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A Wordless Wild Cadence

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by

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To my Grandmother Doris and my Zayde Edmund.

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Table of Contents

<u>Preface 1: A Note Before The Formal Writing Begins</u>

The first words put to paper in the pursuit of this project are an apology. The very point the work strives to prove is self defeating; its linguistic form assures that, by its own goalposts, it will fail. It contains a certain and necessary aporia, a paper about the failure of communication by words made entirely of communication by words! However, hope is not lost! I can provide two partial remedies at this point of the process, a point that holds a unique importance. First, I find it important to create a certain distance between my gesture and the object it points towards. Just as Socrates did not describe The Good, but rather gestured towards something related, I make no claim towards putting my finger on the pulse of something True. Rather, I choose to point towards something I believe has value. Second, Nietzsche said in the preface to *The Birth Of Tragedy* titled "An Attempt At Self Criticism"*,* that his only regret is that he spoke the work when he "should have sung" it instead (5). should have, instead, sung it. He wished that he had not verbalized it formally, but made it musical and artistic. I intend, in lieu of a major switch in academic focus, to conceptualize this writing process as a dance. If—perhaps—language can be choreographed instead of scripted, then maybe (and truly *just* maybe) we can avoid some of the trappings and failings of language. We shall forsake putting our thinkers into conversation (it would be a very frustrated conversation between them anyway) and, in its place, have them share a dance, fluid and artful. Of course, all of that carries tremendous uncertainty: can one even dance with words? If they can, can *I* do so? And even if I can, would it help create some, even the smallest space, within language to create something more effective? To each question, and the many more that go unmentioned, I respond with resounding unsuredness! However, if I

confuse not knowing with never knowing then the battle is already lost and the attempt deserted.

So, let us progress into an unknown that will answer some of our questions, for a gesture at something from a distance is certainly preferable to leaving it undisturbed, is it not?

<u>Preface 2: A Note Before The Formal Writing Continues</u>

Hello again! For you it has only been moments since we first made our acquaintance, but for me it has been months. So, as a favor to me, entertain my warm rewelcoming, it is a pleasure to see you. I write to you from the approximate midway point in this project and, as such, think it's appropriate to reevaluate and reorient our journey together. It is not my place to make substantive changes to the previous note, doing so would be dishonest, therefore I will take this space to pontificate freely towards the end of which I dream. Since I wrote the first note, we have turned away from a project about how words fail, as I so confidently put to paper. I do not seek to land at a conclusion of any failure, much less on the part of words (words, of course, are our creation afterall). Instead, the 'failure' that I wrote of will be removed from its teleological pedestal. It is not that words are supposed to accomplish a certain thing, at which they fail. Rather, I will be trying to show that we employ language for a task that it simply does not have the qualities to complete. We cannot place the blame of such a thing on the words! If I tried to build a house out of straw and a proverbial big (perhaps also bad) wolf came and blew it down, then the straw would not be culpable for my now defunct home. I should have just built the house out of bricks in the first place! Straw is great for many things (although as I write I realize I may not know what straw is, in fact, used for), but building houses happens to not be one of them. Just the same, words lend themselves to much utility and beauty; exact explanation of the interior, as you'll hopefully soon find out, just so happens to not be one of them. To work through that premise, we will structure our investigation in the same order as the journey of words, directionally towards the outside. We'll do so to a certain end, for we can be teleological

in our journey. Are words the best we can do? Is there not something better, something more

accurate, something more honest, something more beautiful? I won't spoil anything, nor could I

if i wanted to! For the time being, let us speak together towards silence.

Dear Reader,

My Zayde was a fighter pilot in the Second World War. He and my grandmother married in 1940, the year before the US joined the war. While he was training in a barrack in Alabama, my grandmother, Doris Zaslow, would visit him from her home in the Bronx when she had the chance. After one such trip she wrote in a letter to him, "how can I tell you all that I feel….there is a wordless wild cadence of music in my heart and mind at the thought of you and the last days… It pours and eddies to my fingertips…making me bow my head with awe." What beautiful writing and magical thought. In my grandmother's words, we find the tension that we seek to explore and, perhaps, even relieve. She seeks a way to express the powerful love that she feels for him. Her description of the feeling warrants repetition, "a wordless wild cadence of music." Yet, despite the wordlessness of the feeling, it "eddies to [her] fingertips," readily placed on the typewriter and prepared to receive instruction for word. It seems to me that the awe that she describes is produced by the tension between the wordlessness of feeling and the worded expression. She is driven by a sense that she *must* try to share how she feels, it is not optional. However, her only outlet for sharing does not elicit an expression that fulfills that need, at least not fully. It is this very problem that we intend on exploring. This is a project that begins with the internal, but it makes no claims to reside there. Instead, it strives for a dynamism that begins within and moves into the world of connection. If it so happens that we pay close enough attention to what we find, then, by the closing of this project we may uncover some new instructions, new guiding thoughts on how best to connect.

I've chosen to write in the form of a letter, modeled off the letter that we began with. I intend it to be read as such. The formality of a traditional philosophical essay does not lend itself to our exploration. In its place I wish for the intimacy of a letter between dear old friends. I'd like to share with you as best as I can, though it will certainly not be complete. The form of a letter does not entail a lack of rigor, per se, but an understanding that it is a *necessarily* human expression. It does not strive for the emotionless logic of traditional philosophical argument. I will not go as far as to declare such writing sophistry, as Socrates did in The Apology. However, it would not serve our, or perhaps just my, purposes. We require the warmth of a letter.

Throughout the work I will digress from the topic at hand in short labeled spurts, ranging from entirely informal to, shall we say, business casual. I intend for these digressions to function in much the same way as educational signage on a hike to a beautiful vista. Let's say the sign tells of all the different species of lizards that live on the mountain. The main focus of the hike is the payoff of the view, but the signage may provide additional information to ground you, the hiker, in the historical and natural context of the land's ecology. You can then choose to incorporate the signage into your experience or not. I place the signs along our hike together because I believe that they will enrich the work, but are not necessary to it, and, on the off chance you happen to see a lizard.

Allow me, then, to brief you on the itinerary of our hike. First, we will explore why it is that language is not a sufficient form of expression. That exploration begins with an examination of human interiority. We will work with the interior as a private space, one that cannot be so neatly divided up and distributed. That will lead us towards questions of honesty. We will then

follow that into an analysis of the specific and its appearance, or lack thereof, in communication. That will, in turn, bring us to the breaching of the role of the other in the process of expression. First using Friedrich Nietzsche's 'sovereign man' and 'conscience' and imposing Jacques Lacan's 'mirror stage,' we will understand a system of the internalization of the gaze of the other. That understanding will seek to unpack the dialectical identification with the other as an independent phenomenon. Although that inquiry will not be exhaustive, we will attempt to come to an understanding of the role an internalized other plays in our experience of the world. That will, then, return us to our question of language. We will work through language as a *mechanism* of internalizing the other through Nietzsche's work in *The Gay Science*. We will eventually arrive at an understanding of linguistic self expression as insufficient and corrupting of the individual, the expression itself, and the connection it attempts to form.

Second, we will imagine an outside of linguistic expression, what else is there that can express a "wordless and wild cadence?" This section of the project will be less tethered to argument and will, in its place, be based in imagination. It will ask the questions: how can we reorient our conception of expression? and how can we mobilize that to best connect? We will examine three case studies: automatic writing, jazz, and Contact Improvisation. These are intended to provide a loose guide to our process. They will help us to new understandings of communication and expression, but will not, themselves, be final. This segment, and therefore the project as a whole, does not intend to be terminal. Instead, it looks forward and seeks to elicit a next step, whether that be more academic work, personal exploration, or another category outside of my imagination. More than anything, it wishes to brand a question into the heart of the reader: how can I connect with others more wholly, more personally, and with more honesty?

The part of an answer I come to in the pages that will follow is a gesture towards a maybe. By the expectations of a logical argument seeking truth, expectations often held by the academy, I will fail. That matrix wishes for a sturdy building, built to completion. I, instead, am attempting to build scaffolding for you, my reader, to build your own building. I have no say in that step of the process. I merely hope my scaffolding is sturdy enough to support you.

Return, with me, briefly to the letter with which we opened. My grandmother concludes by writing "good bye now darling…be well and of good cheer…and if you look about you carefully tonight…..after you're dismissed…you'll see me waiting for you…sitting on the wooden benches half hidden in that little clump of trees beyond and below your barracks….waiting with outstretched hand……" Once again, we are guided by her letter towards an end. She is writing to him because she has no other means of communicating. However, she writes a dream, one in which not a word is spoken between the two. In silence she waits for him and in silence she reaches out for him. We can only imagine that in silence he embraces her waiting hand. She concludes with six consecutive dots, an extended ellipsis. It is as if she is gesturing beyond the language of her letter, pointing towards a silent unknown. The following 50 some odd pages will seek to accomplish what my grandmother did in a mere two. We will begin, as she did, in the exploration of real phenomena. For her, it was the description of the love they shared. For us, less excitingly, it is the unpacking of modalities of expression. Then, as she did, we will conclude in an imaginary, begging the question of how best to stretch our hand to each other. I will be arguing that language, as an attempt to place the necessarily private internal world into the modality of the other, is alienating to both the speaker and the connection they seek to form using words. I will then be imagining different modes of expression, and perhaps we can

find the seed of a beautiful new connection, a new communication, in which we dance together,

hand in hand and wordless.

