like tranquilizer. The eyes of this wish are glancing backward to the state before The Fall. Even in this unfulfilled wish we see the appearance of negative motivation. Depth is now possible with The Fall because there is an awareness of the surface, of the difficult earth. ²²

Moving in flux [*Fluss*] because this keeps thinking nimble. Juris-diction is kept in open hands, fast and loose, still responsible for the agility of the page and the boundary stones we mark. Communion would be death brought close and repeated without malfunction or hesitation, as though the text knows nothing but the assembly line. A will to truth, to Nietzsche, is always a will to death.

Though we breach the taboo that is a tree, it occurs instantaneously, giving us no time to slow down and collect ourselves, no time to fall at the same speed with which truth falls into

²¹ FR 277. All Dickinson citations refer to the Franklin Variorum, abbreviated FR. Rarely will Dickinson have such a high syllable count in her lines.

²² There is also awareness in general. The Fall is a fall into self-consciousness.

differentiations and ambiguities: an incommensurable falling, barring communion and origin, a deep incommensurability in general. Most of all things can now come true. Before The Fall there are no question marks. The other side of the wall - before The Fall - everything is in everything, an ocean of objects: “the door of the coincidence of opposites, which the angel guardeth.”²³ The incommensurable falling is so terrifying to some (logic ; identity men) they try to cure it with a complacent return to coincidence, where everything is so crudely, indecently stable. They don’t even need to bribe the angel for entrance - they walk right through him.

Genesis can’t account for its incommensurability. This inability is gnawing. So *Genesis* doubles down on its indigence going further into debt but going still to the stand to beg for title: accident. When incommensurability provokes too much pain, we crouch under the tin roof of the title promoting haven to heaven. A deeper, more burdensome debt is not always a bad gamble. Better to double down then hide behind coincidence and omnipotence.

We are late to the game, slow off the block, apologizing for and embarrassed by a retardation. But should this embarrassment last? Can it last? Is it generative or debilitating?

Sunset that screens, reveals	
Retarding what we see	Retarding ↔ Enhancing
By obstacles of swarthy gold	↔ By menaces of Amethyst
And amber mystery - ²⁴	↔ And Moats of Mystery.
	amber ↔ opal ; purple

Within the tension between retarding and enhancing there is tendency to infer something paradoxical. How can retardation (delay ; postponement) also be enhancement? Likewise, why

²³ Nicholas of Cusa, *Vision of God*, “How God is seen beyond the coincidence of contradictories and how seeing is Being,” p. 46.

²⁴ FR 1644. All variants stress the artworks inability to stay still, its process and becoming.

do screens reveal? The paradox can only sustain itself if retardation is thought as a force hindering progress. [talk about angelus novus] The Fall generates moats and obstacles between the subject who sees and the object that patiently awaits the subject. Without the screen - the enchanting mesh ²⁵ between - there would be no such thing as subject - object relations. Pure coincidence is virtueless, indifferent effacement, an unthinkable concept.

After The Fall syllables and sentences have texture: “Syllables of Velvet - / Sentences of Plush -”²⁶ The texture is the quality that gives language its richness (depth), even its luxury, like deep-buttoned upholstery, that which is fixed upon the object at hand, covering it, hiding it, giving it meaning. We are thinking about the words we use, struggling with and amazed by their depthful referentiality, or citability. Complicated and con-fused objects flood language. Banished from the Garden, thorns and thistles in the earth we are “cursed” to cultivate. We toil — birth pangs in our wombs — we create — .²⁷ We differentiate between x and y but most importantly we differentiate in general.

This is not idle distinction or schematization. We become knowing like the gods, knowing like people, not with ease and communion but with strain and distance.

Kevin Hart poses a rich reading of the Adamic myth, especially in its embracement of equivocation and multiplication.

²⁵ A limit like the Vail
unto the Lady's face -
But every Mesh - a Citadel -
And Dragons - in the Crease - FR554.

²⁶ FR 380.

²⁷ Genesis 3:18. The snake is cursed to eat the dust of the earth; we will on the other side / page (auf die andere Seite) return to the dust. Still something doesn't taste right.

[T]he Adamic myth is a story of proliferating dualisms or, more precisely, proliferating hierarchies. The Fall from innocence to experience not only divides the world but also introduces a definite structure of value: we fall from an undifferentiated knowledge of good to a differentiated and fatal knowledge of good and evil. From God's presence we pass to His absence; from immediacy to mediation; from the perfect²⁸ congruence of sign and referent to the gap between word and object; from fullness of being to a lack of being; from ease and play to strain and labor; from purity to impurity; and from life to death.²⁹

Hart's use of semicolons bears the weight of all the from/to construction, evoking and announcing a fluidity and immensity (despite?) with the ideas of a growing and mounting cleavage, the abandonment of "perfect congruence," the mounting negativity.³⁰ Faced with "the gap" it promises the possibility of interpretation [*haggadah*], or "interpretive supplementation."

³¹ We are also faced with myriad departures. "Were Departure Separation, there would be neither Nature nor Art, for there would be no World - Emily." ³² Departure is the leaving from one point to another and separation the divergence of two points. What is the difference? Set against departure, separation now seems absolute. This *x* is *y* cannot go beyond the constraint if the relationship is as is. If the copula cannot bear the weight of the heft of more. Substitution is unlikely, so both are taken. With both there ought to be a leaving behind of nature and art! We don't do this.

The root 'hag' of *haggadah* comes from the Greek which means 'holy.' In its verbal case the root takes on other meanings: to avoid, to fear.³³ Is this the nature of our supplementation?

²⁸ *Man stands over against the world* - Heidegger, "What are the poets for?" p. 106. The challenges and politics of difference.

²⁹ Hart, *Trespass of Sign*, p. 5.

³⁰ "I felt a Cleaving in my Mind - / As if my Brain had split - / I tried to match it - Seam by Seam - / But could not make them fit -" No match and no fit. Loose stitching

³¹ Vawter, *On Genesis: A New Reading*, p.16.

³² Dickinson, Prose Fragment 52.

³³ *Flight of the Gods*, Laurens ten Kate, "The Gift of Loss," p. 259.

Add out of fear. Add because we cannot join the text, eyes inside the pages. Probably - We can only be silent for so long. And love: of incongruity, of travel and transformation. Loving “a lack of being,” knowing this lack, loving it - debt/duty [*Schuld*], we realize responsibility: to turn this lack into a capacity, always redescribing valuations.³⁴ Sacrificing through description. It then seems like this sacrifice is a worship through Departure.

PAGAN: I see you prostrated most devoutly and weeping tears of love, not false tears but from the heart. Tell me who you are.

CHRISTIAN: I am a Christian.

PAGAN: What are you worshipping?

CHRISTIAN: God.

PAGAN: Who is the God you worship?

CHRISTIAN: I do not know.

PAGAN: How can you so earnestly worship that which you do not know?

CHRISTIAN: It is because I do not know that I worship.³⁵

We remember its potential to renovate the world. Play and strain work together. Not knowing is good for the preservation of the play - strain tension. There is a hunger for proliferating gaps.

These gaps are gifts. They cannot ensure impasse. Gifts cannot be settled by a balanced, clean economy. There is no way to settle the score when gifts are given. The other word for this is redemption. Gifts are excessive. They do not settle the score so Bataille calls this settling death.

We cannot expect returns or expect a balance. Balance numbs the mind.

Only more *haggadah*. The “weak link in the conceptual chain ‘interpretation — sign — God’ is the middle term.”³⁶ Interpretation, not God, according to Hart, is older than sign. In other

³⁴ Blanchot, *The Infinite Conversation*, p. 21.

³⁵ Nicholas of Cusa, *Dialogus de Deo abscondito*, p. 209.

³⁶ *Trespass of Sign*, p.36.

words, meaning is a function of play in the infinitive, never the past, never in ratio. If Hegel writes that difference can be recuperated into a higher identity, Hart and Dickinson respond with an accusation of complacency, but not only this. Dickinson is willing to accept - but really unafraid of contradiction and the betrayal of *four-cornered little human reason* [*viereckigen kleinen Menschenvernunft*] ³⁷- the possibility of sovereignty in a poem entitled “Aurora” (P96).

Of Bronze - and Blaze -
 The North - tonight -
 So adequate - it forms -
 So preconcerted with itself -
 So distant - to alarms -
 An Unconcern so sovereign
 To Universe, or me -
 ... ³⁸

[...] that privilege is an uncommon favor or an unusual reward. Though our language calls us up to the white board, asking us to follow the guidelines, the skeleton of *x* precedes *y*, like Melville’s pallid, subjective, negative, decisiveless Bartleby, I’d prefer not to.

If the gift of life is predicated upon Yahweh’s test of our worthiness to life, then our desire to rise to the occasion we call life is always a striving for it, a movement or *sens* [sense and direction] of and toward life. By this way our presence is misty at best and our presence is always at risk—Yahweh can withdraw, rescind the test, hide his shape. Will we take the bait? If we take advantage of life, life that is always ready to leave us, our exalted sense of our own mortality, our *hybris* (*hubris*), then we forget and reject our fallenness, we strive for likeness

³⁷ GS, “Science as a prejudice,” section 373.

³⁸ FR 319. When the speaker of this poem is “long ago” she will also be “An island in dishonored Grass - / Whom none but Daisies] Beetles, know - ”

with Yahweh, we reject our gaps, we abandon our humble, humiliated status and we are weak in the knees, tail between our legs.³⁹ And we remember from the preface Rosenzweig's beautiful words: "and this first Yea is "in the beginning." Saying Yea is saying Amen. Saying good is saying amen.

We can think about Dickinson through the double-bind of the word re-cover. She recovers the multifarious implications of The Fall, an act of remembrance, and she is continuously covering over, one language on top of another, one concept over another. Nietzsche tells us to dance upon the edifice of concepts — drunk and bashful —. Dickinson joins in, exposing and throwing the limit.

The Rose did caper on her cheek -
Her Boddice rose and fell -
Her pretty speech - like drunken men -
Did stagger pitiful -

Her fingers fumbled at her work -
Her needle would not go -
What ailed so smart a little maid -
It puzzled me to know -

Till opposite - I spied a cheek
That bore *another* Rose -
Just opposite - another speech
That like the Drunkard goes - . . . ⁴⁰

This is her radical grammar and her radical politics. Stagger pitiful, the drunk, the needle won't go and then the needle goes back to work — the poet goes back to work, bearing *another* Rose.

The politics of truth and the politics of language. Is anything ever given priority? Is anything

³⁹ Caputo, *Weakness of God*, pp. 65-68. See passages about water and the womb. "Wet behind the ears." Same idea as Socrates: knowing that we don't know. Truth as the weakest form of knowledge. See GS, section 110.

⁴⁰ FR 200.

elevated to the status of the *arche* without interruption or substitution? “Conclusions are consolations,” writes Nietzsche.⁴¹ Concepts are constructed; words are *consolidated*. Definition becoming dictation⁴² — an ultimate fear. Dickinson has experience with the traps of the proper and the rejection of the other:

They shut me up in Prose -
As when a little Girl
They put me in the Closet -
Because they liked me “still” - ⁴³

So far I have vaguely sketched the intensity of myriad processes: differentiation, deviation, distance, motion, humility, oscillation, and economy. Now there needs to be some discussion of the difficulty of these process and concepts, especially since they are not self-contained, no single process belonging to or reflecting only itself. The subject is deeply involved with them. More than anything else the subject is experiencing aesthetic relations, ones that resist singular belonging. The sheer multiplicity of belonging, which is sharing, negates the possibility of possession in general.

These relations motivate a conversation about what language can do and what a reader can do with it. A powerful principle of this aesthetic relation is the high degree to which we and our language are susceptible to change and depth. Other words that now flood in: sin, fault, shame, language,⁴⁴ ideas, death, toil. An aesthetic relation is considered weak because it does not

⁴¹ GS, Preface, p. 33.

⁴² Marcuse, *One-Dimensional Man*, p. 14.

⁴³ FR 445.

