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Cosmic Transgression

Rather than aborted, God spewed Man out of the primordial Garden into the world; God cursed Man with the eyesight of consciousness – one eye open (episteme), the other sewn shut (doxa). Aware of his own Historical facticity – born to die, Man used language to transgress against his given primordial origin; made anew – to cast a narrative in his own image that adheres to a mythology (A-history) of his doing; and in bad faith to commit violence against his being and the natural order of things. This meditation is grounded in Cioran’s speculative pessimism (not to be confused with the existential nihilism of Sartre, Camus, et al.) as it explores acts of transgression and its symbiotic relationship to the image that articulates Man’s being-in-the-world. What is possibly revealed by shedding shadow to the image is fourfold: (1) transgression as an eternal epistemic failing (the need to resurrect God/meaning from the dead) and the ontological provocation with being born; (2) the symbiotic relationship between A-history and gravedigging, Man’s necrophilic relation to God; (3) Man’s use of language to inflect violence on his being-in-the-world; and (4) indifference as a mechanism for mummification in which Man is no longer possessed or self-possessed.

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We are the great invalids, overwhelmed by dreams, forever incapable of utopia, technicians of lassitude, gravediggers of the future, horrified by the avatars of the Old Adam¹.

¹ Cioran, *A Short History of Decay*, 119.

Prologue: Epistemic Fallings

In the Holy Bible, Genesis reports of a garden called Eden, beautiful with rivers, rolling mountains, wild beasts, vegetation, everything that man needed; in it everything was good, including the Tree of Knowledge of Good and Evil. God's only request to Man was that, "You may surely eat of every tree of the garden, but of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil you shall not eat, for in the day that you eat of it you shall surely die."² God's mandate from that point forward signified a contractual harmony that depended on Man's obedience to not partake of the Tree of Knowledge. Not heeding God's commandment, both Man and Woman partook of the fruit and were expelled from Eden. "So, he drove out the man; and he placed at the east of the Garden of Eden cherubim, and a flaming sword which turned every way, to keep the way of the tree of life."³ Likewise, the book of Isaiah recounts a holy war in heaven that pitted Michael against the dragon (Lucifer). Cast from heaven to the earth was Lucifer along with his minions. "How you have fallen from heaven, morning star, son of the dawn! You have been cast down to the earth, you who once laid low the nations! You said in your heart, I will ascend to the heavens; I will raise my throne above the stars of God...."⁴ Similarly, both sacred myths are more than carnal accounts of original sin and rebellion – they speak to something that predates Man's human condition, a condition seeded in the dust of the cosmos; his continuous regressive ascent to knowledge, to usurp God, even at risk of eternal damnation and excommunication from Paradise.

Although blasphemous in interpretation, Cioran's fascination with these events are well documented⁵ and of critical importance to his heretical interpretation of Mankind's condition, as he sees both original sin and rebellion ground zero to Man's Historical condition, culminating into neurasthenia, a cosmic disease reserved for Man, that bastard and freak of an accident. At the core of the Fall, Man's *being* is birthed into violence, hailed into question – the cosmic boom, emitting seismic

² Genesis 2:16–17.

³ Genesis 3:24.

⁴ Isaiah 14:12–13.

⁵ Cioran, *The Fall Into Time*; Cioran, *The Trouble with Being Born*; Cioran, *The New Gods*; Cioran, *A Short History of Decay*.

waves that transgress against the order of things; each wave bellowing from his throat is choked with burning tears and regret inaudible to God. Rather than aborted as a fetus, Man was vomited by the cosmos from the primordial soup, cursing him with consciousness. In the same way a dog will chase its tail roundabout without end, consciousness is no different than Man chasing Paradise; it is the primordial seesaw teetering between damnation and beatitude – finitude and infinity, language and silence, meaning and drivel. Chained in his freedom but confounded by limits of his *finitude*, Man's every decision to supplicate is taboo, a necessary transgression that his *being* depends on. It is in his nature to *do* so, but in doing so he commits violence against himself. Cioran⁶ wrote, "Even though belief in eternity is necessary as historical Man's unique consolation, the catastrophic ending of this tragedy of life and of Man in particular will demonstrate the illusion of such naive faith." Truth/truth Man creates, worships, and is consummate. The construction of new idols and destruction of old ones ensure the nauseating motion of the universal seesaw's equilibrium, the delicate balance between consciousness and unconsciousness. (Cioran identified equilibrium as a consolation in terms of *taboo*: idols, images – all A-historical narratives that rail against the primordial Historical in which the veil hides the beautiful lie). In this regard, taboo is that which Man consumes and is consumed by; his blueprint or map to return to his primordial origins (Paradise), in doing so, commits violence against his *being*. If Man's *being* is that which rushes toward its finitude, violence is his attempt to destroy and re-engineer the primordial DNA of his *being* en route to Paradise.

RQ: On Which Nothing Is Solved

In no way does the RQ allude to a comprehensive way to understand Mankind; his human condition has been well accounted for – rather it is a provocative and speculative effort to explore another dimension of Mankind that is his cosmic condition. Therefore, this mediation seeks to utilize Emil Cioran's pessimism as a model to explore how

⁶ Cioran, *On the Heights of Despair*, 26.

transgression informs the cosmic image Mankind has of himself. Ostensibly this image is rooted in the cosmic blasphemy of Man's condition; however, my approach operationalizes Cioran's pessimism to understand Mankind's existential crisis by focusing on 4 types of transgression. What is possibly revealed by shedding shadow to the image is fourfold: (1) transgression as an eternal epistemic failing (the need to resurrect God/Meaning from the dead) and the ontological provocation with being born; (2) the symbiotic relationship between A-history and gravedigging, Man's necrophilic relation to God; (3) Man's use of language to inflict violence on his being-in-the-world; and (4) indifference as a mechanism for mummification in which man is no longer possessed or self-possessed.