The Personal Interior

Our hike begins with a spatial focusing towards the interior. That focus will take us into a viewing—a fleshing out, so to speak—of the human inner world and its properties. What will not be given is a definition of the specifics of that world, such a thing would be somewhere from impossible to outside the scope of this work. My intentions, in the following pages, are specific: to cordon off the interior as a private space of its own, to gesture towards what makes it unique and necessary, and to begin the work of establishing its nature apropos language. Let's slow down for a moment, what do I mean when I say interior and what about its unshareable nature? By interior I mean, in the simplest terms, the inner life of the human, the expansive world of feelings, thoughts, and indescribable little occurrences that make up the intramural area. I am seeking to establish that interior as fundamentally unable to be specifically shared, that is without loss, dishonesty, or inaccuracy. How, then, can we understand and demonstrate its individual and unshareable nature?

Allow me to posit the classic example of pain. If you and I are both stabbed in the arm what are the relations and similarities of our pain? We will unpack two entwined facts that will aid us in reaching insight. First, we can never *know,* for certain, that our experience is the same, or even similar. Any description we can assign to our pains is *necessarily* relative and anything specific and objective remains out of our reach. Even if you and I were stabbed in the same place, with the same weapon, and in the same way there is no possible means by which we can discern each other's pains specifically. I could tell you that my pain is 'sharp and searing' and you could concur, but what do those words mean to each of us? They are relative to experience. What is sharp to me may be what you experience as dull, we simply cannot know. Second, and

derivative of the first fact, our pains are fundamentally unshareable. I cannot, no matter my wish, extract my pain and bestow it to you. This is a point that, in a certain way, is so base that it becomes difficult to express. You may think I am speaking figuratively, that I am saying I cannot describe my pain in such a way that it is as if I am extracting it to give to you. In fact, I am being quite literal. My pain is mine to experience and nobody else's. Description can never stand in place of experience. Despite our similarity in injury, you cannot feel the physical pain of my stab wound and I cannot feel yours. Perhaps we also react differently on an emotional level to our identical injuries. I may be incited to anger, whereas you may be incited to fear. What, then, is so different in our experiences such that our identical external injury so differently affects our internal world? We can then ascertain that experiences of pain, as phenomena of the interior, are essentially personal. I cannot describe them in ways that are nonrelative and I cannot extricate the sensations themselves. Any attempt I make to export their contents in the form of the specific, whole and unaltered, is one that fails before it even begins. The impossibility of does not narrowly apply to stab wounds, horrible pain, and other such outliers. In fact, there are no experiences of the interior that are exempt from this principle. Ranging from extremes of pain, mourning, and love to the most quotidian feelings of boredom, annoyance, or happiness, the entire spectrum of the interior is unchangeably personal in its specifics.

You will notice here that my language is exact. I am not saying that, simply, the interior cannot be shared, point blank. I am saying it cannot be shared in specific and exact form. I cannot describe *exactly* what is going on inside, such that you understand completely. Yet, I can share in some capacity, perhaps even with some success. As we'll get into below, we often communicate our interiors poorly to a specific and actionable end. I could say "I'm in a good

mood and want to dance" and you'll come dancing with me, despite not understanding exactly what my mood means. If I wish to share that with you in a precise and holistic way, I will have failed. I cannot communicate in exact terms, and, of course, cannot extricate the feeling. However, I have brought myself joy by communicating to an end, not for the sake of being understood.

In his famed 1974 essay "What Is It Like To Be A Bat?", philosopher Thomas Nagel poses the titular question, begging the grander question of what the experience of being something other than you is like. We'll turn to his essay for guidance and a framing that will aid our discussion of interiority. Nagel writes that "the essence of the belief that bats have experience is that there is something that it is like to be a bat" (438). We must presume that the fact that bats experience the world, in one way or another, is derivative of the fact that being a bat is, itself, a certain kind of being. Trying to understand what that kind of being is like turns out to be a difficult task because "our own experience provides the basic material for our imagination, whose range is therefore limited. It will not help to try to imagine that one has webbing on one's arms, which enables one to fly around at dusk and dawn catching insects in one's mouth" (439). Our imagination is limited to our life-world, and therefore we are able to imagine "what it would be like for [us] to behave as a bat behaves" but not "what it is like for a bat to be a bat" (439). We cannot imagine ourselves within the lived experience of a bat. Therefore, the answer to his original question is certainly something, but not a something that we can imagine. As Nagel describes, "reflection on what it is like to be a bat seems to lead us, therefore, to the conclusion that there are facts that do not consist in the truth of propositions expressible in a human language" (441). He extrapolites that to the theoretical, writing "we cannot form more than a

schematic conception of what it is like [...] these experiences also have in each case a specific subjective character, which it is beyond our ability to conceive" (439). The capability to ascertain what it's like to be or feel something is limited to the subjective, never crossing the final boundary of objectivity.

I'd like to make a quick note here. One could read the binary distinctions I make and think I am aiming for some form of Cartesian dualism in which there is a metaphysical wall between the self and the physical world. With all of this speak of cordoning off the interior as private, you'd surely be understood for thinking so. However, I assure you I am doing no such thing. I am working phenomenologically and making no claims towards a universal metaphysics. That is to say, I am not pointing towards a general law of separation between the interior and the exterior. There are no claims being made that there is *I* and there is *world* and that they are ontologically and fundamentally separate. Instead, I am claiming that there are certain experiences of *I* that are personal and cannot be wholly shared outside of the self. There is, of course, much exchange between the worlds of the exterior and the interior, through attempts at self expression and intake of sensory information. We are unconcerned with making a statement on the latter category; the scope of this work begins and ends with those gestures at self expression.

A Digression On The Interior Itself

Oh how I wish that our problem were this simple. If I were to simply establish here that our interior is fundamentally unshareable, as I've gestured to above, that we attempt to share it

anyway with words, as I will below, and that this disharmony causes great dissonance, then our work would be easy. This is, of course, untrue; nothing in this discipline is ever quite so easy, but perhaps we may call this problem straightforward. However, we do not seek to merely prove the alienation that words bring. Instead, we take our problem as a calling to something beyond that. This inquiry is not into the failure wrought by language; it is on the potential for communication and connection. *Perhaps our interior is incomplete itself.* Perhaps it needs to reach out and express itself in order to be completed. Here we offer an olive branch to the Hegalians and the extroverts. A savvy reader could interpret the unfinished existence that I am framing as a tragic one. One in which an interior requires a completion that it cannot achieve. I am, however, not a savvy writer. I write this because I believe that our relations to each other and ourselves are not doomed, just sometimes misguided. That there is some completion and beauty to be found. These could be the mutterings under the breath of a romantic lost in a wish, or they could, less elegantly, be flat out wrong. I don't concern myself with questions such as those.

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Part of the problem towards which I am pointing is a lack of honesty. If I purport to share my interior world with you in specific, I am compromising my honesty. I assure you, this is not an ethical judgment, but a practical one. If I am being dishonest, then we are not really communicating anything at all. When I tell you 'I am feeling melancholy,' I am misleading you. Perhaps this is the closest word, and the nearest match, but, fundamentally, I am making sure that we are on uneven terms. You believe I am feeling specifically melancholy, and I am, of course, not. When I tell you that I am, I tell you a lie. I'm using the word 'melancholy' to describe a

feeling that may resemble it, but my feeling is entirely unique. It is similar to the generally understood definition of melancholy, but not a match. Here you may have three basic issues with the premise. First, you may think it's 'close enough.' We have a tacit understanding that when we speak we are not being literal or exact and that we are approximating. That we understand, implicitly or explicitly, that our language is not precise seems evident from the search for a 'best-word' that we often undertake, the grasping at approximation of a writer looking for a synonym, a friend looking to console, or a lover trying to express their feelings. We understand, at least partially, that with our words we simply do our best. Of course, that is not entirely true; much language seems to strive for exactness as if it were possible, but for our purposes it is *true enough*. Our second concern is that our lack of exactness and our misunderstanding simply do not matter. Here we don the hat of a pragmatist. It seems certainly true that a sentence like "I'm feeling melancholy" serves quite a lot of use, even if it is not perfectly communicative. It could spur a listener to deliver chocolates, give a hug, or offer support. It is not a holistic and specific expression, but it serves a purpose towards action. Finally, the third potential counter is that, with a slight semantic change, we could resolve this problem. If I were to say "I'm feeling *something like* melancholy" then it seems as if I have restored my honesty. I am now explicitly working from a model that sees language as that which fits best, not as final and definitive. I have managed to circumvent my dishonesty with a small disclaimer, merely two words: "something like."

 Here you may have noticed these counter arguments are more convincing, even to me, than the original argument of honesty. That is no mistake, nor is it a worry. The strength of the counter arguments would be a devastating turn of events if it were the case that the crux of this

project relies on honesty, on a true and pure expression. Fortunately for us it does not! Our problem is not dishonesty of the interior. Our foray into honesty, then, is a stop along the way, but not our final destination. We must understand, before going forward, the fact of dishonesty when attempting to express the internal in the form of the specific and objective. Even if that is not what haunts our critique of linguistic expression. It is a building block to what does. We must understand that *if one tries to express specifically and completely they will always be dishonest.* It is not impossible to speak with candor, but there is no way of being honest while being exact. Any attempt towards exactness is distorted and disrupted.