⁴⁴ “What is more unwriteable than the inarticulate sounds of nature? And if it is true that language is the more inarticulate the near it is to its origins, it follows — does it not? — that it was surely not invented by some superior being to fit the twenty-four letters which were invented together with it, that these letters were a much later and only imperfect attempt to provide memory with a few markers, and that language did not arise from the letters of a grammar of God but from the untutored sounds of free organs.” - Herder, pp. 95-96)

pledge its allegiance to something eternal or entitled. We can call this frustration a number of things: the intransience of the text and yet its hieroglyphic solidity, the vocality of the text and yet its writtenness. To think about the risk of losing the aesthetic relation is to recognize a nemesis's attempt at demythologizing language - abolishing tensions and discord.

For the more completely language coincides with communication, the more words change from substantial carriers of meaning to signs of devoid qualities; the more purely and transparently they communicate what they designate, the more impenetrable they become. The demythologizing of language, as an element of the total process of enlightenment, reverts to magic.⁴⁵

The “demand for pitiless clarity” and “straightjacket” language is ultimately a reversion into magic, one primarily concerned with purposive spell-casting, a sorcery without substance and without penetrability or plasticity. If language sets out only to designate meaning, it can only follow that language relinquishes its capacity to carry meaning. Penetrability and plasticity are functions of movement. Every language communicates because we have language to communicate. This necessary tautology is the the point of slippage. Once the subject arrives at this point it either falls into a void without quality (a homogenous zone without gap) or a vehicle with transport potential, like metaphor.

I will try to show how flood is persistent, forcing its way into the way we think about change in language, now adding more words: renewal, substitution. Designation stubbornly rejects substitution, an act that recognizes the subject's lack of patience. The straightjacket will

⁴⁵ Horkheimer and Adorno, *Dialectic of Enlightenment*, p. 133. The authors are thinking about in one sense the advertisement as a mode of communication. Advertisers make the decision to produce the “striking yet familiar” and the “easy but catchy” headlines and slogans. The culture industry sacrifices meaning for formula. See also p. 118 — a language without means is a language without meaning. When language becomes pure utility. Dickinson is at war with these conceptions of language. The aftermaths of The Fall are the artillery with which she wars. In magic everything is foreseeable, you put in what you get out.

come off so long as designation is not the goal of language. To avoid the reversion to magic one must keep language penetrable, pliable, plastic. In magic language becomes a tool only important for its effectiveness and transparency, not its ability to generate meaning.

I will come up against Dickinson much more from this point on, wondering where our eyes are in relation to the pages, thinking about what our eyes can do, shifting positions in agile lexicons that themselves look to slow and agile readers. It's the goal of this essay to think with her about language's relationship with these flooding words, some more than others. Substitution is crucial to a discussion of metaphoric possibilities with Dickinson. With her we are always looking to find new ways of expressing meaning. We are trying to experiment with language, giving it slant or bend, style above all else. Style might be the most important aspect of the thinking that happens with the writers at hand. With honesty and wit Nietzsche calls himself "the most scabrous philologist."⁴⁶ Constructing more conjunctions⁴⁷ we stay in motion, agile and started, still wet behind the ears from our creations and births.

The testing taunt is not scored, nor would it be interested in settling it, let alone entering into some game. It reveals the possibility of "fresh eyes," a new window (one of many beginnings scattered throughout *Genesis*); "your eyes will be opened," says the snake.⁴⁸ The snake has power,⁴⁹ namely negation of the gods: *You shall not be doomed to die*, the snake tells Adam and Eve. By alternative, they face the first ever opportunity, a moment of impulse: to

⁴⁶ *Spurs*, p. 35.

⁴⁷ GS, section 346, "Our question mark" : "We laugh as soon as we encounter the juxtaposition of 'man and world,' separated by the sublime presumption of the little word 'and.' "

⁴⁸ Gen. 3:5.

⁴⁹ The snake is all of the following with or without grace: leader of the animals, god of fertility, symbol of sterility (once it is punished for tempting and teaching Adam and Eve). See p. 14 of *Thinking Biblically*.

defect, to undo the perfection with which they were created.⁵⁰ The opportunity continually presents itself. Put in reversed terms, we continually encounter the opportunity. Deviation because deviation reveals something new, a new pair of eyes, but never without an economy of loss and gain, never without sacrifice. These ideas of differentiation and undoing pass through a wider scope: a going in general, “[t]his sacrificing, this throwing way,” as Nietzsche writes with so much vulnerable power and commitment.⁵¹

To miss you, Sue, is power.
 The stimulus of Loss makes most Possession mean.
 To live lasts always, but to love is firmer than to live. No Heart
 that broke but further went than Immortality.
 The Trees keep House for you all Day and the Grass looks
 chastened.
 A silent Hen frequents the place with superstitious Chickens - and
 still Forenoons a Rooster knocks at your outer Door.
 To look that way is Romance. The Novel “out,” pathetic worth
 attaches to the Shelf.
 Nothing gone but Summer, or no one else that knew.
 The Forests are at Home - the Mountains intimate at Night and
 arrogant at Noon, and lonesome Fluency abroad, like suspending
 Music.

Of so divine a Loss
 We enter but the Gain,
 Indemnity for Loneliness
 That such a Bliss has been.

. . .

I trust that you are warm. I keep your faithful place. Whatever
 throng⁵² the Lock is firm upon your Diamond Door.⁵³

⁵⁰ Ricoeur, *Symbolism of Evil*, p. 233. It can be argued that even this pre-original, prehistoric perfection is already imperfect. Made of clay and *ruach* (breath / spirit), the human gains its shape.

⁵¹ GS, section 27, “*Der Ent-sagende*,” The renunciator turns out - suddenly - to be the affirmer too. The throwing way is willingly sacrificial.

⁵² Mass, crowd, pressure. Knocking, intimacy, to keep throng. Thring: to assemble into a crowd, to scrimmage, to strike.

⁵³ FR 1202. All Dickinson poems are from the Franklin Variorum edition.
 This loneliness will not last. A new loneliness: ---

Dickinson writing to her sister in law Sue with characteristic combination of prose and poetry, we are encountering “outer Door,” “superstitious Chickens,” “Diamond Door.” The proximity between the two forms necessitates a lapse in reading, like an overlap, not a failure to concentrate, but a concentrating that cannot lock onto a single object without being shook from it. What is in the inner door? “Nothing gone but Summer, or no one else that knew.” Or? No thought-action fully elucidated: to miss, to live, to look (to look *what* way), abrupt transitions, unclear prepositions and modifiers: “intimate” and “arrogant” mountains.

We lose so we gain. We only weep when God is near us - not enough distance, not enough space for meaning. It is a mistake to think of it the other way around. A brave substitution: insurance against loneliness *for* loneliness (Indemnity for Loneliness). So much exposure. Even if this is a fall into loneliness, we experience bliss. Probably infinite bliss or “the beatitude of departed souls.”⁵⁴ *That such a bliss has been.* The present perfect tense “has been” is much more complicated than the simple past *was*. It stresses a difficult movement from the genitive “has” (which opens up the question of belonging-to-what) to the backward glance of something that once was *up until this point in time*. So this is also a glance at our current position? Does this leave us with expectation, that something will continue to commence, the feeling of incompleteness and perpetuation? “To miss you, Sue, is power.” To be without is power. Distance is power. Loss - Gain. Antipodes that collide are forgotten as antipodes. *Die Sittlichkeit der Sitte*. How does one enter gain? Without attribution, gain is something that one goes into, a

⁵⁴ OED 2c. “Bliss of birds,” a choir. Roland Barthes: The brio of the text (without which, after all, there is no text) is its will to bliss: just where it exceeds demand, transcends prattle, and whereby it attempts to overflow, to break through the constraint of adjectives—which are those doors of language through which the ideological and the imaginary come flowing in. Text of bliss: the text that imposes a state of loss .. - *The Pleasure of the Text*, pp. 13-14.

space or a site, not a possessive moment. When antipodes collide and space outdoes the genitive, ‘I keep your faithful place’ — this time, what kind of substitution?

Dickinson’s rare⁵⁵ period in the fourth line of the stanza sets the tone of anxious conclusivity. We then look between “Loneliness” and “That,” an enjambment that unsettles the earth below us as we go beyond, stride over. We are *encroaching*, intruding with our legs (*jambes*). The pro-noun “That” is an accomplice, involved in this going beyond.

The possibility of the opportunity to defect from the gods and defect in general does not stress a human ability or inclination, but thought otherwise, as a necessary product of Yes and No, affirmation and negation. I am not trying to predict or explain what *gives rise* to possibility or to the Yes / No. This is a distraction and a symptom of a desire for cause and effect.

Cause and effect: such a duality probably never exists; in truth we are confronted by a continuum out of which we isolate a couple of pieces, just as we perceive [*wahrnehmen*]⁵⁶ motion only as isolated points and then infer [*erschließen*]⁵⁷ it without ever actually seeing it. The suddenness with which many effects stand out misleads us; actually, it is sudden only for us. In this moment of suddenness there is an infinite number of processes that elude us. An intellect that could see cause and effect as a continuum and a flux [*Fluss*] and not, as we do, in terms of an arbitrary [*willkürliches*]⁵⁸ division and dismemberment, would repudiate [*verwerfen*] the concept of cause and effect and deny all conditionality [*Bedingtheit*].⁵⁹

The desire for an explanation of the Adamic myth through cause and effect, elsewhere put by Nietzsche as “the wheel of causality,”⁶⁰ is an attempt to overstep the limits of knowledge (not to push the limits), or to simply and complacently think about knowledge in the strong, moral sense

⁵⁵ Dickinson will hardly use periods in her poetry.

⁵⁶ Literally, to take as true.

⁵⁷ To forge links or to open something.

⁵⁸ Friedrich Schlegel’s conception of *Willkür* would come in the form of absolute choice. This should not be confused with free will. There is Nietzsche aphorism on free will that will come up below.

⁵⁹ GS, section 112, “Cause and effect.” Section 217, same title: “Before the effect one believes in different causes than one does afterward.”

⁶⁰ Nietzsche, *Zarathustra*, p. 38.

as what should have the highest priority (as what should come first), as if our position in the world is ontologically fixed, as though beginnings and endings are determined (this is the sense of “myth” in Adamic myth). It is truth at any price. Or are we continuing? Every startled moment feels like a flashing transport. Adam becomes Adamant⁶¹ in consolatory determinations. Beginning or continuing is an unresolvable disjunction not because we are waiting for the messiah but because our memory is too weak, necessarily so, to bear the freight of either/or. A conviction of the one is always the abandoning of the other.

We do not actually see the Adamic myth as an event that abides by the conditionality Nietzsche critiques. If you accept conditionality you accept “in the beginning” as authority. This is where Franz Rosenzweig is giving too much power to the Yea. There is not enough stress on the Yea as the *silent accompanist*.

This would-be observance was inherited from the frantic response to the fact that event [*Ereignis*] cannot be plugged into the formulaic, restricted *Bedingtheit*, which is already itself blushing to the point of radiance. When is cause excuse, as the etymology of cause suggests? You need to indulge a cause. Some thing [*Ding*] calls for some thing. Some thing calls *to* some thing. Events are attempts at earnest communication without the expectation of or planning for equivalence. Some thing entails some thing, a carving upon, a cutting into some x-tapestry. Tails

⁶¹ (ii) classical Latin *adamant-*, *adamās* (also *adamāns*) very hard substance (perhaps hard steel; frequently typifying hardness or inexorability), diamond, in post-classical Latin also lodestone, magnet, the stone identified as ‘adamant’, object or substance that overrides or negates the action of a lodestone < ancient Greek a name of the hardest metal, probably steel, in Hellenistic Greek also diamond, either < ancient Greek to tame (< the same Indo-European base as TAME *adj.*; compare Hellenistic Greek (adjective) unbreakable; already in ancient Greek (Homer) as a personal name, apparently in sense ‘unconquerable’), or a loanword, perhaps from a Semitic language, reinterpreted by folk etymology. Adam is a diamond with good reflector lights - also very stubborn and yet *tame*.

become tallies - keep track of them; keep count! Make sure you are counting; large numbers are blameless in their strength, irrefutable every time.

The threat is self-inscribed. Nietzsche's division and dismemberment, antitheses to equivalence and conditionality, do not require a virtuous status. They are already so natural, absolute tendency - expanding and contracting as with the Adamic myth.