Here we arrive at the core of our premise, one that we have repeated more than once. Our interior worlds are necessarily personal; they do not possess the capability to be split and externalized. Nietzsche, in a notebook entry published posthumously in the 10th volume of the *Nachgelassene Fragmente 1869 - 1874: Kritische Studienausgabe,* writes that "there is a false saying: 'How can someone who can't save himself save others?' Supposing I have the key to your chains, why should your lock and my lock be the same?" (4). This passage contains an important insight to drive our point home. Nietzsche is referring to a basic lived truth of ontological difference: the locks on our chains must be different. Assuming that the questions, complications, and experiences of interiority are identical is a mistake. In place of congruency, we must assume individuality and difference. Interestingly, Nietzsche's short parable prompts the crossing of interior boundaries, *I* open *your* lock. There is room left for affecting the other's internal life without entirely crossing the boundary and claiming the interior as shared. Change, then, can be moved from the outside. We can see the exterior perspective more clearly in Jacques Lacan's essay "On a Question Prior to Any Possible Treatment of Psychosis" from his seminal

Écrits. He writes that God—who, for Lacan, represents the absolute and eternal other—"is incapable of understanding a living man; he grasps him only from the outside (which certainly seems to be his essential mode); all interiority is closed off to him" (469). In this, Lacan is describing the place of the other apropos the subject. For God—the ultimate other to the general subject—all that is comprehensible in man is from the outside, from action and description. This phenomenon is replicated on the interpersonal level, mirroring the macro level of divine perspective, in exchanges between individuals—who are both simultaneously in subject/other relationships—understanding is only available from the perspective of the outside. The interior remains closed off.

A Short Digression On Words

This is a project about how our use of words falls short and deceives us. However, do not get the wrong impression that its takeaway is the absolute uselessness of words. Words have more righteous and healthy uses than can count. They can be practical; I could call a friend and tell them to meet me at Bubby's at 2. They can be funny; I can pose a knock knock joke that ends in the words "orange you glad I didn't say banana?" (to an uproar of laughter, of course). They can be poetic; I can spin a beautiful metaphor that perfectly describes an autumn day. Yes, in fact, they can even be emotionally moving; I can eulogize a dear friend and tell a story that perfectly gestures towards what we all understood his spirit to be. There is no doubt that words are essential. However, what this project aims to challenge is that words are *absolute.* There must be another way to express, something that does more justice to the unparalleled gale of the personal that language can merely allude to.

The Entrance Of The Other

We can now proceed with an understanding of the personal and private nature of the specifics of the interior. That interior, however, is not sealed off from the world. Although it is essentially unshareable, the interior space is, of course, shaped and affected by the world it exists within. That fact alone is not of negative consequence. However, when the exterior world infiltrates the interior, posing as an extension of the self, we run into issues of alienation. It is not the fact of influence by the outside that is a problem, that would be a myopic and unsteady claim at best. It is the disguising of other as self that causes us problems. If a friend gives you a good piece of advice and you listen and change something in your life, that is to be celebrated. However, if you begin identifying with a representation of your friend that functions as an internal regime of enforcement that comprises part of the self, then problems arise. I know I am being vague here, I apologize. Allow me to dive into specifics for assistance in my explanation.

We turn to Nietzsche for assistance in bringing our problem into focus. In the second essay of *On The Genealogy Of Morals,* he establishes a model of depth psychology, through the language of the 'conscience' that will shed light on our exploration. When I say 'depth psychology,' I am speaking, quite generally, of a psychological system that acknowledges the human psyche to contain more than one layer, usually a conscious and an unconscious, or some form of that distinction. Nietzsche writes of a "sovereign man" who "has his own independent, protracted will and the right to make promise" and awakes "a proud consciousness, quivering in every muscle, of what has at length been achieved and become flesh in him, a consciousness of his own power and freedom, a sensation of mankind come to completion" (59). The sovereign man has awoken what we call self-consciousness. He has an awareness of, not only the

environment around him, but of himself and his place within it. The capability to promise is the capability to hold the self accountable. It is a result of a reflexive consciousness, an awareness that reflects back upon itself. The psychological development of the sovereign man, it's worth noting, is upward. He begins with an unconscious and develops a consciousness. He writes that this "proud awareness of the extraordinary privilege of responsibility, the consciousness of this rare freedom, this power over oneself and over fate" is given a name by the sovereign man, he "calls it his conscience" (60). The sovereign man, then, is positioned as the one who possesses the capability to look back upon himself and pass a judgment, through the mechanism named the conscience. The conscience is an apparatus of reflexive consciousness, a consciousness that looks upon itself.

The conscience is in contention with the psychological plain that predates the reflexivity of the sovereign man, for Nietzsche that plain is named 'instinct.' The sovereign man comes into full power when man "found himself finally enclosed within the walls of society and of peace [and...] suddenly all their instincts were disvalued and suspended" (84). The man finds himself in a web of connections with others, a society, reverent to the formal wishes of others and removed from his passive individuality. That new position sees the sovereign man renounce and repress his instincts, replacing them with this new conscience. He is now submissive to the codified systems implemented by others to ensure collective normalcy.

The sovereign man is suffering. His ailment Nietzsche names the 'bad conscience.' To Nietzsche, bad conscience is "the most serious illness that man was bound to contract under the stress of the most fundamental change he ever experienced," the transition to society (84). Now, what is this bad conscience that haunts him? We must first understand the process and

mechanism of general conscience. Conscience seeks to sort action into the discrete categories of right and wrong. Of course, there is nuance to be had, but, for our purposes, that understanding will serve us just fine. What belongs in these categories, the business of morality, is not naturally decided. They are, then, culturally derived. How that goes about happening is the focus of *On The Genealogy Of Morals.* The sorting voice of the conscience is a socially created one, it is the internalization of mass morality.

Our project does not seek to provide close analysis of Nietzsche's origin of morality, but we will foray into his origin of conscience. He writes that the conscience emerges from "relationship between *creditor* and *debtor"* (63). This gives us, frankly, very little in terms of direct causality, but we must look a bit closer and think a bit more creatively. In the preface, Nietzsche calls for "an art of exegesis" in order to understand the book after all (23). In the relationship between the creditor and the debtor, what dynamics unfold? He writes that "the debtor made a contract with the creditor and pledged that if he should fail to repay he would substitute something else that he 'possessed,' something he had control over" (64). The emphasis on the word 'possessed,' and its following loose definition of control, is notable. The stakes of a contractual-debt relationship are the loss of control, or at least of a portion of control. If the debtor fails to return the creditors loan, they lose a certain amount of their sovereignty. They allow the creditor to invade and annex their agency.

Let's look towards an example. Let's say Sven lends Melissa 10 bushels of grapes with the promise that Melissa will pay him when her grapes are ready for harvest. On the most literal and elementary level, Melissa is now in debt to Sven for the amount of 10 bushels. We need not concern ourselves with questions of interest here. Nietzsche's interest in the relationship is not

clarified from this literal and material understanding; such a thing can be thought of practically, perhaps Melissa's grapes are late this year and she needs to borrow Sven's to feed her kids. Luckily for us, Nietzsche does not refer to the material relation we refer to as debt, instead he is interested in the relationship between the creditor and debtor. In other words, he is not focused on the grapes, he is interested in Melissa and Sven. It is between these two that we can begin to access the association of debt to the conscience. What Sven has done is not the mere material practice of giving grapes; no, he has intermingled his and Melissa's interests and possessions in such a way that Melissa now occupies a dialectical relationship with Sven. By receiving his grapes with the contract of a continuing grape-centric relationship, Melissa has taken on Sven's interests as her own. They are now bound together in contradictory, but conjoined interest. Melissa owes, as due to a contract—a sort of third party mediator—a part of her material gain to Sven in the future. She is, in a certain sense, occupied by Sven's wishes. Her individual wish would be to claim her grapes as her own, but the fact of the preexisting relationship to Sven nessicates that not to be the case. Sven is possessing her mind as a third party looking at her actions, dictating whether or not they follow the contract she agreed to. In her promise, she not only signs away her grapes but a part of her self-direction. She allows Sven to monitor and control her actions. It is this relationship that Nietzsche calls the conscience, the third party reflexive mediator. Especially important for our investigation, that mediator is the voice of the other internalized. Melissa's conscience, as it relates to grapes at least, is not her own voice, it's Sven's.

Here we can come to an understanding of the conscience, and its formation. It is the internalized voice of the other relaying the obligation an individual has to them or a generalized

abstracted other. That obligation, at large, is formalized through a society of law that demands a sublimation of instinct in exchange for the gift of conscience. I am reminded here of W.E.B DuBois's illustration of the double consciousness. While we are not working within his specific terms, it is worthwhile to glance towards him, in order to drive the point home. In his influential 1903 work, *The Souls of Black Folk,* DuBois famously writes, "the Negro is [...] born with a veil and gifted with second-sight in this American world,—a world which yields him no true self-consciousness, but only lets him see himself through the revelation of the other world. It is a peculiar sensation, this double consciousness, this sense of always looking at one's self through the eyes of others" (38). In his description of the experience of being Black in America, DuBois offers us an excellent and telling example of the internalization of the other. He describes the other's gaze, in this case not merely an other in the fact of their not being of you, but importantly also other in the ontological identity category they occupy. That gaze is defining; the other becomes the yardstick by which the individual measures themself. The experience of Blackness in America, for DuBois, is that of looking back at oneself through the eyes of the white other. That self-view cements an understanding of self as inferior and, essentially, other to one's own self image. Importantly, the other, here, is the oppressive institution of whiteness. Therefore, we can also understand the work DuBois provides us with as being exemplary of the material danger of the conscience, as Nietzsche constructs it. Internalizing the moral voice of the other that says, for example, 'murder is wrong and you should not do it' seems to be materially beneficial. It instructs people not to murder, clearly a social good. However, the voice internalized does not repeat merely neutral or righteous moral imperatives. It can just as well be the voice of an oppressor or a different unrighteous and cruel other.

Through our foray into Nietzsche's conscience and DuBois's double consciousness we may now understand the resulting psychological harm of the internalized voice of the other. Importantly, by the claiming of the other's voice, we become alienated from ourselves. In the addition of the other into our personal matrix, we outsource some of our control over our interior. We become mixed up in a whirlwind of identification, losing a core of individuality through which to interact. The other's voice becomes as loud as our own in personal internal matters.