Instead, I am trying to describe a movement in flux. Opportunity and possibility are beyond locality. Locality here is a reminder of the subjective vision and at the same time its denial, losing sight of itself as question and still maintaining the power of the "unrelenting relation."⁶²

The Drop, that wrestles in the Sea -
Forgets her own locality -
As I - toward Thee - ⁶⁴

Ich bin du, wenn
ich ich bin.⁶³

The German has the repetitious stammering (ich ich) while the English has the tautologically divine symmetry (I am I). In any *wenn* construction subject and predicate must be adjacent followed by the conjugated verb. The splendor of the english symmetry is sublime just as with Yahweh's words to Moses.⁶⁵ I and Thee are con-fused. If locality is being, knowing my density,⁶⁶ shape, and place, forgetfulness⁶⁷ embraces beyonds, a nonknowledge with and without reified and delimited shapes. It would not mean too much if we repudiate or throw away [*verwerfen*]

⁶² Levinas, *Totality and Infinity*, p. 295. This relation has an asymmetrical shape. Only the asymmetrical keeps its tension.

⁶³ Paul Celan, "I am you, when / I am I."

⁶⁴ FR 255.

⁶⁵ Exodus 3:14. Probably the greatest moment of the proper name as being both a tool for authority and self-affirmation. These activities can only come about if the people are suspicious enough to ask for proof. When Moses goes back to the Israelites he knows the people will demand proof, proof by name. See Robert Alter's commentary in the *Five Books* pp. 321 - 322.

⁶⁶ GS, section 107: "more weights than human beings"

⁶⁷ Forgetfulness is also the force that motivates substitution. [We are indebted.]

conditionality just before the drop forgets her own locality. When opportunity and possibility get fixed, it is a gesture of consolation. Christ is the best example of this since he is both substitution and affirmation of the gods. Delimited shapes are easier, more convenient. Maybe my gesture here is itself transcendental, but imagination is susceptible to an outside.

Did we disobey Him?
Just one time!
Charged us to forget Him -
But we could'nt learn! ⁶⁸

A difficult challenge: “recovering myth as myth, before it slipped into gnosis,⁶⁹ in the nakedness and poverty of a symbol that is not an explanation but an opening up and a disclosure.”⁷⁰ There is a moral and political problem in disguising myth as explanation, a disguise that rejects meaning. Explanation is a tool of domination. We can elect explanations. Interpretation or description, instead, striving for free play: a sense of knowledge that does not require fixed hierarchies and comforting, still determinations, instead a long, mortal horizontal. De-scription has an openness to it, so Nietzsche poses the word *erschließen*. I’m alongside Ricoeur’s restoration of myth as the double-bind of opening and disclosing, adding to it Nietzsche’s conception of suddenness that exposes the limits of an attempt to put the Adamic myth into conditionality’s neat binary of cause and effect.

⁶⁸ FR 299.

⁶⁹ For Ricoeur gnosis attempts to paste an etiological frame over myth. He will acknowledge that myth invites gnosis, but also that it is our task to recognize and resist the affinity to let gnosis rule our reading of myth and to disallow the frames attempt to swallow the myth. For Horkheimer and Adorno it is through the mediums of logic (proposition) and mathematics (number) that we see the covering of myth: the unique mythical event was intended to legitimize the factual one. See pp. 20 - 23 of *Dialectic of Enlightenment*.

⁷⁰ *Symbolism of Evil*, p. 165.

Motion is a collection of isolated points, writes Nietzsche. Forming a composite (the composite is not ready-made - an arrangement instead. In this case motion is an act without humility, a consolatory gesture.⁷¹ Stress should be on the word collection. In it we locate elements of choice and curation. Nietzsche goes inside motion, thinking about its smaller pieces, coming out with a new geography: motion as being comprised of islands, points susceptible to change like grains of sand, an almost or soon-to-be familiar image. There is a perpetual oscillation [*Schwankung*] between literalization and mystification, another form of movement. We pin the Adamic myth down only to let it loose again; opening and disclosing the function of myth in general. This oscillation happens, not because the object under scrutiny is strictly elusive, but through a lack of patience or commitment on our *behalf*. We do not commit for too long, moving elsewhere, looking for more meaning. Nomadology⁷² because a settled state is too tranquil, another *melos* and *more* we cannot stomach mainly because they will lose their savor.

Emily Dickinson has been given many gifts, not merely received, but a bearing, an act of maternity,⁷³ relinquishing protection for the sake of difficult creation. Her writing puts strains⁷⁴ on language in such a way that we are reminded of why there should be strains,⁷⁵ why language

⁷¹ Humility does not guarantee innocence. Even humility is a form of pride since its positive character is reassuring.

⁷² Deleuze's concept of nomadology is indebted to Nietzsche's concept of embarkation. See p. 144 of *The New Nietzsche*, Deleuze's essay "Nomad Thought." See also section 289 of GS, "Embark!"

⁷³ Levinas, *Otherwise than Being*, "Vulnerability and Contact," p. 75. Nietzsche will call the creative person the "mother type." He would even consider his thinking self as pregnant woman. See section 369, "Our side by side" or "Our coexistence (*Nebeneinander*)" in *Gay Science*.

⁷⁴ In what ways does Dickinson practice re-strain?

⁷⁵ Dickinson's mentor T.W. Higginson writes after his first visit with her: "I never was with any one who drained my nerve power so much. Without touching her, she drew from me" (L 342a-b). See also FR 99: "Low at my problem bending - / Another problem comes" Words are problems, never resolved: "I check my busy pencil - My Ciphers steal away -] My figures file away -"

should challenge itself on the levels of form and content,⁷⁶ and why it should challenge others.

The avoidance of a challenging language is a product of a subject's weakness, a growing comfortability with banal simplicity, with Clara, reasonable language, the merely prosaic, the proper, and a growing comfortability with bad conscience - forgetfulness.⁷⁷ A challenging language does not seek to preserve itself and ourselves; it is instead a constant, turbulent becoming. Maybe this is not a seeking at all. Has seeking been a mistake? A challenging language is generative since it does not stay still, hiding in fear from the sweeping wind-debris of Paradise. The language turns inward and outward, challenging ourselves and others, self-resistance and resistance in general.

I lived on Dread -
To Those who know
The stimulus there is
In Danger - Other impetus
Is numb - and vitalless - ⁷⁸

The Latinate pushes against itself! Going into the Latin only to leave it just as quickly, like the cold pool in the bath house. Banal simplicity embraces a stiff language; it rejects plasticity, the figurative, differentiations: the most powerful product of The Fall.⁷⁹ The old tongue becoming unsettled, falling into a sensorium, dialectically posed between numbness and vitality.

⁷⁶ Outer and inner. A thinker like Foucault would ask for the abandonment of the inner - outer alternative, being otherwise "at the frontiers," emigrant style. See p. 113 of his "What is Enlightenment" in *The Politics of Truth*.

⁷⁷ "The Shapes we buried, dwell about, / . . . The Grave yields back her Robberies -" FR 337.

⁷⁸ FR 498.

⁷⁹ Matthew 21:2 – "Go into the town that is over against you." The double preposition is ambitious and formidable — a profound responsibility, a difficult challenge. Risk reminds vulnerability.

Expectation - is Contentment
 Gain - Satiety -
 But Satiety - Conviction
 Of Necessity

Peril as a Possession
 'Tis Good to bear
 Danger disintegrates Satiety ⁸⁰

Of an Austere trait in Pleasure -
 Good, without alarm
 Is a too established Fortune -
 Danger deepens Sum - ⁸¹

↔ too secure/serene Possession ; too Contented Measure
 Sum ↔ suns

This time, and this is often with Dickinson, the mathematical metaphor is faced with a paradox. Sum would commonly indicate totality, but Dickinson gives it depth, a susceptibility in general, a depth sum cannot justify - this kind of justification would look like making-tame. Sum has nothing to do with depth. Sum is fixed; depth deepens. Depth is with parts; sum forgets and neglects its parts. Danger is impelling and augmenting. The conclusivity of sum, its determinedness, is safe, easy. The depth in this poem in particular comes through the dash. The dash serves as an omission, an elliptical event in lines two and three. The copula is replaced by notation.

The plastic language is thinking about sound and tempo, transitions between words and relationships of combinations. Dickinson constructs a scene on street, merriment in the air, boys in the road "Shot the lithe Sleds like Shod vibrations"⁸² Shot — Sleds — Shod; lithe — like. So immediate, but not all the way through! Language that is for your tongue, for sound. These words come through, but suddenly – "Emphacized and gone" - the graceful flexibility and complicity of the simile, supple boys with supple words, stressed, given their moment in writing

⁸⁰ FR 1699. Check variorum

⁸¹ FR 865. There are twenty-seven references to sum in Dickinson's writing. Another sympathetic occasion: "How destitute is he / Whose Gold is firm - / Who finds it every time / The same stale Sum -" FR 1509. Sum is stale because it can be found inert every time. This is a bad poverty. Good poverty is malleable gold. The *ceaseless poverty* that is to come is malleable gold. You cannot sum a sun.

⁸² FR 1518.

and speech, then gone [*dahin*].

The plastic language suspects its own plasticity, reminding us of something familiar: “I could not find my “Yes” -”⁸³ Losing sight of the silent accompanist. Self-suspicion is the movement from inwardness to expression. The plastic language is not confident enough for an easy arrival at the Yes. The Yes has to be located, gathered, mustering up its courage before its decision to express. It also forces the question of priority. Priority is always a question of what will earn the Yes or the No. If we have fallen from the proper to the figural,⁸⁴ what does this mean for positionality? Is our point of origin now the figural, a point that has already denied itself? Sometimes we try to

distil[l] amazing sense
From Ordinary Meanings -
And Attar so immense

returning it to something proper, something determinate and sturdy. But will the distillation lead to something pure or always something else entirely that can be distilled *en abyme*? Can we get the better of the shifting sands? Is distillation always a sacrificial substitution?

This was a Poet -
It is That
Distills amazing sense
From Ordinary Meanings -
And Attar so immense Attar ↔ attars

From the familiar species
That perished by the Door -
We wonder it was not Ourselves
Arrested it - before -

Of Pictures, the Discloser -
The Poet - it is He -

⁸³ FR 346.

⁸⁴ *Trespass of Sign*, p. 6.

Entitles Us - by Contrast -
To ceaseless Poverty -

Of Portion - so unconscious -
The Robbing - could not harm -
Himself - to Him - a Fortune -
Exterior - to Time - ⁸⁵

Why the fifth line in the first stanza? Why the ambiguous pronoun *That*? Is it she or he, the poet?

The third stanza is confident: present tense, the poet does something. It is *That* contra *It* is *He*.

What is the contrast? Poverty contra? There is no object in the first stanza that can stand in

contrast to Poverty. There is only a process. The rhyme between “sense” and “immense”

provokes a binding - sense and immense Indigence, “ceaseless Poverty,” is a prerequisite of the

aspiration for being and the hunger for meaning.⁸⁶ And so we are entitled, given a title or a

motive. Indigence is thus desired. Loss - Gain. Poverty: our constant friend. Fortune will come of

it. Robbed of what? The discloser adumbrates, giving faint and weak yet provocative and

excessive outline to the pictures. Outlines are filled and revised, incomplete and wanting.

Bound a Trouble - and Lives will bear it -

Circumscription - enables *Wo* - ⁸⁷

Every creation is now faced with difficulty and struggle. Velvet and plush are not all the

way through. We become complicit, thrown into G.W. Hegel’s conception of history such that

“the same history [the same difficulty] repeats itself in every son of Adam.”⁸⁸ Adam’s fault is

⁸⁵ FR 446.

⁸⁶ “But suppose somebody said in all seriousness, the poets lie too much: he would be right; *we* do lie too much. We also know too little and we are bad learners; so we simply have to lie. And who among us poets has not adulterated his wine?” - *Zarathustra*, “On Poets” p. 127. Artworks win life only when they renounce likeness to the human. ‘The expression of an unadulterated feeling is always banal. The more unadulterated, the more banal. Not to be banal requires effort.’ - *Aesthetic Theory* p. 168.

⁸⁷ FR 240.

⁸⁸ Hegel, *Logic*, p. 43. Nietzsche’s doctrine of the eternal return is nearly aligned with Hegel’s conception of immanence. Many would argue (Kaufmann for example) that this doctrine does not first appear until

present in any event [*Ereignis*], at any moment [*jeden Fall*] our fault. This is perpetually happening. This persistent conception of history clings to Dickinson's writing. It is the force that motivates Dickinson's words.