We will now turn to Jacques Lacan for an account of the internalization of other and its mechanism. For Lacan, the other becomes internal at 'the mirror stage,' the moment an infant, when looking in a mirror, first recognizes that image as themself. Before that, their relation to their mirrored image would be the same as a dog's or another animal's. At that point, there is no mechanism by which they are able to connect the image within the mirror back to themself. Their reflection is alien to them, just in the way that any other person outside of themself is. However, at a certain point in development the child enters into, what Lacan calls, the mirror stage. It is at that point that the child looks at the image in the mirror and claims it as their own, as themself. Importantly, for Lacan, the mirrored image fundamentally remains other to the child's subject. It is but a mere surface image, not, in fact, the child. The mirrored reflection still resides outside of the child's self and remains alien, but yet the child still identifies with it anyway. It is at this moment that the child, by claiming other as itself, enters into the consciousness that internalizes the other. He writes, in the essay "The Mirror Stage as Formative of the *I* Function" within *Écrits,* that the realization of the mirror stages enters a child into a process of becoming "objectified in the dialectic of identification with the other" (76). When the child identifies the mirrored image as "me," they are immediately placed within a dialectical

relationship between themself and other in which they simultaneously identify with both as the same. They become aware, not only phenomenologically, but reflexively as well. That is to say, that they not only experience, but also look back upon that experience. He describes the realization of the mirror stage as the "moment that decisively tips the whole of human knowledge into mediatization through the desire of the other" (5). It is the single fulcrum upon which the internal world becomes subverted and of the other. After this point, no longer are you for yourself, but you are for the other. The language of "mediatization," meaning the process by which media affects other forms of culture, is particularly poignant here. Imagine, say, a professional athlete giving a post-game interview. The answers they give are, of course, not genuine to them, but intended to satiate the desires of the ultimate symbolic other, represented by the media. They are, at that moment, mediatized. However, common understanding is that mediatization only happens for brief moments. Yes, perhaps the athlete is mediatized in that interview, but then he goes on to be his own individual, capable of truly personal thought. For Lacan, the mirror stage makes this untrue. In the moment of the interview, the athlete is explicitly mediatized, but they then go back and, having internalized the gaze of the other, maintain this state even privately. The athlete has already identified with the other dialectically and the other's desires have insidiously entered their psyche. Finally resulting in the alienation from self that Nietzsche touches on. That alienation consists of the natural subversion of the mirror stage. We internalize the gaze of the other within ourselves, making the so-called sovereign man a perpetual other.

From the moment the image in the mirror becomes identified as "me," the gaze of the other is installed into the workings of the inner world. Lost is the absolutely personal nature of

the infant mind and begun is the alienation wrought by the internalized other. What are the stakes of that alienation and what are we to do about it in this project? Determining the level of concern we ought to have about this phenomenon is tricky. In a certain way the alienation is inevitable; we cannot, presumably, go back and unrecognize ourselves in the mirror after all. However, at the same time, its dangers and complications are not to be overlooked. This alienation insidiously changes the very way we interact with the world. We think, not only in our own thoughts, but in the thoughts of the internalized and imagined other. Our own conceptions of the world, what is good, bad, right, wrong, desirable, exciting, decent, dreadful, or any other adjective of the type become mixed up, to some degree, with a collective understanding. While it is true that a degree of that alienation is a basic fact of human life, particularly of society, as Nietzsche acknowledges, it does not follow that it must be accepted entirely and uncritically. If we are to accept that the other's gaze is within us and there's no getting it out, we must then ask how can we subdue it? This project does not seek to entirely answer that question, that would be far too wide in scope. At this stage, however, it does offer one important link in a chain towards an answer; it begins with the recognition of the other's presence. We must know that it is there and holds psychological sway. If we do not then we claim its thoughts as our own, and we are lost. Our next step must be in figuring out more specifics; how does the other exhibit itself and how else does it become internalized?

The Linguistic Distortion

Proceeding from an understanding of the internalization of the other, we must turn our focus towards mechanism. I will be arguing that one of the key means by which we identify with the other is through linguistic channels. When we attempt to speak, that world goes through a process of transliteration which has the inevitable result of distortion and reduction. This is, in its purest form, a temporal claim, one that orders events and is, in a certain sense, historical. The events, in the broadest possible strokes, move as follows: first a feeling internally arises, then we make linguistic the feeling—this part of the process is internal. Finally, we vocalize the feeling in order to communicate it to another. I'd like to focus on this moment, the second stage in the linguistic process: the linguicizing[1] of feeling. I will be painting a picture in which, within the model of linguistics presented, it is at this pivotal second stage that we encounter a distortion, or depersonalizing, of feeling. We will see through Nietzsche's pen that the experience of Lacan's mirror stage is easily imposed onto language. The personal world of the interior, when transliterated into language, is shown through the modality of the other. In this chapter, we will continue to explore that phenomenon, from the angles of the intimate and the philosophical (if there even is such a distinction to be made).

Let us begin in the personal. Now, if you care to allow me, I wish to share an anecdote that may enlighten us both. As is often true, an example of distortion is clearest when pushed to an extreme place, at the liminal fringes of language. Recently, a dear friend of mine lost his father suddenly and painfully. This person is a friend of ten years, a person whom I have spent much of my life growing and learning with. His father was a major figure in my life, a man who

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[1] A word just made up! For the record, meaning to make linguistic.

helped guide a process of growing into adulthood. There are few people in this world whom I am more equipped to communicate with and few topics I am more equipped to communicate about. However, despite that, when I saw my friend I was *unable* to speak in a way that felt sufficient. It was not that I did not feel *enough,* nor that I did not know the situation *enough.* I can assure you that was not the case. It was that there *are no words* that could accurately express my emotion; pure language *simply does not have the capacity to communicate what I felt.* I wished to speak in language, which, as we'll soon see, reduces my feelings to that of a collective. The feelings evoked at that extreme were too acutely personal, too intimate, to be accurately generalized. I spoke in ways that fell short, but, more importantly, I was silent with my friend.

A Digression On Speaking And Silence

Is silence the opposite of speaking? It strikes me that the answer may not be so clear, nor necessarily universal. Perhaps some silence is the opposite of some speaking. Perhaps, as Nietzsche says in *Beyond Good and Evil,* "the fundamental faith of the metaphysicians is *the faith in opposite values.* It has not even occurred to the most cautious among them that one might have a doubt right here" (10). Maybe there are no such opposites to be found. In a letter to Heinrich von Stein, Nietzsche writes, of his own "life's task" that they "may not speak of [it]. Or rather, being as [they] are, two very different persons, [they] may not even be silent together on [that] point" (198). Nietzsche poses silence's relation to speech not as opposite, but as a parallel alternative. It is unclear whether he considers the two as slightly misaligned synonyms, e.g. 'hear' to 'listen,' as degrees e.g. 'run' to 'walk,' or as words that don't have a referential

relationship but are related, e.g. 'eat' to 'drink.' In any case, silence works as a communication, just not one in the sense we're used to. In their shared silence, Nietzsche would not have divulged any specific information nor would von Stein. However, there is something shared, something about togetherness that still allows a kind of communication. In this tension, we see a potential for a reorienting of communication. The standard discursive understanding of communication is limited to a transfer of concrete information. Perhaps Nietzsche is guiding us towards a more abstract form, one that involves expression and togetherness without any specifics.

Here we turn back to Jacques Lacan for an account of our psyche that establishes a space that is fundamentally unutterable. Lacan picturizes the psyche as three interlocking rings: The Symbolic, The Imaginary, and The Real. We will be dealing primarily in The Real, but the three are interdependent and cannot be severed entirely. Let me be clear, there is no way to work with these categories that is both concise and entirely specific, Lacan made sure of that. So allow me to concede and apologize for the fact that this fleshing out will be somewhat cursory, but not inaccurate. In addition, our use of these categories will be limited; we are not delving into every aspect of their psychoanalytic importance, but just the ways they lend themselves to this investigation. I will be quite transparent about which parts I am mobilizing in order to avoid any confusion or dishonesty. We may begin with the order of The Symbolic. It is here that we are dealing with linguistics and the more formal ways that we interact with the world. We may use an example, borrowed from a conversation with Lacanian scholar Dr. Helena Gibbs, that will

seem jarring, but works quite well to illustrate our point. Let's take the experience of a survivor

of The Holocaust, liberated from Aushwitz. Their description of the experience of the camp

belongs to The Symbolic order. The act of describing is comprised of the arrangement of

signifiers in order to elucidate what, exactly, occurred within the camp. The Imaginary order

deals in images and sensory information. That is in the realm of the sensuous and emotive. In the

case of our survivor, they could perhaps paint a detailed and exact picture of the camp, a surface

picture working merely with aesthetics, and it would belong to the imaginary order. Now, at this

point, we are granted an image of the camp through The Imaginary and a linguistic and specific

narrative through The Symbolic, yet we have still not dealt with The Real. You would be

forgiven for asking "If we have already covered these seemingly illustrative factors, what, then,

is still up for grabs?" The answer to your question is at once all too simple and, at the same time,

impossible! There is a certain element in our current picture, built through The Symbolic and

The Imaginary, that is not communicated. It is the phenomenological experience that our

survivor undergos at the camp. No matter how much they can describe and illustrate the

circumstance of the camp, the tortures they may have been subjected to, and their daily routine,

there is a dimension that *can not be articulated.* This dimension is The Real. Lacan, in his only

televised lecture, titled both as "Jacques Lacan: Télévision" and "La Psychanalyse 1 & 2," opens

by saying "I always speak the truth. Not the whole truth, because there's no way to say it all.