Remorse - is Memory - awake -
 Her Parties all astir -
 A Presence of Departed Acts-
 At window - and at Door - ⁸⁹

Parties all ↔ Companies

We keep Adam awake with remorse, a powerful regret and guilt [*Schuld*]. The *jeden Fall* is a poetic sense flooding our way toward articulation ("the finer Forge / That soundless tugs - within -"),⁹⁰ a confused temporality bringing together the far, an ontology seducing the communion of life and death. This is not a spontaneity but an impatience. Every impatience provokes another look, another interpretation. As such a powerful, hurried sense, naturally it finds its way to the process of deviation and in particular, differentiation as a supplement to notions of oneness, equality, identity.

"The Wanderer" in Book III of *Zarathustra* but a method is posed in Book II "On Redemption" dealing with the problem of *what is mine already* : "To redeem those who lived in the past and to recreate all *it was* into a *thus I willed it* — that alone should I call redemption." Every *it was* is a stone that needs throwing. Every stone will fall but there is still *this throwing way*. Adam and Eve are boulders we wield every great noon. This is the happy fall (*felix culpa*). Retribution is impossible: the *it was* (the Adam) can never be repaid because it is so excessive, as Hegel implies.

⁸⁹ FR 781.

⁹⁰ FR 401.

Logik kommt von Unlogik, writes Nietzsche.⁹¹ Logic is looking to force an identity.⁹² This is the only way logic can prove anything.

$$\begin{array}{l} 4x = 12 \\ x = 3 \\ 4(3) = 12 \\ 12 = 12 \quad \checkmark \end{array}$$

Dickinson's tendency is to play with and remind us of differentiation (a practice logic does not know).⁹³ Logical identities never remain as such if they are not avoided altogether: "Existence's whole Arc, filled up, / With one - small Diadem"⁹⁴ - " Or size in reverse: "My Basket holds - just - Firmaments - "⁹⁵ Like the last: "The Finite - furnished / With the Infinite -"⁹⁶ This time further into abstraction and aesthetic disagreement, creating tensions between the ability of substance,

⁹¹ "Logic comes from illogic." *GS*, section 111, "origin of the logical." - "The dominant tendency, however, to treat as equal what is merely similar — an illogical tendency, for nothing is really equal — is what first created any basis for logic." In the next paragraph Nietzsche criticizes the concept of substance, arguing that it is also a product of illogic. A poem (FR513) about a spider communicates with Nietzsche's abstract idea, posing a narrative: "He plies from nought to nought - / In unsubstantial Trade -" An economy of nothings whose product is something. The unsubstantial hardly remains as such. Between fill or lack seems one-sided. We find a way to give it shape. But in this giving-shape we acknowledge the gap between presence and sign; through this acknowledgment we escape the traps of determined meaning (this is the case before The Fall, pure co-incidence). So we cannot resolve difference into an *arche* or a *telos*. See p. 10 of *Trespass*.

⁹² I am also thinking about personal identity as being constituted by logical identities. Here I am. This kind of confidence will become a complacency if the mediation goes unnoticed. The logical identities attempt to forget its own use of escutcheon (see FR 77), the shield that marks our identity and protects us from difference. Or being confused with something else. The other forgetfulness: that this coat of arms is itself a sign of identity.

⁹³ There are "internal possibilities" in logical structures. Still, logic is unconcerned with the art work's reception, thus attempting to abandon the receptor, the viewing experience. See p. 137 of *Aesthetic Theory*.

⁹⁴ According to the Dickinson Lexicon, diadem has meaning in the following sites: diadem (-s), n. [Fr. < Gk. *διάδημα*, regal fillet of Persian kings.] (webplay: crown, ends, forehead, gold, head, kings, let, made, neck, ornament, pearls, plain, power, set, sometimes, stones, supreme, worn). Crown; headband worn by kings as a badge of royalty; fillet often adorned by jewels. Webplay indicates words that appear together with diadem throughout Dickinson's writing.

⁹⁵ FR 353 and 358.

⁹⁶ FR 830.

questioning the de-cision imbedded in the very act of measurement, Dickinson in awe writes of “A nearness to Tremendousness,” recalling *Moby-Dick*, responding to Ishmael’s profound bulk.⁹⁷ Not only aesthetic disagreement, we also notice language found throughout philosophy and theology. Nearness becomes amongness.

A word like “Arc” for Dickinson and the mentioned disciplines recalls *arche*. The most relevant characteristic of this word *arche* is its being determined as the most indispensable and present object. Kevin Hart lists some major *archai* throughout western thinking: “*eidos* (Plato), *ouisa*⁹⁸ (Aristotle), *esse* (Aquinas), clear and distinct ideas (Descartes), *Geist* (Hegel).”⁹⁹ Dickinson chooses in these moments to give priority to baskets instead of firmaments, the finite - infinite. We will see though that Dickinson is not consistent in this reversal, nor is it ever reversal for its own sake. Consistency is not a characteristic of the flood poetics, Nietzsche’s *Fluss*, river and flux at any moment [*jeden Fall*]. Option outdoes consistency.

I make His Crescent fill or lack -
His Nature is at Full
Or Quarter - as I signify -
His tides - do I control - ¹⁰⁰

⁹⁷ FR 823. “Such, and so magnifying, is the virtue of a large and liberal theme! We expand to its bulk. To produce a mighty book, you must choose a mighty theme. No great and enduring volume can ever be written on the flea, though many there be who have tried it” (The Fossil Whale, p. 349). Phrases like “imperial Folio” call out to Dickinson and back. She often writes of gnats and flies, gnats as giants and flies instead of Christ: “I heard a fly buzz when I died”

⁹⁸ With English it is difficult to avoid suffixes of presence: -ous, -ful, In German some suffixes sound like Ich (I): -lich, -ig. Saying yes (*oui*) is making something present.

⁹⁹ Trespass of Sign, p. 83.

¹⁰⁰ FR 837. See FR 1376: “Which is the best - the Moon or the Crescent? / Neither - said the Moon - / That is best which is not - Achieve it - / You efface the Sheen -” Neither object is treated by the speaker as being better than the other. No order is implied. But the question could be posed: why does the moon have the diegetic moment and not the crescent? The crescent is on the way to speech. Achievement means the effacement of sheen. Who would in their right mind sacrifice resplendence for conclusion?

Dickinson's decision: to set a disjunction between quarter and full, via the poet's ability to "signify," to "control" nature, to fill or make it lack. Saint Augustine confesses:

I thought that whatever had no dimensions in space must be absolutely nothing at all. If it did not, or could not, have qualities related to space, such as density, sparseness, or bulk, I thought it must be nothing ..¹⁰¹

All we can say here is that once we are upon "such as" the flood hits. And it doesn't just throw its weight around. The "such as" is *at once* description and simile. Disunity and illogic.

Inconstancy and option. Always describing, never explaining.¹⁰² What is the Crescent? Probably the moon. But can it recall *arche*, that indispensable permanence that pushes swells; ark of Noah rescuing the world? A crescent is incompleteness, the part of the whole (moon). This is the same critique of presence. The object cannot be cast out and entitled to pure presence; it is always the object for us to signify. Full or quarter: this is just one possible disjunction.

There is agency in control. "Crescent" has already been familiarized by the personal pronoun, though it is no doubt the most abstract object in the stanza. Dickinson's status: "as I signify." To make something fill or lack is an incredibly important question to metaphysics and sense perception. It is first and foremost an aesthetic decision. It is the process of Dickinson's poetics to make as many of these decisions as possible, keeping language open. Floods are soaked up and released. Every tide is subject to signification (loss - gain). Without [controlled] signification there is a nearness not tremendous enough. In fact, that type of nearness border on a rejection of the bulk and debris — and the tides and floods in which they charge] flow.

¹⁰¹ *Confessions*, p. 134.

¹⁰² GS, "Cause and effect," section 112.

Dickinson reminds us of what could be autonomous (or automatic) activity: “The Day undressed - Herself -.”¹⁰³ So yes: the subject has decisions *to make*, often ones of priority. But here Dickinson writes subjectivity onto the object. Objects like us say *I come in; I come out — here it is my turn*, my time - but time is never personal. The day makes the decision, unravelling and disheveling herself. This activity would disallow the human tendency to claim the status of *first at the scene* (the case with a usual reading of the Adamic myth): objects in pure presence await my touch; I bring objects into focus, not being. Rather, the day comes before us, doing something - occupied, distracted - before us. We are responsible for its activity despite that activity’s hiddenness and immanence.

The day gets dressed and undressed on her own as her own [*eigenere*]. Since we cannot account for this, we feel embarrassment, a failed responsibility, even an impotency. It is at work before we go to work with it. Does the embarrassment become jealousy, since the day might be engaged with someone else? But we can motivate this jealousy! Turning it into Proustian suspicion, that detective-like need (disguised as intrigue), the force that mediates our loves and our objects. But not a suspicion that needs to get to the bottom of every barrel. The day will be engaged in some activity before we head toward the play of interpretation. If this is the order of operations, stress is on the word play.

We play at Paste -
Till qualified, for Pearl -
Then, drop the Paste -
And deem ourself a fool -

¹⁰³ FR 495. See also 583. Women “ ‘put on something’ even when they take off everything. GS, section 361, “On the problem of the actor”

The Shapes - though - were similar -
 And our new Hands
 Learned *Gem*-tactics -
 Practising *Sands* - ¹⁰⁴

Just a “drop,” not even close to a full repudiation. Still complicit with Paste, coming back to it soon. This poem is a strong illustration of Dickinson’s affinity for re-covering. Metaphor and the presence of small objects, a playful tone with the heft concepts. Also a predictive, assuming tone, “drop the Paste -” This is what happens: one, two, three. We do something to get something. After that, we discard the thing we used to get something, as if embarrassed by the means. Finally, an inward turn “deem” deciding character, considering and figuring ourselves. But we decide: fool. Could such a decision stand its ground? Would our foolish selves hold fast to the status as fool?

There is something knowing about the word “qualified,”¹⁰⁵ aware of the playfulness but somehow serious or at least vague. The vagueness if it can also be called ambiguity is located in the preposition Till, which does not offer one reading. We play at paste until we get the pearl. We play at paste until we are ready for pearl. Is qualification the achievement - the arrival - that necessitates the drop? Did we get too close to pearl? Why play and then qualify? What is play *to*

¹⁰⁴ FR 282. The OED entry for paste is overich with containers: geology, gemmology, fashion, cookery, angling, ceramics, cosmetic. Paste can also figuratively mean the material that makes up a man.

¹⁰⁵ There is also a business-like tone to this word that would bring paste closer to something like replica or duplicate. Duplicate is especially interesting because the phonetic *doop* sounds as dumb as it is, to be duped; to be a dupe — like a fool, like a fool or child tinkering with language . . . or gymnastics - gem tactics. *A second copy of a letter or official document, having the legal force of the original: whether made along with it, for separate custody or transmission, or prepared subsequently to take the place of the other in case of loss. A pawnbroker’s ticket.* What can we justify? The dupe says nothing, unravelling his dusty laugh.

qualify? Are you qualified? - God asks the group of players at the gates of the kingdom of heaven.¹⁰⁶ Is this a game? Did you qualify? How fast was your time?

The second stanza is overfull with s consonants, lending the sound of suspicion to what appears similar in our new hands and eyes. The alliteration of the first line too, but not of suspicion: there - a youthful honesty. Why do we have new hands? Is it because we are now qualified for Pearl? Only if - then we would be fools. So - we are fools learning *Gem*-tactics. Practising: fine particles assembled motivating shape and reshape, imitation and again. I'm not confident that "Practising *Sands* -" only belongs to our new hands. Does practising belong to both *Sands* and the speaker's hands? The end-stop would allow for both genitive/accusative constructions. By the very nature of sands as object, it is possible to read an autonomous activity in the sands themselves, each grain shifting, most shifting out of sight. Dunes of you / thought.

Going back to the word pearl. "Pearl" has associations with eternal life,¹⁰⁷ reduced to the small object, attitudes and images of luxury and wealth but also rarity: the object the Diver struggles to find. Pearl can now be thought of as ideal. The diver in the liquid element, alien territory (not land), restricted, restrained motion, without air and with those slowed, fluid movements.