Saying it all is literally impossible: words fail." Ah! What poetic language from a man who only

offers us convoluted neologisms and jargon! Our survivor offers us absolute truth (in as much as

their truth is perspectival) when they describe the camps to us. However, their truth is

incomplete, for it must be! It is lacking in the real! The truth both Lacan and our survivor fail to speak, The Real, is phenomenological; it is the ineffable.

Lacan's account of The Real allows us entrance to a particular and unutterable part of understanding. It carves out a formal space for that which is unable to be moved from its post within the interior. That formalizing, though, begs the ironic question of what exactly resides within the order of The Real and why it is designated as such. I refrain from offering a discursive answer here, for neither I nor Lacan believe one can be with any semblance of accuracy. I offer, in its place, a return to chapter one and a reminder; that which is purely internal is inextractable. What, then, is purely internal? We ought to be careful here, for this is messy territory. The distinction I seek to make, which does not claim to be absolute nor binary, lies within origin. What we can communicate with a certain degree of accuracy and success originates in exteriority and passes through the interior, merely as a means of processing. Does that mean that it can be communicated with complete success? I suspect not. If I point at a cherry and say "that cherry is red," there is still no guarantee that the recipient of my observation has the same conception of red and therefore successfully receives complete and accurate communication, nor have I made clear what shade of red I speak of. However, we both have an understanding of what the general meaning of "red" is and can come to a certain agreement on what that implies in a practical setting. Therefore, our first category, that which can be somewhat communicated, is that which is analyzed in the interior but originates in the exterior. Our second category begins in the interior, perhaps in response to external stimuli. Let's take that same cherry from above, if I eat it I can describe the taste as "sweet." My friend will still, to the degree possible, understand what I mean. However, I cannot articulate the way that that taste makes me, internally, feel. That is because the

former example, how it tastes, is a description of an exteriority, it still pertains to and is about the

cherry first and how I interact with it, second. The latter, though, is about me. The cherry just

happens to be the catalyst. It is the location of origin of a phenomenon that determines the degree

to which it can be expressed in specific form.

A Digression On Style

Nietzsche, in a letter to Erwin Rhodes, speaks of his writing, saying that his " style is a

dance—a play of symmetries. This enters the very vowels" (221). Is it possible to be liberated

through stylistic means? Nietzsche may be attempting a circumvention of linguistic trappings.

Trying to use poetic language that aspires to beauty in order to weave and dodge past specificity.

If he can, as he tries to, dance with words then perhaps he can dance around the issues of

communication we are detailing, if just some of the way.

That begs the question, what is this process that we undergo when we attempt to

linguicize and express our internal world? We will turn back to Nietzsche and a passage from

The Gay Science that will become core to this project. In aphorism 354, Nietzsche takes up the

question of consciousness, by which he means reflexive consciousness, defined as a denotation

of a subject referring back upon itself, and its direct relationship to language. He begins, "the

subtlety and strength of consciousness always were proportionate to a man's (or animal's)

capacity for communication" (298). The revelatory nature of this claim is easily missed; the

origin of our self consciousness, our very awareness of ourselves as individual or subject, is in response to the ability to communicate. The ability to look back upon ourselves developed in order to communicate. Without reflexivity, we would not be able to package our experience in a way that is comprehensible to the other. Nietzsche describes that consciousness further, writing that "we could think, feel, will, and remember, and we could also "act" in every sense of that word, and yet none of all this would have to enter our consciousness" (297). Here, Nietzsche is breaking with a conception of consciousness that is tied to a capacity to action. The doing of a thing is utterly irrelevant; it is the *awareness of one's self doing so* that matters. Following that logic, awareness of self and action must serve a purpose, that is communication. His argument is somewhat simple. We become reflexively conscious in order to communicate to others. That is, we bring our experiences explicitly into our awareness so that it can be actively described to another. The crossing of the threshold of self, requires self-acknowledgement. The conclusion drawn, then, is "that consciousness does not really belong to man's individual existence but rather to his social or herd nature [...] our thoughts themselves are [...] translated back into the perspective of the herd" (299). Again, the claim here is simple enough. Because our reflexive consciousness exists for the purpose of allowing communication, it's mechanistic function is a transliteration[2] of sorts, from the domain of the personal to that of the public. Nietzsche writes of the result of consciousness's mechanism that "fundamentally, all our actions are altogether incomparably personal, unique, and infinitely individual; there is no doubt of that. But as soon as we translate them into consciousness they no longer seem to be" (299). Here, we come face to face with the core of our issue: when our interior is transliterated into the modality of

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[2] Nietzsche uses "translation," but I choose to use transliteration in its place for the sake of avoiding linguicizing the internal.

consciousness, which is thereby the modality of communication, which is, finally, the modality

of the other, it ceases to be so uniquely ours.

Nietzsche comes to a similar conclusion to Lacan, in the mirror stage, regarding this kind

of reflexive consciousness, but he arrives at it from a different route, one that will be of more

direct application to the work that we are doing at present. Nietzsche mobilizes the same central

object, a mirror. He writes, speaking of the unnecessary nature of consciousness, that "the whole

of life would be possible without, as it were, seeing itself in a mirror" (297). Just as Lacan does,

Nietzsche understands self-consciousness to be akin to looking at one's own reflection. Their

claims align; a mirror raised to one's own actions results in the claiming of the other as one's self

and vice versa. Where he importantly differs, however, is in the formulation of that mirroring

effect. Rather than being done through a literal mirror and the world of apparences, as it is for

Lacan, Nietzsche understands the mirror to be placed through the fact of communication and,

more specifically, language. Lacan writes in his third seminar, titled *The Psychoses,* that

"alienation is constitutive of the imaginary order," that is, the order that deals with images and

senses (146). Nietzsche is then shifting the alienation of the mirror stage from the imaginary into

the symbolic. The very act of linguisizing, of bringing into consciousness, alienates us from our

own action and our own internal world. It takes that which is entirely personal and non linguistic,

and translates it into that which peddles in the herd consciousness. It attempts to make what is

fundamentally and inextricably mine, yours to share.

The argument that I am making may be misunderstood here. One could think "I see, we

are to understand that the problem of this all is that we have a natural inner self and we falsely

transliterate it and become estranged from our *true selves."* However, that is not the case. Such

an argument has a place, perhaps being made by a pure Nietzschean, but that place is not here. This project is unconcerned with what is true and natural; instead, we must concern ourselves with phenomenological and perspectival reality, not on any ontological or essentialist basis. You may respond, "if not for the sake of the true self, then, why is this interior space, which has been outlined, so important that alienation from it is worthy of such great concern?" In answering this I come to a crossroads, a point of unsuredness and tension in the work that my reader, observant as you are, must have picked up on already. Now, a possible answer would be that the interior, or private, world holds a special significance. Perhaps it is the least corrupted by the non personal. Perhaps I could just assert that blindly and ask the reader to accept it. However, I will not do such a thing. This interior, at which our concerns begin, need not hold any special ontological, metaphysical, or epistemological place at all! Am I saying that it *does not hold a place of particular importance?* No! Nor am I saying that it does! The question of the interior's place in a psychological hierarchy is one I gleefully decline to answer, for doing so brings us only trouble and no reward. We do not need to concern ourselves with how important this space and its contents are. The bedrock assertion of the work, regarding the interior, is that it *exists.* This is not a minor nor uncontroversial claim, but that can be the business of the first chapter. Our claim is not, as some might understand it, that we are being alienated from a particularly important part of ourselves, or perhaps even the part of ourselves that is *truly real.* No, we are working with the argument that, merely, *a* part of ourselves is being incorrectly communicated and thus estranging us from it. This part holds equal weight to anything else, but all parts must hold weight! There is no need for a unique sanctity to grant an aspect-of-self importance. The interior is, simply, one of our parts and we do not—as it goes—have infinite parts! Linguistic self expression, then, does

disservice to one of our parts, causing a profound alienation, a disharmony between the interior and our connections to the world. That disharmony itself is what we are concerned with.

A Digression On Language and The Things We Wish To Say

Let us acknowledge and establish a necessary difference. That is the distinction between words and what they mean. Let me be clear, this is not essentialism in a linguistic form; we are not dealing with Truths and words that attempt to symbolize them. Instead, we are making a *technical distinction* between the thing a word refers to and the word itself. The act of drawing this particular distinction must be placed in the outstretched hands of phenomenology, therefore we will amend our distinction from 'words and what they mean' to 'words and what they who uttered them intended them to mean.' In doing so, we avoid concerns of truth and lies, veils and what lies beyond, or the material and ideal, such bickering is best left to the metaphysicians and philosophers of essence. However, 'meaning,' a word I must admit draws me, carries far too much baggage from philosophers past who used it in ways different than I would ever dream. Instead, we will borrow from our dear friends the semioticians—Ferdinand de Saussure in particular—the vocabulary of signifier and signified. Of course, we are not working directly with semiotics, just borrowing their lingo as it were. Therefore, I must provide my own definitions to adapt it to our ongoing linguistic project. Language is a signifier. The signifier *necessarily* holds no independent traits; it has no substance without a signified. The signified, on the other hand, is that which the signifier refers to. The signified holds independent traits, but only becomes 'the signified' when entering into a relationship with 'the signifier.' Let us take, for example, an

apple. As I write this I am holding a Jonagold Apple (I work at an apple farm on the weekends, it is fresh and very delicious). The words I write on this page, 'Jonagold Apple,' are the signifier for the material and non-linguistic actual apple that I hold. The substance of the words 'Jonagold Apple' are entirely dependent on the material reality of Jonagold Apples in general, and, in this case, the one that I am holding in this moment. The apple I hold, however, is indifferent to the fact of its signification. It exists independently of language to refer to it. Regardless of the language, it will continue being, and likely continue to be delicious.