Back to paste. Paste can mean synthetic glue mixture that is used to fabricate precious stones, thus another process, this time of fabrication.¹⁰⁸ We can also consider pastes verbal case: deposit; place; pile; bond; seal; solder. This is where a metaphorology appears, the attitude and

¹⁰⁶ See pp. 106 - 107 of *Weakness of God*. The kingdom is full of paradox by way of reversal: the last are first, insiders out, stranger neighbor, enemies loved.

¹⁰⁷ Pearls adorn the gates to the kingdom of heaven, also often a metonymy for soul or child of God.

¹⁰⁸ Benjamin, *Tragic Drama*, p. 29.

tendency of substitution, sacrifice and recovering.¹⁰⁹ Every verb becomes its own site of departure. Though the paste is dropped,¹¹⁰ it is the earthly, artificial stuff we have at hand. Sometimes too cloudy, too smoky to pass for pearl, the real thing. Only the expert can tell the difference between paste and pearl. And that's all he does: tell. Dropped, but picked up again, saved for later, as the child figures play.

The foolishness could be the thought of achieving immortality. But the process of fabrication has a wider scope than immortality, reeling in notions of the poet's practice, also questions of language as tool and limit. Authenticity [*Eigentlichkeit*]¹¹¹ is in question. Paste, though, has more dimension than pearl, if not only because pearl stands on death. Fabrication overshadows original. Language is inadequate and excessive after The Fall since it always comes up against fabrication; this very disproportion is meaning's counter to magic, equivalence, complacency, identity, totality.

Origin [*Ursprung*], although an entirely historical category, has, nevertheless, nothing to do with genesis [*Entstehung*]. The term origin is not intended to describe the process by which the existent came into being, but rather to describe that which emerges from the process of becoming and disappearance. Origin is an eddy in the stream of becoming, and in its current it swallows the material involved in the process of genesis.¹¹²

To give The Fall a primitive feature, to decide Adam is the first man or that The Fall announces the beginning of history, is to determine its irreducibility and impenetrability, like prime numbers. It is also to decide that there is a fixed truth. Proof in itself cannot hold up against the

¹⁰⁹ Dickinson writes pearl in roughly thirty other occasions, more metaphors and options.

¹¹⁰ This word will come up a lot.

¹¹¹ Blanchot articulates the relation between *Ereignis* (event) and *Eigentlichkeit* (authenticity) in *Writing Disaster*: There is no origin, if origin presupposes an original presence . . . every beginning is a beginning over . . . To begin with, the term "authenticity" does not *do justice* to *Eigentlichkeit*, which already suggests the ambiguities of the word *eigen*, as they are to appear in *Ereignis* — the "event" which cannot be understood in relation to "being." p. 117, Blanchot's emphasis. I think Blanchot puts emphasis on *do justice* because he knows that justice means the many becoming the one.

¹¹² Benjamin, *Tragic Drama*, p. 46. -Ent

tooth of time. Proof in itself is immediate banality; it barricades meaning. Images flare up but proof finds this unthinkable.

Without immediate access to the day — to the sunny places of thought¹¹³ — we are faced with the absence of an absolute ground.¹¹⁴ Much of this question of who does what first (Day or I) is again dealing with the problem of priority or privilege, so it is necessary to commit to how something stands. The Fall is a point of slippage; it holds an excessive energy that continuously pours over, seeping through the boards, the piled centuries, into every son of Adam, every child of the Earth [*adamah*], and every language on our tongues.¹¹⁵ This upsurge then gravity. My description renders the word “point” in “point of slippage” tenuous; space might be better. We are actually looking at multiple points, Benjamin’s constellations.

I never hear the word ‘Escape’
Without a quicker blood!
A sudden expectation! A flying attitude!¹¹⁶

Our blood is too quick for a single point. I single point does not hold for too long. The Nietzschean suddenness returns, always amazed by itself, passing through the disbelieving word *still*. The Fall has a tremendous shadow, despite its privacy and witnesslessness.

A great Hope fell	
You heard no noise	noise ↔ crash
The Ruin was within	Ruin ↔ havoc ; damage
Oh cunning Wreck	
That told no Tale	
And let no Witness in ¹¹⁷	

¹¹³ “Today or this noon / She dwelt so close / I almost touched her / Tonight she lies / Past neighborhood / And bough and steeple / Now past surmise” - FR 1706.

¹¹⁴ “We are like barrels with no bottom to them so long as we have not understood that we have a base.” Simone Weil, *Gravity and Grace*, “Decreation,” p. 33.

¹¹⁵ Hebrew for earth. Not a gendered noun.

¹¹⁶ FR 144.

¹¹⁷ FR 1187.

The Fall is like a shipwreck, no witness is present, no witness survives. Survival itself has become a grave misunderstanding. It occurs within itself, within its own mythic disc. But this privacy is not accepted. More than this, we are too uncomfortable in its excluding us. After the fact, we come in to rescue the myth from its isolation, supplementing it with interpretation, introducing our own discs, never deliberately trying for eclipse. .

“Dropped into the Ether Acre - / Wearing the Sod Gown ... Journey of Down -”¹¹⁸ Sod is often thought of as a phrase to mean farmland. Ether modifying Acre unsettles Acre, not just a word applying to earth. There is now something delicate about the ground, even atmospheric or of the sky. Our journey downwards, into the ground, the journey of belonging to or made of Down, soft feathers.

Read as test or taunt, a result of the Adamic myth is fault.¹¹⁹ The gods are disobeyed. There is no going back to the state before The Fall where work is purely joyful, where our anthropology is clean and clear, although so much philosophy and so much thinking in general tries to go back, nostalgic for prelapsarian Truth,¹²⁰ desirous of disambiguation, uneasy in fault, anxious in indetermination.¹²¹

¹¹⁸ FR 286. Variants for first line: “Dropped in the ether acre.” “Dropped into the Ether Acre!”

¹¹⁹ I use the word fault instead of sin because fault has a wider scope. The German *die Schuld* is a better word altogether because it includes the following: debt, fault, obligation/duty. *Unschuld* means innocence, artlessness, virginity — unsuspecting. .

¹²⁰ FR 570: “I probed Retrieveless things / My Duplicate - to borrow - / A Haggard comfort springs”

¹²¹ I know that I must rebel against this type of philosophy, and I hear Georges Bataille when he writes one “cannot be a rebel in order to perfect submission” - *Unfinished System of Nonknowledge*, p. -- I ask us to remember and conserve the Adamic myth and original sin not because I think we ought to remember submission. This position can only be argued from the angle of idealism, one that tells us we must rest on thetic ground. “Settling the score is death” - *On Nietzsche*, p. 81. Clean and neat economies (give and take) are unwelcome. Our fault and our depravity lift us up and bring us down. Unwilling to claim mastery, we write — *Spread out!*

We have lost our footing, the foot shall slide,¹²² though the problem lies in the very fact that too much weight was given to ground in the first place.¹²³ Walking measures the ground. Walking keeps us grounded How many paces! Walking as balancing, as safety and consolation.

At last - the Grace in sight	↔ The Grace is just in sight -
I shout unto my feet -	
I offer them the Whole	the Half of Heaven
The instant that we meet -	
They strive - and yet delay -	
They perish - ... ¹²⁴	perish ↔ stagger

Crossing, dizzying, staggering like a drunk, like Adam under the centuries, clear complementary measurements, Half/Whole. The offer of a strange economy. The meeting, the striving, not positive, not achieving some goal though great energy is expended, but more like strife or struggle, “to be in a state of variance or mutual hostility.” The more overtly political definition: “to bandy words with a superior; to behave mutinously.”¹²⁵

Test or taunt, either has the same consequence. Yahweh withdraws; an absent presence; determinate meaning will only show itself — mediated and confused — through signs.

Perception of an Object costs
Precise the Object's loss
...
The object Absolute, is nought - ¹²⁶

¹²² Deut. 32:35.

¹²³ Novalis writes that all philosophy is homesickness. “Homeland is a state of having escaped” - *Dialectic of Enlightenment*, p. 61.

¹²⁴ FR 666. “I cross till I am weary”

¹²⁵ OED.

¹²⁶ FR 1103.

The absolute object is no thing, or no-place (utopia). Only misapprehension renders this object accessible to some degree to the subject. Dickinson does not go far enough. This object is determined. The problem is mistaking sign for being,¹²⁷ sign for essence. We are always looking at what will soon become yet another sign. The Fall is a fall into difference. Nietzsche writes that truth is bashful; Dickinson corroborates: “Ah! Be bashful! / Gesture Coquette - / And shake your Head!”¹²⁸ The body here is honest (almost humiliated but still confident), vulnerable, alluring and seductive. Nietzsche would call this writing “divinely untroubled, divinely artificial art.” He would also stress the good fact that this artist has never owned a hair-shirt¹²⁹ - or *better* - just pawned it for a lion’s garrulous voice. “Gesture Coquette” — like amazing sense, we don’t know it. Have you ever seen the common noun used in such a way? Sighing we enter into risk, chance, and doubt. “For me, turning away from the world, from chance, from the truth of bodies is shameful. No greater sin exists.”¹³⁰ Signs begin to burn our hands. There is an urgency that instructs us to pick up the next one, letting the others pass through more hands or letting them fall back into the earth to be picked up again.

John D. Caputo, American philosopher and theologian, calls the tree of knowledge “a giant pink elephant” for this reason.¹³¹ It is too apparent. There is no account of the creation of

¹²⁷ I held my spirit to the Glass, / To prove it possibler - / I turned my Being round and round / And paused at every pound - To ask the Owner’s name - Fr 357. Possibler is a frequent word for Dickinson. Putting possibility in the comparative. Round and round the speaker turns Being, like what? an object belonging to the young girl, playful tone “round and round.”

¹²⁸ FR 277.

¹²⁹ The hair-shirted despise the body. - *Zarathustra* p. 188.

¹³⁰ Bataille, *On Nietzsche*, p. 75.

¹³¹ “Yahweh tells them [Adam and Eve] to make themselves at home [in the garden of Eden] and enjoy everything *except* the tree of knowledge of good and evil. An impartial observer would have to say that this is a little disingenuous; it is like telling them that they may let their minds roam freely over any object of thought at all, but they are definitely not to think of a giant pink elephant. That *constitutes* the tree precisely as an object of forbidden desire — is there any other kind? — which seems to have been planted there in the first place just to tempt them.” *The Weakness of God*, p. 69, Caputo’s emphasis.

the tree. All we know is the tree is there - an insufficient, troubling grammar. We are forced into conflicting attitudes, ones unwilling to negotiate. We yield to the tree's presence, knowing that we don't know, accepting and admitting. After our banishment, the tree is guarded by "the cherubim and the flame of the whirling sword" as if these images are familiar.¹³² The same goes for transgression itself. We are inclined to fault and yet we are created good according to God's consistent and persistent incantations. The snake too.¹³³ It is just there. We yield to its existence; we concede. We yield and concede to the tendency, a kind of magnetism, drawn to but never with the other.

This is not a passive or halting attitude! Paul assures us: "where sin has abounded, **grace** abounded all the more."¹³⁴ Nietzsche's attempt at the same sentiment could not come through without hysterical laughter.

"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."¹³⁵

¹³² Gen. 3:25. Robert Alter explains that these figures are borrowed from Near Eastern mythology, thus unsettling an ontologically fixed beginning. I should also mention that in combination with the sense of temporality just discussed there is also a concept of atonement: "In myths, everything that happens must atone for the fact of having happened" - *Dialectic of Enlightenment*, p. 8. Atonement (Yom Kippur, -*Kipp* as stem discloses the following: disposal site, cigarette butt, commutation failure, to wobble (*kippeln*), or the kippa that we wear on our heads. If you drop the kippa, you are sure to kiss it. A fluid rem[a]inder of our wobbling and waste, the excess beyond unity.

¹³³ His notice - instant] sudden - is

¹³⁴ Romans 5:20.

¹³⁵ GS, "origin of sin," section 135. This section could also be called "Redeeming the Greeks" It would be redemption given the unhappy words in sections 81 ("Greek taste") and 82 ("Esprit as un-Greek"). Nietzsche also thanks the Greeks for tragedy and the passions as a divine virtue, [unlike Saint Paul.] See also section 138, "Christ's error."

Nietzsche believes grace is much more accessible. Contradiction gives us option, a generative premise. “It bloomed and dropt, a Single Noon - ”¹³⁶

We come across Dickinson

Taking up the fair Ideal,
Just to cast her down
When a fracture - we discover -
Or a splintered Crown -
Makes the Heavens portable -
And the Gods - a lie -
Doubtless - “Adam” - scowled at Eden -
For *his* perjury!¹³⁷

The confidence of the first two lines, the present progressive “taking,” “taking up” as if the “fair Ideal” is a basket of infinitude. We worry it is reduced to a “fracture” a “splintered Crown - ” Lifted with ease, without intention (“just”) or anything purposive. But what is the temporality of the discovered fracture? Does the discovery happen before the casting? After the casting, we look to the broken Ideal, the one previously unportable - a stubborn Heaven. Is it Adam’s perjury? Why is the genitive construction italicised? Why is Adam in quotation marks? It is because we will only ever know this ‘ first man ’ as script. Our only confidence is his diegetic presence. He begins our history (it’s safe to say), he is our reminder of fault and fallenness and yet he is pure text, pure myth. The fracture and splinter in the ideal necessitate portability. The ideal is made by us and so we risk the complacency of investing it with the violent bone lexicon. The ideal and the divine are brought back down to earth, where they should be, instead of casting

¹³⁶ FR 843. “Much Flowers of this and further Zones / Have perished in my Hands / For seeking it’s Resemblance] similitude - / But unapproached it stands - ” A great example of Dickinson thinking philosophically about our access to the object. Her conclusion: “unapproached.”

¹³⁷ FR 386. About autumn 1862, in Fascicle 19 (H145). On the typographical level, the fascicles demonstrate Dickinson in the processes of thought. Her variants are more substantive if they pass through the reader’s tendency to think conjunctively. See p. 57 of *On the Line -- drawing lines not points* -- even Dickinson’s periods are laughing at themselves: “I never saw a moor.” “This World is not conclusion.”

them out far away, impervious, immutable. The casting out is a rejection of flood poetics and the decision to decide what is out (out of the body) is always good. To make things clear the body will always become profane.

We are headed toward ambiguity and uneasiness, toward the abyss within ourselves, encounters with the hallowing forces (the finer forges) within us. We are indebted to these attitudes (option, bashfulness, play) ; without them we would still frantically exclaim: “Truth at any price!”¹³⁸ As if this were the mission. We are indebted and it is a responsibility to conserve indebtedness. Both a duty and a debt [*Schuld*]. Truth at any price means you are *on the take*, doing anything to get ahead; bad corruption. Fault is always a possibility if responsibility is remembered — possibility outdoes oneness, or any kind of discrete, separate thing-in-itself. The thing-in-itself is always the thing-for-us and thus the thing from which we take too much and give too little.

What is *amor*, what *deus*, if there is not a drop of blood in them? ¹³⁹

Prelapsarian Truth is behind us, out of sight but not out of mind. Hegel has already signaled the infinitizing force of Adam’s fault. Every child inherits a familiarness with infinity and its being taken away from us. More questions of inheritance, the role of chaos.

¹³⁸ GS, “How we, too, are still pious” section 344.

¹³⁹ GS, “why we are not idealists,” section 342. “The essential attributes or predicates of the divine being are the essential attributes or predicates of speculative philosophy.” - *Principles*, p. 12.

The gods create order out of chaos, order out of the dark swirling waters of the first day of creation. There are elements, dumb and ready - to be used by the gods. Winds and choppy seas of the deep in their elementality await transformation, so we imagine.¹⁴⁰

What is Prelapsarian Truth? There are many interpretations¹⁴¹ of what this Truth looks like. Its Truth is singular, without consciousness. But even this is not exactly true! Rosenzweig dives deep.

Adam's first deed is to give names to the creatures of the world, and this too is but prologue. For Adam names the creatures, as they step before him in creation, by categories and not as individuals. And he names them himself, thus only expressing his demand for names. The demand still remains unfulfilled, for the names which he demands are not such as he himself might give; rather, they are names which are revealed to him like his own name ...¹⁴²

If names are *revealed to* Adam and not *provided by* him, and since this naming occurs before The Fall, then we can infer [*erschließen*] that oneness was already mediated by the presence of the gift or the debt before the loan, the debt that is never paid. An endowment that somehow comes before endowment.

That the lonely heights should not remain lonely and self-sufficient eternally; that the mountain should descend to the valley and the winds of the height to the low plains — oh, who were to find the right name for such longing? “Gift giving virtue” — thus Zarathustra named the unnamable.¹⁴³

¹⁴⁰ *Weakness of God*, p. 61 and 70. To say pure elementality is a mistake. Geoffrey Hartman points to the false bottom of the first day. Pivoting to spring, he argues that “the Hebrew word for the deep, *t'hom*, is suspected to be the Canaanite primal Goddess Tiamat. Her proper name is lost in Genesis: she is voided into a mere noun that means “the deep,” [severed from its history]. Canceled, sublated perhaps, it (she) enters a new discourse” - *Saving the Text*, p. 65.

¹⁴¹ The sheer fact that we are now and always in the space of interpretation (the after-the-fact) implies a movement away from oneness.

¹⁴² Rosenzweig, *The Star of Redemption*, p. 187.

¹⁴³ *Zarathustra*, “on the three evils,” pp. 189 - 190.

Our inherited postlapsarian truth is plural; the plural always outdoes the name. The boundary between these two thinkings is highly fluid and our always new plural status does not mean we lost a grip on life, a mastery¹⁴⁴ over our self-constitution and language. True but this is an anxiety symptomatic of the fall from oneness, the fall from immediacy with the gods. Nietzsche's aphorism is a guiding star for the appearance of this postlapsarian plurality and as a signalling rem[a]inder of this essay.¹⁴⁵

One is always wrong, but with two truth begins. One cannot prove the case, but two are irrefutable.¹⁴⁶

. . . One cannot prove his case, but two are already irrefutable.¹⁴⁷

In its hyperbole and confidence, the aphorism takes us to a powerful, overrich idea. As though tinkering with a multiplication table, Nietzsche skips the first lesson. Truth *begins* with two, not one. How is it possible that something does not begin with one? Two has perspective. Two produces options and accidents.¹⁴⁸ Two has nostalgia for one. Without two we cannot long for one. Two has force, force by struggle. Two is itself a tension that generates more tensions. One is

¹⁴⁴ Mastery is always blind. Mastery is always death, an assumption of sufficiency which is the ultimate complacency. The fall from oneness has triggered a deadly reflex in the human. We have been trying to recuperate a mastery over nature and the world. This achievement would be the end of thinking.

¹⁴⁵ You know I have a vice for voices, Prose Fragment 19. Vocality is deeply connected to the exit and return of language. Especially with much of Dickinson's writing, the hymn is a frequently used form.

¹⁴⁶ GS, section 260, "multiplication table" or "1 x 1"

¹⁴⁷ GS, Cambridge, p. 150.

¹⁴⁸ *Genealogy of Morals*, "Original. —" "Not that one is the first to see something new, but that one sees as new what is old, long familiar, seen and overlooked by everybody, is what distinguishes truly original minds. The first discoverer is ordinarily that wholly common creature, devoid of spirit and addicted to fantasy—accident.

too remote [*fern*].¹⁴⁹ One is without an adversary or a neighbor or another. One is alone, never at risk, bored, inert.

I never felt at home below,
And in the handsome skies
I shall not feel at home I know —

I don't like Paradise!
For there 'tis Sunday all the time
And recess never comes,
And Eden'll be so lonesome¹⁵⁰

The speaker is not at home in this world. Language indicates and reflects this homelessness: words never touching themselves, always groping and fumbling.

Two risks itself as ratio and still it never settles as such. There will always be common multiples. We can pose one over two just as easily as we can four over nine or $\sqrt{16}$ over $\sqrt{81}$.¹⁵¹ Two are in dialogue and James Baldwin writes that dialogues can be confession.¹⁵² Disclosure and declaration are elements of twoness. They are confident elements that pronounce the seemingly complete only to then remember that there can always be more confession. Two is more honest than one.

Tis Glory's far sufficiency
that makes our trying poor¹⁵³

far sufficiency ↔ overtakelessness
trying ↔ running

¹⁴⁹ *Fern* in its adverbial case (*ferner*) denotes moreover; in addition; again. In the German Bible the word for neighbor is *Nächste* (the nearest). *Der Fernste* (the farthest) — the stranger or the other.

¹⁵⁰ FR 437.

¹⁵¹ The square root signs attached to the values of 16 and 81 show how mathematical notation, thought of as a language that undergoes change, opens up new possibilities of expression. Further, we can say that these new modes of expression will always have the ability to establish new complicities, new common multiples.

¹⁵² Baldwin, "White Man's Guilt" p. 412.

¹⁵³ FR 1183.

In our new attitude, a synonym for “wrong” is *insufficient*. One will no longer suffice because it does not deceive enough, because one cannot confess to another. One is dishonest because it has nothing to be honest with. Creatures who conceive solutions are always dead serious – sincerity and severity together – but these same creatures are looking for nothing more than to be taken seriously. Once we accept two, we no longer deal with sufficiency — excess instead. The overflow, the river of becoming that realizes genesis and generation, proliferation in general. If we think one is healthy it is only because it is guarded and uncontested: “Divinity dwells under Seal -”¹⁵⁴

Dickinson is energetically involved with this conception of insufficiency. Divinity is capped at one, sealed so that another cannot breach the seal. Nietzsche’s polytheism is rejected. This is a fear of chaos and confusion or even a fear of madness, what Nietzsche calls the exception [*Ausnahme*], even though we put this seal there ourselves. We should fear, instead, the politics implied by Dickinson’s choice of preposition. Seal dominates Divinity through the stratification of the word “under.” We do not need to ask for the seal to be removed. We can repudiate it just as easily.

Retainer; protective label that shuts, confines, or secures; marker that fastens something private, secret, sacred, or confidential; fastener for a door or storehouse in the absence of the lord; adhesive substance fixed on a closed door so that one cannot open it without the owner knowing; [fig.] divine barrier on the door into the next life; means of access into the presence of Deity; large stone that blocked the entrance to Christ's tomb (see Matthew 27:6).¹⁵⁵

¹⁵⁴ FR 1057.

¹⁵⁵ Emily Dickinson Lexicon.

The Seal [*Dichtung*]¹⁵⁶ is approval and container. Oneness has been approved; twoness has not. Twoness, though, does not require any singular x. Here we only need to remember the divine council of creation or the two cities discussed by Augustine.

In another poem Dickinson instructs us to “Tell all the truth but tell it slant -.” Even more radical than this:

By homely gifts and hindered words
The human heart is told
Of nothing -
“Nothing” is the force
That renovates the World -¹⁵⁷

Two returns us to the chaos of the first day, the ready elements, the feeling of excess, the place where disagreement and difficulty convince us of their creative power. A nothingness provokes renovation, a passivity so vulnerable, only change and movement seem like natural, inevitable responses.

I deploy Nietzsche’s aphorism because the Fall results in the abandonment of one and the introduction of two. After The Fall, Truth no longer looks like one (coincidence of opposites); it looks like two or more. We are in what Saint Augustine calls a *regio dissimilitudinis* (land of unlikeness).¹⁵⁸ So difference cannot be subsumed into some higher positive identity. There is the land of man and the land of God. Communion means becoming a unity (a one), to make one of many. This is a bad consolidation or bad distillation. Unlike the poet who distills amazing sense

¹⁵⁶ The German word for literature and poetry. The adverbial stem *dicht* means dense, tight, compact, thick, *impervious*. Looking to other languages is good for substitution and its product: multiplication. The *dicht* of all citations in this project is the criterion for the expansion and proliferation of the citation’s meaning. Anything impervious cannot contain itself under seal.

¹⁵⁷ FR 1611.

¹⁵⁸ Saint Augustine, *Confessions*, Book VII, section 10, pp. 146-147.

or the adulterator, he distills trying for essentialization, bottom of the barrel telos — then death. Another word for communion is justice, the many becomes to one, an essentialization that would be a parasitic luxury, a bad nihilism (nothingness) that does not renovate the world. Nietzsche's lion is destructive but this lion can still turn the *it was* into the *thus I willed it*. The bad nihilism never sheds its skin. It throws on a second hairshirt, trudging in the banal desert of the *it was*, for the sake of the *it was*.