Our world is messy. Giving clear cut answers here is a fool's strategy. Nietzsche himself, whom we are citing as our primary thinker, complicates our process. In *The Gay Science,* he writes "to realize that what things are called is incomparably more important than what they are" (121). Uh oh! That is not what we wish for him to say… Don't worry, gullible reader o mine, I know I had you for a second there, but I'm only kidding. Nietzsche is making a claim here of weight and complication. It certainly can be read at face value, but I offer a different understanding. He begins by writing that this fact has given him "the greatest trouble and still does" (121). The fact of the inversion of importance, from substance to name, is of concern for Nietzsche; it is a negative turn. We have moved away from the material thing and towards what it's called, and particularly what it's called by others. That name is "almost always wrong and arbitrary" but "becomes in the end, almost invariably the essence [of the thing] and is effective as such" (122). The inversion of substance and name leads to a disruption of materiality by that which is arbitrary and, according to Nietzsche—the great destroyer of binaries— "wrong." We

can extrapolate, then, that the insight towards which Nietzsche points us is about the secondary effects of language. It is not merely used as a tool to approximate something more whole; it subverts and replaces that holistic substance. In this, we are not only alienated from each other, but from ourselves as well. The danger becomes not only having *you* believe that I am merely 'feeling melancholy,' as we spoke about in the first chapter, but that I will believe so as well. Language becomes a mediator of my experience of my own interior. I run the risk of losing access to the profoundly individual and personal nature of myself and replacing it with symbols of the collective.

Here we are left with a more complete picture of the linguistic effect. Language and self consciousness develop in lock step. We become aware of our own psychic activity as much as is required to repackage it into language and export it to the other. Language, then, becomes the paradigm of the other. When we speak, we are transliterating our deeply personal interior experience into a form that makes expression to the other possible. In doing so, we invite the other into our internal processes, allowing them entrance to our subconscious mind. Speech and language are riddled with inaccuracy and loss. It is insufficient in the communication it attempts. Finally, the linguistic world becomes so integrated into psychic experience that it inverts and replaces degrees of experience. We become alienated from a more whole and pure feeling by mediating it through the representative of the other. We lose levels of complexity, levels of wholeness, and, most importantly, it ceases to be so, as Nietzsche puts it, "incomparably personal, unique and infinitely individual" (299).

On Connection

It is now, after many pages of writing on the problems of doing so, time that we turn towards the *need* to express and connect. Remember, if you will, in the introduction we read an excerpt from my grandmother's letter. She wrote that she had a "a wordless wild cadence of music in [her] heart and mind" and yet, despite the self diagnosed impossibility, the language of the letter "pours and eddies to [her] fingertips." One of the most tremendous assumptions of this project is that, in spite of the difficulties of doing so, people, in general, wish deeply to express to and connect with each other. We must understand both that my grandmother wrote because she *had* to express what was within her*,* and that she wrote in words because she had no other medium at her disposal. The purpose of this leg of the project is to imagine, very loosely, how a person could express without language, what a different kind of expression and connection could look like. As much as I wish this were not the case, we will not solve any problems in the following pages. The hubris I possess, though sizable, is not great enough to claim that. I hope that this chapter serves as a spark, for me as much as for you. How can I express myself as myself for myself to another? How can I bravely take a leap of faith away from the trappings of the specific and reflexive and into the vague and unsure without fear? The answer does not seem universal to me. I do not write prescriptively. I implore of the reader for an openness of mind; I ask you to replace either your "yes" or your "no" with a powerful maybe. Think to yourself, if only until the next chapter break, "what could it feel like if I expressed this way?" Perhaps you'll imagine it as freeing. You could, of course, imagine it feeling horrible. That too is ok! Just hold this question closely: how could I express without *telling* how I feel?

Nietzsche's great meditation on the nature of connection in *The Gay Science*, "Over The Footbridge," haunts the aspirations of this project. How may we learn to embrace our distance and use it to connect and love more truly, without the pretense of internal sharing? If we acknowledge that our use of language alienates us from a part of ourselves in our attempt to connect, then a very reasonable response is to refrain from connection. However, that is despair and I shall not stand for it! Nietzsche writes "there was a time in our lives when we were so close that nothing seemed to obstruct our friendship and brotherhood, and only a small footbridge separated us" (90). He is gesturing largely towards connection and an extreme example at that, a situation of such closeness that it appeared as though it was completely unobstructed. However, we good philosophers know to pay close attention to what is and what merely seems to be. Nietzsche is guiding us here towards the latter. Yes, these two friends had a connection of such intensity that they believed that they had total unblocked access to each other, merely a footbridge in between them. Of course, this is only an appearance, a delusion, what seems to be. Nietzsche continues that "just as you were about to step on it, I asked you: "Do you want to cross the footbridge to me?" —Immediately, you did not want to any more; and when I asked you again, you remained silent" (90). This simple question, with the intention of intimacy, causes a radical change in their relationship. How is it that such a question could have such an inverse effect? Nietzsche writes that "since then mountains and torrential rivers and whatever separates and alienates have been cast between us, and even if we wanted to get together, we couldn't" (90). The very invitation to cross the boundary between two individuals corrupted their dynamic. The verbal acknowledgment of removing that distance, in Nietzsche's own words, alienates the

two friends from each other. They cannot call out in order to reach each other, and to pretend as if they can spoils their connection.

Here we must ask of Herr Nietzsche, are you pointing us towards distance as a necessary part of relationships for its own virtue? Or is distance a given and deceiving ourselves into believing that it's a hindrance and, itself, crossable causes us distress? The answer here is nuanced. To understand, we must look at what it means to cross the footbridge. It does us no service to consider the footbridge as a metaphysical bridge from your inner life to mine. Doing so would be a contradiction; bridges are, of course, passable. In fact, that is the defining feature of a bridge. As we've established through the breadth of this work, however, that is a feature unshared by the interior. Rather, we are dealing with a different aspect of the picture of connection here, one not unrelated to the divide between the inner and the outer, but not identical either. It is best to think of the footbridge as a spatial manifestation of a binary of connection, between the detailed and the genuine. That is, it represents the gap between a gesture from a distance and specifics from up close.

We run into a beautiful contradiction here. The necessary condition for a crossing of the footbridge is dissimulation and unspecificity. If we wish to pass across it, we must not speak for speaking engenders distance. Yet, it seems we cannot be invited to cross the footbridge without being spoken to. We can look to the previous aphorism, "From A Distance," for some clarification. Nietzsche begins by speaking of a mountain which "makes the landscape it dominates charming and significant in every way" (89). The presence of the mountain makes the larger circumstance more beautiful. Because we understand that, "we become so unreasonable and grateful that we suppose that whatever bestows so much charm must also be the most

charming thing around and we climb the mountain and are disappointed" (89). The story tells itself here and makes much sense! I write this from Dutchess County, New York, a place with spectacular views across the Hudson River of The Catskill Mountains. I often admire them from my distanced perspective. I've always been struck by a particular phenomenon on the mountains: the shadow of clouds. The scale of the dance they perform is enchanting. Now, my friend, I don't tell you this just to inform you of my taste in mountain occurrences, however excellent it may be. I tell you because if I were on the mountain in that shadow of a cloud, I would simply be experiencing shade! I would lose the perspective that comes with distance and my understanding would become isolated in its specificity. Nietzsche brings the point home saying that "suddenly, the mountain itself and the whole landscape around us, below us, have lost their magic. We had forgotten that some greatness, like some goodness, wants to be beheld only from a distance" (90). If we wish to experience the whole of the mountain's beauty, we must resign ourselves to a loss of the specificity in close contact.

In aphorism 60, Nietzsche imagines "a large sailboat, gliding along as silently as a ghost;" he wonders if his "happiness itself sit[s] in this quiet place [...] quietly observing, gliding, floating? As the boat that with its white sails moves like an immense butterfly over the dark sea. Yes! To move over existence!" (123). Nietzsche is imagining a beauty in being on the outside of something. He is silently observing, silently taking in the whole of a thing. From his perch atop the sailboat he gains the distance necessary to understand and admire a holistic beauty. Perhaps he is missing details, but that is besides the point. What is important is that he has perspective and distance. He revels in his externality; it is the very thing that grants him the ability to marvel and find happiness. He would never wish to give it up to be within something.

Returning to "Over The Footbridge," Nietzsche finishes the parable writing that "when you now think of that little footbridge, words fail you and you sob and marvel" (90). The footbridge cannot be crossed, nor addressed, with words and when we think of such a thing we have no choice but to simply feel at it. Here we see a completion of a short study of connection and its necessary components. Intimacy requires distance. If we confuse the intimate with the unobstructed, then we find ourselves corrupting the connections we hold most dear. We attempt, with our language, to hold two great communications in hands that can only handle one. We wish to be holistic and to be specific. Our question then remains, can we cross the footbridge if we abandon language?

I wish I were able to provide an answer in binary form, a yes or a no. However, our investigation does not lead us to such a thing. I'll leave that to the next writer. We are not coming to a conclusion that is to language as day is to night, rather we seek a dawn. Not a sun risen to its noon day peak, but the first glimmer of light at the break in the darkness. Our question can be rephrased in three ways, between which I am unprepared to pick—whether that be for intellectual precision or perhaps just a cowardice of writing. I will, with great apology, leave the task of decision up to the reader. First, we may understand our question as 'can we wordlessly approach the footbridge?' Second, it may be 'can we begin to cross the footbridge?' Lastly, 'can we find ourselves on the other side of the footbridge without intending to have done so?' I will not elaborate on the virtues of each individually; I will merely instruct you, the reader, to continue with whatever question most resonates with you. They are, afterall, incomparably personal questions.