The Adamic myth is terse in language and content - progression is abrupt as we move from sentence to sentence. The abruptness of The Fall, the quick movement from the coincidence of opposites (unity ; equivalence) to pure differentiation denies unity. It is not the movement that affects the denial but the sheer force of unsustaining stability: "As soon as unity becomes stable, it is already lost."¹⁵⁹ The Fall is necessary because the coincidence of opposites, if sustained, would seal the fate of a tensionless, flat world. We cannot \ have coincidence unless we also know cunning. Innocence before The Fall awaits guilt after The Fall so coincidence can see cunning, anything to see something else. To miss you Sue is power. Truth is a woman. Can there be unity without complacency? without trying to possess like "the inexperienced seducer who has not yet escaped his foolish hopes of capture."¹⁶⁰ Anything that is terse (*dicht*) is everything that resists capture.

Two are "irrefutable." We are faced with an impossibility. Two cannot be disproved. Two cannot be undone; there can only be more proliferation. Covering all of this is the idea that a new epistemology has intervened. Gayatri Chakravorty Spivak captures a Nietzschean attitude in a way that is relevant here: he "puts 'knowing' under erasure ... effacing the presence of a

¹⁵⁹ Adorno, *Aesthetic Theory*, p. 187.

¹⁶⁰ Derrida, *Spurs*, p. 55.

thing and yet keeping it legible.”¹⁶¹ So we are not merely looking at the binary of singular/plural with respect to this advent and intervention of a plural epistemology. The Fall is also a fall out of full presence, a fall out of a complacent knowing that claims access to full presence. And still it is too difficult to forget complacent gestures, or rather, it is a responsibility to keep them nearby. This is most literally understood through the description of a fall out of presence with the gods, but if the gods live in the space of Truth, we also fall away from this Truth, into fault, error, and the possibility of experiment, a process always at odds with conclusive consolations, bad, tautological infinity; proof.

Experiment escorts us last - escorts ↔ accosts
 His pungent company
 Will not allow an Axiom
 An Opportunity - ¹⁶²

Axiomatic thinking is disallowed because it betrays the humility of experiment. Axioms might come from experiment but the axiom itself will likely abandon the experimental means, taking honor in itself instead. Who is “His pungent company”? What does this tell us about experiment and who the his is?

The Fall, like the gesture of erasure, is never absolute. Presence and truth are still “legible” but it is never so without some degree of equivocation. This is the equivocal nature of fallenness and this same equivocation is always present in the word. Coming back to the plastic attitude: words do not experience progress moving toward the triumphant Clara. She is banal.¹⁶³

¹⁶¹ Derrida, *of grammatology*, Spivak, translator’s preface, p.xli.

¹⁶² FR 1181.

¹⁶³ I am referring to Clara from E.T.A. Hoffmann’s *The Sandman* (1816). The text ends with Clara in the country with her children leading a bourgeois life, totally effaced by the self-sufficient bourgeois life and

It is really that they move and that they are *susceptible* to movement in all directions, a multifarious and incessant exile and return.

Dickinson keeps the Sabbath other-wise, wearing wings, staying at home. She is a special kind of Sunday Christian.

“God” - preaches - a *noted* Clergyman -
 And the sermon is never long,
 So - instead of getting to Heaven - at last -
 I’m - going - all along! ¹⁶⁴

All along - never at last. *At last* is what Benjamin calls progress and what the hairshirted are devastatingly, nihilistically seeking. Going instead of getting. A viable, infinitizing experiment, a deluge of going. The *all along* is not progress. It is the childlike locomotion that knows no telos. Thankful for this nonknowledge, Heaven comes close. We can see the blood coursing through it.

We also look to the moments where Dickinson delivers theories of signification, where prose is rejected. If she is breaking out of the stillness of prose, she is heading toward the fluidity (or flood) of the poetic.

We send the Wave to find the Wave -	
An Errand so divine,	
The Messenger enamored too,	
Forgetting to return,	
We make the wise distinction still,	wise distinction ↔ sage decision
Soever made in vain,	
The sagest time to dam the sea	sagest ↔ only
Is when the sea is gone - ¹⁶⁵	

at the same time this life, this ending to the story, forgets the rest of the text, one filled with the most fantastical events and happenings (bodies toyed with like dolls, *Doppelgänger* / *der Gang* = corridor or motion / *gegangen* (adj.) = gone or lost, everything that disagrees with her name and experience. The disagreement is flattened by the banality of self-sufficiency, which with utmost irony we assign the greatest power.

¹⁶⁴ FR 236. Dickinson’s emphasis.

¹⁶⁵ FR 1643.

The redundancy appears to confine us, but it doesn't? It's more like "Light - enabling Light -"¹⁶⁶
 Like Nietzsche's madman, even in early light, those sunny places of thought, he brings his lantern, worried or confident there might still be something uncovered, knowing also that his lantern might also have a veiling effect [*Enthüllung*]. Or it is a joke. The redundancy Wave - Wave constructs a proximity that is too close, forcing the process of differentiation precisely because it starts with lexical identity.

We forget the pain of this indigestion, though pain is not the first word that becomes felt. Instead a laziness percolates, one we cannot afford. Ultimately it is an ethic that should provoke embarrassment. With Dickinson we are left with excesses, remainders. She is giving us notice, involving us in a language that at first seems like it does not work. Unable to digest her covered and recovered thinking, some scholars and editors changed the poems, removing dashes, introducing proper punctuation, protecting verse forms, administering titles (though sometimes this is interesting). She reminds us that mere words are deadly. In her straining words we enter into a space of constant motion, a freedom from fixed grammar and thinking, a freedom still willing to dance and parry with the stillness of fixed prose and the rest, still willing to dwell ever closer to the lightning.

To be alone, to experience things by oneself, to neither obey nor rule, to represent as individual [*ein Individuum bedeuten*] - that was no pleasure back then, but a punishment; one was sentenced 'to be an individual.' Freedom of thought was considered discomfort itself. While we experience law and conformity as compulsion and loss, one formerly experienced egoism¹⁶⁷ as a painful

¹⁶⁶ FR 830.

¹⁶⁷ See p. 118 of *Otherwise than Being*. The ego is original expiation [Buße].

thing, as an actual affliction. To be a self, to estimate oneself according to one's own measure and weight - that was contrary to taste in those days.¹⁶⁸

It's amazing how this punishment is still practised. Those days are these days, a terrifying repetition. We return (but never completely) to an original chaos,¹⁶⁹ where Dickinson is with us to remind us that God creates the world with uncertain - ready and raw - materials, that our mornings, every one, need to remember this, that dwelling in possibility is an honest, vulnerable life. Thinking more about the image of an origin, what brings what into a space of knowing. Disorientation is a fear only insofar as estimation is elevated to some primary, impervious position: a godlike calculator. Estimation is entitlement - giving ourselves number and shape.

Beyond our faint Conjecture -
Our dizzy Estimate - ¹⁷⁰

The estimation is already dizzy, a vertiginous attitude. Disorientation is always need. Egoism forgets the debt before the loan, as Levinas¹⁷¹ lovingly writes, lovingly even with the immanent, profound, putting-behind economy.

Like Rain it sounded till it curved
And then I knew 'twas Wind -
It walked as wet as any Wave
But swept as dry as Sand -
When it had pushed itself away
To some remotest Plain
A coming as of Hosts was heard
That was indeed the Rain -

curved ↔ swelled
I ↔ we

The House of Supposition -
The Glimmering Frontier that
skirts the Acres of Perhaps
To me - shows insecure - ¹⁷²

¹⁶⁸ GS, cambridge edition, section 117, "Herd pangs of conscience" A great moment in literature that captures the self shedding its own concept as affliction is Petrarch's *The Ascent of Mount Ventoux*, where a mountain is climbed out of whim alone.

¹⁶⁹ The doctrine of original sin accounts for this element of chaos. see edwards p. 233 and augustine

¹⁷⁰ FR 369.

¹⁷¹ *Otherwise*, p. 111.

¹⁷² FR 725.

It filled the Wells, it pleased the Pools
 It warbled in the Road -
 It pulled the spigot from the Hills
 And let the Floods abroad -
 It loosened acres, lifted seas
 The sites of Centres stirred
 Then like Elijah rode away
 Opon a Wheel of Cloud ¹⁷³

Loosened and lifted: these are the words describing the activity in Dickinson's plastic, delugic language. Where is the stillness of prose or writing? Centers stirring, winds curving, waves walking, waves sweeping like sands (practising Sands). The sensorium is dizzying like the soft impression of the metaphoric spigot pulled loose but quickly plugged again. Just a drop of flood, but that was already too much. The residue is a weak "indeed." This adverb *emphasizes* infinitely more than it could ever confirm anything.

I read "atom" in the poem below as Adam's duplicate from the myth. Since it is not a compulsion to always erect symmetries between Dickinson and any other writer here, it can still be pointed out that the "I was once" implies *only once*, only one time. This runs countercurrent to Hegel's gesture of immanence in Adam and infinity with world.

It troubled me as once I was -
 For I was once a Child -
 Concluding how an atom - fell -
 And yet the Heavens - held -

Concluding ↔ Deciding

The Heavens weighed the most - by far -
 Yet Blue - and solid - stood -

weighed the most ↔ were the weightiest - far
 solid ↔ easy ¹⁷⁴

¹⁷³ FR 1245. No stanza breaks.

¹⁷⁴ An incredible tension. This is so important to our metaphysics (science) of presence, especially above in Saint Augustine's discussion of density and shape. He thought it must be nothing. It is easy to grasp the solid, but it is not easy to grasp the thick.

Without a Bolt - that I could prove -
Would Giants - understand?

Would Giants ↔ Did ↔ Might (no dash)

Life set me larger - problems -
Some I shall keep - to solve
Till Algebra is easier -
Or simpler proved - above -

keep ↔ save solve ↔ prove
Till ↔ Where

Then - too - be comprehended -
What sorer - puzzled me -
Why Heaven did not break away -
And tumble - Blue - on me - ¹⁷⁵

Is there anything good about an easy Algebra, where the equations and formulas are neat and clean? Concluding or deciding, Dickinson asks. Did Adam fall or is it our own decision? The doubt in this poem, the suspicion and puzzlement, stresses the process of decision. Why do the heavens weight so much? The speaker cannot find the right bolt, a fastener and a moment of light. Why is there no tumbling? Where is the staggering Adam? The fixed axioms of algebra cannot explain Heaven's dismissal of gravity. Blue and solid, heaven stays. Easy, Heaven stands. Where is the collision of Heaven and speaker? Dickinson forces the collision by virtue of her decisions and question marks. The concepts of Heaven and gravity are unsettled, keeping the flood loose and nimble.

As Nietzsche writes with confidence and wit,

Hitherto one has generally trusted one's concepts as if they were a wonderful dowry from some sort of wonderland; but they are, after all, the inheritance from our most remote, our most foolish as well as our most intelligent ancestors ..What is needed above all is an absolute skepticism toward all inherited concepts. ¹⁷⁶

¹⁷⁵ FR 516.

¹⁷⁶ *The Will to Power*, section 409.

It is crucial that Nietzsche does not speak univocally about our ancestors; he maintains both “foolish” and “intelligent.” It also must be noted that Nietzsche’s skepticism cannot be defined without the word perspectivism. Perspectivism embraces any given truth as being contingent upon its temporary status as a truth and its rejection of a static value system. This does not mean that Nietzsche believes that one approach is as good as any other. He would agree that our concepts have plastic potential. *Sittlichkeit der Sitte*. Inheritance is always a matter of history, a matter of fragmentation and selection - aesthetic materialism, the images that flare up. The “absolute skepticism” is a comfortability in the abandonment of prelapsarian truth. If we treat our concepts as dowry, we risk an idle use of words. Gravity and Heaven are tucked away behind their axioms and schemas. And if this dowry is a gift, we cannot limit ourselves to a never ending economy where we feel the pressure or need to settle our debts. It is better to violate the devastating cycle of give and take, not always seeking to collect, not always looking to keep balance, lines not points.

Dickinson again speaks through the child.