<u>A Digression On Love</u>

Here, I abandon all pretense of formal philosophy, just for the section. I choose to infuse it with a dance for my own sake if nobody else's. Why must we love and not despair? Why must we connect? Why not, as Zarathustra does, isolate in the cave to find the way forward? What is the virtue of connecting and of loving? What silly questions to ask! If you were to ask an unhappy man why he may love his partner he'd certainly answer in discrete lists, hence his unhappiness! Why must we love? Because we must! Reason has nothing to do with it! I am reminded of Zizek who, in his titular movie, *Zizek!,* poses, with no logic but feeling and a relation to quantum physics, that the fact of the existence of anything at all is a "cosmic catastrophe" and "that the only way to counter this is to go to the end and assume the mistake, and we have a name for this. It's called love." If the universe is catastrophic, then love is its answer and its resolution. When I am asked why I love I can lie and say specifics, perhaps someone's kindness, the color of their eyes, or their humor, that is usually the intended answer to that question, is it not? Or I can be honest and say bravely "I do not know! I just know that I must!"

We have established now, throughout the breadth of this work, that we, as people, experience a fundamental wish to express. That wish is a mysterious thing which I make no claims to unpack outside of acknowledging its existence. However, the medium we traditionally have at our disposal for this all important sharing, language, is at best incomplete and, at worst, corrupting. That corruption comes to us by way of a reflexive consciousness that enters us into a

dialectical relationship in which we become alienated by identifying with the other. Our concern, then, of immediate relevance is how to circumvent that reflexivity, how do we express in the modality of the self? I will offer three case studies that perhaps can get us closer to an answer. They will be surrealist automatic writing, jazz music, and, finally, a dance form, Contact Improvisation. We will find, as a common thread, all three examples center around improvisational practice. The first will explore improvisation as a solitary act, the second improvisation as group prodigious practice, and the third improvisation as physicalized non reflexive conversation. Improv, definitionally, carries the particular trait of being non-premeditated. In its spontaneity, it circumvents a degree of reflexivity. None of these case studies will make any claim to solve our question, nor will they, in specific, be suggested as consisting of a move towards a solution. Rather, we will try to understand what it is, exactly, about each that helps, or restricts, a non reflexive communication. I implore the reader not to grant too much weight to any of the examples, but, instead, to undergo a process of extraction in which any helpful information can be gleaned.

In the seminal 1924 writing, *The Surrealist Manifesto,* Andre Breton defines surrealism as "pure psychic automatism by which it is intended to express, either verbally or in writing, the true function of thought. Thought dictated in the absence of all control exerted by reason, and outside all aesthetic or moral preoccupations" (298). We are granted, here, a quick and easy connection to our work. Breton supposes a view of the mind, in very much the same fashion we have, that places human thought as essentially private. However, he presents a teleological view, that we abstain from, in which thought has a 'true function.' We can, however, still identify, in slightly different terms, with the gist of his argument. For Breton, thoughts are depersonalized by

their formation apropos reason, aesthetics, and morals. It is fair to suppose here that this depersonalization occurs for very much the same reason we've been working with in regards to language. Reason, morals, and aesthetics are all, for the surrealists, modalities of collective thought. Therefore, when thought is formed by these modalities they are not personal, but collective, and made, for Breton, untrue. The surrealist project, then, is an attempt to reclaim the personal nature of thought and circumvent the structures that collectivize them. The means by which they attempted to do so, that we will focus on, is automatic writing.

In her book, *Automatic Writing,* Anita M Muhl describes the process as writing "as quickly as possible, attempting to remove conscious control or interest over what was being written" (2). Here we can recall Nietzsche's words about consciousness from *The Gay Science*, that "our actions are altogether incomparably personal, unique. and infinitely individual [...] but as soon as we translate them into consciousness they no longer seem to be" (299). In the surrealists attempt to circumvent conscious control, they are, more fundamentally, attempting to retrieve the personal nature of their thoughts. I'd like to examine the key components of the practice so as to more clearly understand its successes and shortcomings apropos both its goal and ours. The defining features of automatic writing—its speed, fluidity, and disregard for aspirations towards narrative, linearity, or any sense at all—are what draw me to it as a potential framework through which to think. The automatic writer seeks to circumvent the processes that turn language into specific communication and, thereby, into the terms of the other. In order to do so, Breton instructs the writer to "write quickly, without any preconceived subject, fast enough so that you will not remember what you're writing and be tempted to reread what you

have written" (29-30). Breton is describing an attempt to outrun the internalized other. He leads

the writer to channel the internal by minimizing the space for interference by the external.

Of course, importantly, automatic writing is an expression made of language! The very

thing we have spent 3 chapters critiquing! This certainly is a complicator! What is the purpose of

the language which comprises automatic writing? Is it direct communication? I believe that it is

not. The automatic writer does not discursively tell their feelings, but they arrange language

abstractly. In this, we make room for a use of language that does not engage the estranging

nature of direct language. Although composed of language, automatic writing does not primarily

seek to communicate specifically and literally. It is using language as a medium, rather than its

substance.

Automatic writing raises another important question: what role does solitude play?

Breton believes that the isolated action of writing can bring about an expression that circumvents

reflexivity and the internalized other, but does it, in the process, circumvent the other altogether?

Certainly that is not our goal, we wish to connect! Perhaps it poses a question of order; I can

only connect and express with you *once* I do the same for myself. That is to say, I cannot

automatically write for you, but I can show it to you once I'm finished and that amounts to a

similar result to immediate sharing. In this system of expression, it may be that the other is only

involved part of the time in a cycling relationship between isolation and togetherness.

Interestingly, that mirrors Zarathustra's movements for Nietzsche, who rotates between isolation

in a cave atop a mountain and travel, in which he speaks with others and teaches students.

Our next case study of improvisation will be jazz music. Jazz, as opposed to automatic

writing, is made communally among groups of players. Importantly, all active participants, in

this case musicians, must exhibit a certain degree of competence and fluency within the field in order to engage. Therefore, it is a practice with prerequisites. One can not, at least in the modern iteration, simply sit down with an instrument and play jazz. Of course, 'jazz' is a broad category, and I acknowledge it as such. We are speaking of improvised jazz of the American tradition. Jazz has a historical significance that must be noted in our exploration. In the popular imaginary, with a good deal of historical accuracy, the origin of jazz is pinpointed to Congo Square in New Orleans. It was there that, according to historian Dr. Gary A. Donaldson in his book *A Window On Slave Culture: Dances At Congo Square In New Orleans, 1800-1862*, "slaves recently from Africa were allowed to spend Sunday afternoons dancing and singing, and remembering their African heritage" (63). It is at this site that the celebration and remembrance of an identity, that has been systematically stripped by the other, forms into what we now know as jazz music. The other, here, is not an arbitrary representation of a person other than the self. It is the sinister and cruel other that represents white supremacy, the slave trade, and horrific racialized violence. Jazz, in its origin, is a response to chattel slavery, the most base and profound oblitaration of self by and for the other. It is from this origin that it gets its acute power. Jazz, historically, exists as a reclamation of self in the face of the most literal possible theft.

In its more modern iterations, we can see the evolution of the form and its continued relevance to our project. For our purposes, we will understand jazz in its most simple and recognizable form: improvised music, usually played in groups, and deriving from the African-American compositional tradition. There is much to bicker about in this definition, but it is loose and will do for our purposes. In performance, the improvisation is key. As with our other examples, it circumvents reflexivity. However, unlike either of our other examples, jazz has

necessary conditions to be met before improvisation can begin. Its two conditions (discounting the obvious instrument possession, group presence, etc.) are structuring compositional elements and musical fluency. I don't intend either of those factors to spoil jazz's relevance to this project as a non reflexive expressive form; I see them, at worst, as complicators and, at best, as specifiers. First, let's examine the component of musical fluency. It suggests a bar for entry; if someone wants to express through the playing of jazz music, it can't be done haphazardly. In doing so, it becomes a partially closed practice, one that requires prerequisites before joining. Does that mean it is disqualified from our consideration? No! It simply means that the specific practice cannot be universalised. Not any schlub who buys a saxophone can express with jazz; it must be done with true intention and follow through. Second, let's look at the compositional structures. The standard format for jazz composition is skeletal. It details motifs and checkpoints, but much of the specifics are left up to the players. The fact of structure informs the way we think about jazz as a means of extra-linguistic expression. First, we have a temporal element. The improvisational element of jazz is in touch and correspondence with a previous structural and reflexive element. That is, the spontaneity of jazz playing is bracketed by the previous and premeditated work of a composer. It is, at once, improvisational and structured. Those modalities enter conversation in the final product of playing. A generous reading of its temporality is as an anchoring to a previous aspect of self. The music is tied referentially to a self that has been removed. That is given more power when we remember the historical content of identity being violently removed. Less kindly, we could read it as subverting and corrupting, to some degree, the non-reflexive elements of playing. The compositional element also importantly raises the question of subject: whose expression is it? Is it the composers? The players? Some hybrid? It is

here that it seems to me we reach a critical point for our interest in jazz. It is an expression that remains individual—composers usually work alone and it's standard practice for players to solo at least once per performance—but also functions collectively. There are discreet internal expressions of individual self *and yet* there remain seamless communal expressions at the same time. It seems that, in this way, the structure of jazz is able to, perhaps just partially, erect bridges while maintaining individual status.

Finally, we move on to Contact Improvisation. Steve Paxton, writing self-referentially, in Contact Quarterly, the journal of Contact Improvisation, offers this definition of contact in their 4th volume no 2 in 1979: "Contact Improvisation is an evolving system of movement initiated in 1972 by American choreographer Steve Paxton. The improvised dance form is based on the communication between two moving bodies that are in physical contact and their combined relationship to the physical laws that govern their motion [...] Contact improvisations are spontaneous physical dialogues that range from stillness to highly energetic exchange." We can take some very particular bits of language from the definition to guide us to what is most alluring to me about the communication in Contact Improvisation.