The Child’s faith is new -
 Whole - like His Principle -
 Wide - like the Sunrise
 On fresh Eyes -
 Never had a Doubt -
 Laughs - at a scruple -
 Believes all sham
 But Paradise -

Credits the World -
 Deems His Dominion
 Broadest of Sovereignities -
 And Caesar - mean -
 In the Comparison -

Baseless Emperor -

Ruler of nought,
Yet swaying all -

Grown bye and bye
To hold mistaken
His pretty estimates
Of prickly Things
He gains the skill
Sorrowful - as certain -
Men - to anticipate
Instead of Kings - ¹⁷⁷

anticipate ↔ propitiate

We first read the qualities of faith that the child maintains. We take stock of modifiers that speak to an openness in faith, maybe something authentic, despite this incredibly narrow poem. Words like “new,” “whole,” “wide,” and “fresh” warrant a security, “Paradise” is possible; everything else is “sham.” The first three lines move slowly and this slowness pays respect to the the child’s faith in general. Secondly, the slowness is complimented and contrasted by the quickness of the first four lines of the third stanza. There is no punctuation in these lines. Quickly the child grows.

But more than anything else, the child learns something. He “gains the skill” to anticipate (or propitiate) men “Instead of Kings.” This gain is not positive. It is a regaining of the favor of a lesser creature. Growth is conflated with (or happens because of) loss. The gain happens quickly. It never indicates achievement or completion. Gain is always preliminary or if we are reading through the variant “propitiate,” redemptive.¹⁷⁸ If it does fall into the container of achievement it is expressed with neutral negativity: “Gain - Satiety -”¹⁷⁹ If gain is satiety,

¹⁷⁷ FR 701.

¹⁷⁸ “To gain his grace - I’d die! (FR250) ; “Or that Etherial] seraphic gain / One earns” (FR288) ; “If end I gained / It ends beyond” (FR484) ; “But gain - thro’ loss - Through Grief - obtain - “ (FR834).

¹⁷⁹ FR 865.

achievement will suffice. But Dickinson will not leave things in a state of sufficiency, incongruency is fundamental to Dickinson's poetics, remembering Hart's discussion of proliferating gaps. She constructs further metaphors, destabilizing what is, dashes functioning as conjugated ontological verbs: "But Satiety - Conviction / Of Necessity." Necessity is no longer so necessary if it requires "Conviction." One must be confident and convinced of necessity, so necessity is arguable.

The confidence is gone and so is ambition. The grand senses of faith are missing in the third stanza. There is almost no sense of faith at all. The child is falling out of childhood, out of the openness of faith. The confidence of the first stanza, where action and description initiate most lines, is replaced by a very different tone. "To hold mistaken" speaks to a stubbornness or at the very least an embracing of what is false. Is this then a holding fast to suspicion?

The adverbial phrase "bye and bye" speaks to an inevitable growth and movement. Time is coming, coming one by one. The phrase customarily reads "by and by." Dickinson attaches e's to emphasize a departure that always occurs, amplifying the sorrow of growth as loss, the longing for what faith used to be.

One by one, one after another, one for another, methodically and inevitably, the child gains a restricted practice: "pretty estimates." Paradise was a sure thing. The child credited the world in the second stanza; in the fourth he estimates. Such a cold word. The closest word to this might be calculate and the word that captures its aggravated (exaggerated) tone: to appraise.

The poem below poses a special occasion, a time provided by nature.

There's a certain Slant of light,	
Winter Afternoons -	
That oppresses, like the Heft	Heft ↔ weight
Of Cathedral Tunes -	Tunes ↔ tombs

Heavenly Hurt, it gives us -
 We can find no scar,
 But internal difference -
 Where the Meanings, are -

None may teach it - Any - Any ↔ anything
 'Tis the Seal Despair -
 An imperial affliction
 Sent us of the Air -

When it comes, the Landscape listens -
 Shadows - hold their breath -
 When it goes, 'tis like the Distance¹⁸⁰
 On the look of Death - ¹⁸¹

Internal difference is a phrase that is too near, too tremendous. A grammar cannot organize it. It is a site without locality, without the presence of “scar” - and even this presence would be the remainder of the wound, a residual indicator of violence, or speaking most generally: action.

This residuality is reflected by the placelessness of the neuter pronouns. The first “it” refers to the “Heavenly Hurt” of “a certain Slant of light.” But why the movement from oppression to bestowal “gives us”? Only the second stanza provides a subject, the first person plural “us.” The “none” in the third stanza comes close but ultimately recedes. This is self-consciousness, an outcome of The Fall, incredibly close to us. It is a self-differentiation that is simultaneously loss and gain: loss of presence with God

(“Omnipotence - enough”)¹⁸² and gain of signification and meaning (“where the meanings are”). We can feel the oppression, the pressing against, the throngs, two forces against each other.

Not any particular meaning, just location (“where”), the site where meanings happen, not the

¹⁸⁰ My second epigram resurfaces: Distance out-distances itself.

¹⁸¹ FR 320.

¹⁸² FR 876.

site where meanings are determined.¹⁸³ This is also what makes philosophy possible. Internal difference can only be a perception that is postlapsarian and therefore all consciousness happens with identity and difference as terms always already at odds with each other. Together with Hegel's conception of history, the temporality of The Fall becomes less significant. Pure communion with objects is unthinkable, but the common shows itself through sympathy, coming from or going towards Adam.

The poem speaks about chaos in its traditional sense. We are looking at the empty space, space before order and hierarchy, that is also the pregnant space, the pre-original state of the universe as it seems ("and it does seem!"),¹⁸⁴ inasmuch as we involve ourselves. The scar is the missing piece of evidence that we will never locate, never experience. Only the effects. Only the aftermath. Only the adumbrating Discloser - it is He.

...
 We will not drop the Dirk -
 Because We love the Wound
 The Dirk Commemorate - Itself
 Remind Us that We died - ¹⁸⁵ died ↔ did

I first want to note the incredible variant for "died." The extreme gap between past tense activity and the unknown state after life is for Dickinson a matter of the letter e.

It is necessary to unfreeze language, to turn concept (back) into *Begriff*. Back into a humble space, a personal space. A theory of meaning is what we have. It does not remain in place. Making lines, not making points.

¹⁸³ *Sinngebung* = "meaning bestowal." *Das Gebund* = bundle or package. Levinas, "Subjectivity as An-Archy," *God, Death, and Time*.

¹⁸⁴ GS, section 344, "How we, too, are still pious"

¹⁸⁵ FR 664.

Conclusions are Consolations: Supplements of Purple ¹⁸⁶

‘Is it true that God is everywhere?’ a little girl asked her mother; ‘I find that indecent!’ - a hint for philosophers! One should have more respect for the bashfulness with which nature has hidden behind riddles and iridescent uncertainties. Perhaps truth is a woman who has grounds for not showing her grounds? ¹⁸⁷

How much does a poet look to words to supply what is put down, and how much to notate what was within the self prior to the words? ¹⁸⁸

Four Trees – upon a solitary Acre –
Without Design
Or Order, or Apparent Action –
Maintain –

Ein Feld ist, einsam, drauf vier Bäume stehn,
von ungefähr.
Was waltet vor, was wirkt hier mit?
Sie stehn, sieh her.

The Sun – upon a Morning meets them –
The Wind –
No nearer Neighbor – have they –
But God –

Es kommt die Sonne mit der Früh,
Wind tritt hinzu.
Vone allen, die da Nachbarn sind:
ihr nächster, Gott, bist du.

The Acre gives them – Place –
They – Him – Attention of Passer by –
Of Shadow, or of Squirrel, haply –
Or Boy –

Das Feld hat für sie einen Ort,
und sie fürs Feld ein Aug.
Ein Aug, das huscht, jetzt hier – schon dort,
vielleicht ein Knabenaug.

What Deed is Their’s unto the General Nature –
What Plan
They severally – promote – or hinder –
Unknown – ¹⁸⁹

Was sind sie im Zusammenhang
von Werden und Schregen?
Ein jeder: wem bahnt er den Weg und wem
steht er entgegen? ¹⁹⁰

¹⁸⁶ FR 1713. Purple: royalty; color of death on the body; rising or setting sun.

¹⁸⁷ GS, Preface, p. 8.

¹⁸⁸ R.P. Blackmur, *The Kenyon Review*, “Emily Dickinson’s Notation” p. 225

¹⁸⁹ FR 778. Variants: Action ↔ signal;notice. Maintain - ↔ Do reign -. - promote - or hinder - ↔ retard - or further -.

¹⁹⁰ Celan, *Gesammelte Werke*, Vol. 5, p. 399. There are nine other Celan translations of Dickinson.

Beginning with the end of Celan's translation of "Four Trees," we read the word *entgegen*.

Coming back to Derrida's dictum: *Distance out-distances itself*. The passage continues:

The far is furthered. One is forced to appeal here to the Heideggerian use of the word *Entfernung*: at once divergence, distance and the distantiation of distance, the deferment of the distant, the de-ferment, it is in fact the annihilation (*Ent-*) which constitutes the distant itself, the veiled enigma of proximation. The remote proximity of *Entfernung*'s outbreak gives way to truth, and here, woman too, of herself, averts. There is no such thing as the essence of woman because woman averts, she is averted of herself. Out of the depths, endless and unfathomable, she engulfs and distorts all vestige of essentiality, of identity, of property.¹⁹¹

The attitude of destruction passes through the hurried nature of distance. Without distance there is no style, no option, no incommensurability - just flat coincidence. The trees are just there in solitary, onesome (*einsam*) presence. Acre gives place. What would we have without this unit of measure? Would there be no place? Without plan or design or *apparent* action, the four trees stand solitary. Where is their context? Where is the unrelenting relation (*Zusammenhang*)?

Unlike the floods of stirring centres and the acres of perhaps, these objects seem older, more primitive, less touched by our judgments, less touched by Dickinson's vision and hands. There is no delugic sensorium here lifting and loosening acres. There is a deep distance between subject and object, forcing the hollowing of purposiveness. *Das Feld hat für sie einen Ort*. The Acre has a place for the trees. What is the nature of this bestowal, this gift?

To disappear enhances	
The Man that runs away	
Is tintured for an instant	tintured ↔ gilded
With Immortality	

¹⁹¹ *Spurs*, pp. 49 - 51.

But yesterday a Vagrant -
 Today in Memory lain
 With superstitious value
 We tamper with "Again"

value ↔ merit

But "Never" far as Honor
 Withdraws the Worthless thing
 And impotent to cherish
 We hasten to adorn -

Withdraws ↔ removes

Worthless ↔ paltry

Of Death the sternest function
 That just as we discern
 The Excellence defies us -
 Securest gathered then

The Fruit perverse to plucking,
 But leaning to the Sight
 With the ecstatic limit
 Of unobtained Delight - ¹⁹²

I reason, Earth is short –
 And Anguish – absolute –
 And many hurt,
 But, what of that?

Ich denk: Dies währt nicht lang,
 ein Ding ist, es heißt Bang,
 und weh tut Hand um Hand –
 ja und?

I reason, we could die –
 The best Vitality
 Cannot excel Decay,
 But, what of that?

Ich denk: Sieh zu, man stirbt,
 der Saft, der in dir wirkt,
 auch ihm gilt dies: Verdirb –
 ja und?

I reason, that in Heaven –
 Somehow, it will be even -
 Some new Equation, given –
 But, what of that? ¹⁹³

Ich denk: Im Garten Eden
 ist alles wieder eben,
 die Gleichung neu gegeben –
 ja und? ¹⁹⁴

¹⁹² FR 1239.

¹⁹³ FR 403.

¹⁹⁴ Celan, *GW*, p. 401.

Give little Anguish,
Lives will fret -
Give Avalanches,
And they'll slant,

Straighten - look cautious for their breath -
But make no syllable, like Death -
Who only shows his Granite face -
Sublimar thing - than Speech - ¹⁹⁵

Granite Face ↔ Marble Disc
thing ↔ way ; sort

The disc image percolates again. The Discloser returns, giving her adumbration, never filling, always opening and closing, distilling amazing sense. Avalanche, the thickest and densest form of flood. The slant of truth and the slant of lives. Equation (*Gleichung*) will never blink in the face of the slant. It might not ever notice it.

Though the trees are *einsam*, *We hasten to adorn*.

Despite the *unobtained Delight*, the *ecstatic limit* renovates the world.

So the earth is short. *Ja und?* So what? Yes and?

The *it was* is never enough.

We tamper with "Again"

¹⁹⁵ FR 422.

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