Paxton sets up the foundation of the contact project as "communication between two moving bodies." From the start we are dealing in terms of communication, it is an act of sharing, of expressing to each other. That communication is, importantly, between 'moving bodies.' It is done between two entities fundamentally in flux, still in communication, but flexible and unspecific. The physicality of communication in a shared dance removes the pretense of the reflexive and of the specific. It reduces the dancers to forms moving with each other. They reorient towards themselves in shifting relation to the other. He goes on to write of the

combination of their relationship apropos the laws of physics. Here I'm less interested in the centering around physics, an important technical aspect of the dance but not so much an ideological one. I am, however, interested in the language of a 'combined relationship.' It seeks unity and solidarity, but still maintains a certain fundamental distance. They're combining in relation to another entity, but are still existing as separate and individual. They are unified at a distance. Finally, I'd like to mention his closing definitonal remarks on the "spontaneous physical dialogues." This seems to be the perfect turn of phrase for what strikes me as relevant about contact improvisation, why I see it as an excellent case study in a possible communication. Spontaneity is key. It is purely improvisational, not maintained by an extracorporeal motif like jazz. It circumvents completely the reflexivity of language and forces dancers to dance with complete fluency and immediacy. It completes that excellent spontaneity in the context of a physical dialogue, a conversation without words. While automatic writing is entirely centered around the self and is a solitary act, Contact centers connection around created points of contact between two individuals. It allows two people to communicate wordlessly and without specifics, but to dialogue nonetheless. It is a dialogue that requires a profound improvisational component and, just as importantly, a point of contact between two bodies in motion. It constructs a silent bridge, maybe even a footbridge, between the two moving bodies. Perhaps the bridge is temporary and certainly specifics are unable to traverse it. Yet, there is a bridge where two become one while remaining two.

<u>A Digression On The Listener</u>

Perhaps what we require is not a change in expression. Perhaps it's a reorientation in listening. I wonder if we listen too well, too closely, and too naively. Why must we speak instead of being silent? Why do we feel discomfort in not knowing? If another tells me their feelings, I believe them without question. How can a reorientation towards not knowing change our capacity to connect? Can it bring us closer by smashing the presumption to explicit closeness? If I, as a listener, can learn to not know with much intention then perhaps the problem can be ended with quiet and tacit agreement. A silently held hand can mean more than any word ever spoken or heard; the hands simply must hold each other in an unspoken unison.

Hopefully, after our three case studies, we can start to imagine what non-linguistic, non-reflexive, non-specific communication *could* look like. In my thinking, spontaneity plays an important role. It allows some degree of avoidance of an internalized other. We have also imagined the virtues, or lack thereof, of degrees of solitude, historical practice, group practice, and physicality, among others. How, then, can we incorporate those practices into quotidian life? Surely, I am not advocating for most connecting and life to remain the same with the exception of the occasional artistic practice of expression! We are not only concerned with the act of writing, the jazz show, or the Contact jam (as they're called). We wish to improve the everyday as well, the intimate moments in which connections are *really* formed. Our point, then, is not to prescribe Contact Improvisation, but to ask the question "how can you communicate *like* a dancer?" The answer is not obvious, nor will it be provided. However, it's worth thinking about

in interactions; how can you speak like an automatic writer? How can you listen and respond like a jazz player? These are not logical questions, they are imaginative. In fact, the entirety of this section of the project is a practice of imagination. We are not trying to address any question beginning with "What is," whether that be "what is communication by dance?" or "what is a jazz player saying?" We are speaking towards the question "What could," "what could a dancing communication be?" "what could a jazz player say? Yes, we are trying to envision a new communication, not unpack an old one.

Closing Words

Where now do we stand? Certainly on unsteady ground. We have toyed with an understanding of the interior as personal and unshareable. That exploration led us to questions of the other in the drama of speech and expression. We worked through the implications of the presence of an internalized other and its mechanisms. Following that, we were guided towards an understanding of linguistic expression that sees it as alienatory and distorting, finally dropping us at the questioning towards a new kind of connection and expression. Why, then, do we tread on unsteady ground? Of course, it is because we have arrived at no answers. That is no issue! As Nietzsche wrote in *Beyond Good And Evil*, "there might be a more laudable truthfulness in every little question mark that you place after your special words and favorite doctrines (and occasionally after yourself) than in all the solemn gestures and trumps before accusers and law courts" (36). To find the limit on firmly knowing and acknowledge it as such, instead of pushing past it to firm up a real *truth* is to find a more honest truthfulness. It seems that the domain of this project has a limit and that we have run headlong into it.

Our limit is simple, the matter we seek to take up is entirely personal and can, and for that matter should, not be solved externally. There is no universality to the answers to our terminal question of connection. I simply cannot provide a solution that says "you are doing x wrong and y will fix it." I can, however, detail for you what lies beyond this project for me.

It continues in a certain resignation. I am, by nature, a nervous person. I wish for overcommunication at all turns. Fundamentally, I wish to understand and be understood by others. I don't mean that in a profound sense, but in a very literal one; I wish to know the intention of actions and wish others to know mine. That emerges in nervous and tentative

questions, "are you ok?" "what's on your mind?" "how do you feel?" asked far past the point of being thoughtful. I feel discontent with not knowing. In doing so, I push my friends, loved ones, family, and others I hold dear to, not only the point of annoyance, but into *my* agenda. *I* wish to understand them, even if they wish to remain private or distanced. I am driving them, and myself, further and further into the terms of the other. I wish for them to be specific, and to open themselves completely. In a certain way, I am inviting them, imploring with them even, to cross the footbridge. How may I learn to resign myself into silence and distance? It is not an easy task I assure you. The first step, however, is clear enough. It requires knowing and identifying the roots of the linguistic problem appearing in my own desires and actions, a movement towards an awareness of my wish to cross the footbridge or have it be crossed. The second step, as with all things at a certain level, is to try.

Now of course you ask, "how does one, or more specifically, how will *you* try?" You do not leave me be, my imagined interlocheteur, I was hoping to avoid that particular question! Frankly, I am unsure of how to answer it. I believe that at the heart of an effort to connect more is, for me, an effort to give up a certain kind of control and exhibit a certain kind of trust. I read a Taoist book in a library once when I was about 12, the name of which has always evaded my searches. There was one phrase that stuck with me. The author, whom I unfortunately cannot cite, instructed the reader, perhaps intended to be a practicing Taoist instead of a New York child, to "relinquish your name." There's a certain quality about that phrase that resonates with me. It implores whomever comes across it to let go of a name, that which demarcates the self to the other. In doing so, they become self for self, not a representation of self for another. In connection, that process works reciprocally with the other whom one is connecting to. They are

able to connect with the nameless individual more purely by dropping the pretense of specificity, of name. I apologize if I'm being loquacious or esoteric or any other adjective you choose, but I feel I have to circle the point to get anywhere at all. My point is I wish to try a relinquishment of name in a certain sense, a removal of the pretense of identification for, and therefore with, the other.

In the act of letting go of some specificity, we are acknowledging what we may already be aware of: we cannot know everything. As we continue to furiously grasp at the specific, we are hoping that maybe this time, we'll be able to cross the footbridge. Of course, we never are able to and our persistence only moves us further from each other. If we wish to be closer, to connect more profoundly, we must find ways around the specificity granted by words. We must imagine another way that is not language and another destination that is not knowing.

In her poem "Hunger," Susan Griffin, here quoted from the collection *Reweaving The World: The Emergence of Ecofeminism,* writes "language is filled/ with words for deprivation/ images so familiar/ it is hard to crack language open/ into that other country/ the country of being" (97). Here, in the waning pages of this work, we are granted a destination, albeit aspirational. We wish to 'crack language open' into 'the country of being.' She asks us to inquire, as Nagel did at the early stage of the work, what it means to be and, more importantly, what it means to be something that is not you. She does not simply question, though; she is leading a reader towards an imagination. She is able to note the many "words for deprivation," but implies that those words fall short of illustrating the experience of deprivation, of granting access to The Real. They point towards 'the country of being,' but do not reside nor grant passage there. The titular word, "hunger," serves as a perfect example. Descriptions of hunger

can be understood with clarity, but they do not cross that sacred border. They are not the same as being hungry. However, Griffin's language is not final. She does not categorically reject entrance into the 'country of being,' she merely says it is difficult to do through language. She could easily have written that 'it is impossible to crack language open,' but she does not! She leaves room for hope, room for something closer than a gesture. Although she presents the possibility of an extension past description, she is not prescriptive. She will not provide a roadmap to the country of being, nor an instruction manual to breaking language open. In place of answers, though, she raises a beacon of hope in the form of a period followed by an unstated question. Although it's difficult, we can crack language open and enter the country of being. How?

Thank you for sitting with me until this point. In the last section of *Beyond Good and Evil*, Nietzsche admits his regret, "alas, what are you after all, my written and painted thoughts" (296). What, at the end of his project, *are* his thoughts once manifest? They were once so "colorful [and] young" but are now "so pathetically decent, so dull" (296). Once they breach the fence between his mind and his pen they lose their youthful sheen, some of their joy even. Here I break with Herr Nietzsche. My thoughts are not written on this page, nor painted, nor sung. No, they live somewhere above, or perhaps below, the page. It is there they dance tantalizingly out of grasp. I did not write my thoughts. I merely gestured towards them. They do not live on the page; the page is just a guide towards where they may live. Perhaps they don't live at all. I certainly don't know.

After all of this, where will you be, waiting with outstretched hand?

Warmly,

Isaac Zaslow King

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