Transgression: The Epistemic Fall

Paraphrasing Aristotle's famous dictum, all men desire to know, if taken to its logical consequences, is something more subversive and perverse, transgressive and subterranean, about humankind's condition. I imagine Cioran taking umbrage and rephrasing his dictum: "Some men are tempted while others are condemned to know" seems more apropos, as if mankind's reason to know can be reduced to an energetic, infantile curiosity, or that his natural curiosity signifies a cosmic inheritance to know the nature of things by a special revelation. After all, the biblical teachings preach a co-created contractual relationship between God and Man⁷. Is it heretical to say the contract was out of guilt, necessity, boredom, or all the above – that God needed Man because the beast would not obey; therefore, Man was birthed into an accidental chaos/servitude to entertain and obey? And since Man was born in God's image, ostensibly the same guilt, necessity, and boredom may have served as the impetus for leaving God. Is it a reach to conclude that to spite Man, God sarcastically bequeathed him a consolation gift – lyrical (language) madness, the ontological foundation of his transgression, primordial nothingness, and nomadism in which Man incessantly ruminates about his accidental existence and God's condition? These

⁷ Genesis 1:27.

are the questions that Cioran wants us to consider as they are seeded in the very bows of our being.

“...[Man] is always pulling ahead or falling behind. Yet the more life eludes him, the more ardently he longs to seize and subjugate it; failing he mobilizes all the resources [truths, idols, images] of his anxious and tormented will, his sole support: an exhausted yet indefatigable misfit, rootless...⁸

There is no biblical basis to substantiate these queries; religion distances itself from the passions and fervor of the soul, leaving the manic mind wandering. In supplication, the mind ruminates, if Paradise was enduring, then Man would never have left? As such, transgression identifies limits – biological, anthropological, or metaphysical – and the possibility of superseding such conditions; it is also the act of betraying or violating one’s condition, which is to say it uses tools to vacillate between and in between those conditions to transgress. In the case of Man, he uses language as his primary tool to transgress (i.e., creating narratives, idols, and images against the universal order of things). All images’ (although metaphysical fiction) sole purpose is transgressive but ensures Man’s vitality. In other words, the degree to which we are free is commensurate with the panoply of images created. We see the same transgressive dilemma in Bergman’s *The Seventh Seal* between the Knight (Antonious Block) and Death in the confessional.⁹

Knight: I want to talk to you as openly as I can, but my heart is empty.

Death: [Death is silent]

Knight: The emptiness is a mirror turned towards my own face. I see myself in it, and I am filled with fear and disgust.

Death: [Death is silent]

Knight: Through my indifference to my fellow men, I have isolated myself from their company. Now I live in a world of phantoms. I am imprisoned in my dreams and fantasies.

⁸ Cioran, *The Fall Into Time*, 38.

⁹ Bergman, *The Seventh Seal*.

Death: And yet you don't want to die.

Knight: Yes, I do.

Death: What are you waiting for?

Knight: I want knowledge.

Death: You want guarantees?

Knight: Call it whatever you like. Is it so cruelly inconceivable to grasp God with the senses? Why should He hide himself in a mist of half-spoken promises and unseen miracles?

Death: [Death is silent]

Knight: How can we have faith in those who believe when we can't have faith in ourselves? What is going to happen to those of us who want to believe but aren't able to? And what is to become of those who neither want to nor are capable of believing?... Why can't I kill God within me? Why does He live on in this painful and humiliating way even though I curse Him? Do you hear me?

Death: Yes, I hear you.

Knight: I want knowledge, not faith, not suppositions, but knowledge. I want God to stretch out His hand towards me, reveal Himself and speak to me.

Death: But He remains silent.

Knight: I call out to Him in the dark but no one seems to be there.

Death: Perhaps no one is there.

Knight: Then life is an outrageous horror. No one can live in the face of death, knowing that all is nothingness.

Death: Most people never reflect about either death or the futility of life.

Knight: But one day they will have to stand at that last moment of life and look towards the darkness.

Death: When that day comes...

Knight: In our fear, we make an image, and that image we call God.

Transgression: Epistemic Suicide and the Provocation of Birth

Clearly the Knight's dilemma is no different than modern Man's escaping from God's Paradise/hell means transitioning from one cosmic punishment to another without guarantee or even the promise of

knowledge. Every concurrent breath Man takes secures his biological facticity but does not satiate his metaphysical being. Herein lies the problem when both logic and metaphysics reach an impasse. God's silence neither confirms His presence nor absence and the world and all that is in it appear indifferent and exasperated by Mankind's presence – thus the provocation of a cosmic birth. The Knight's existence is rooted and characterized by what Eliade¹⁰ saw as the “universal pattern of self-realization,” whereby Mankind is conceptualized into three incongruous orders: homo existens, homo symbolicus, and homo religious. Self-realization is not a religious panacea but provides a short-term anesthetic where the three loci of Man's being is concerned, eventually giving way to lyrical madness, which “man senses his profound nothingness, feels that he is only a creature, or, in the words in which Abraham addressed the Lord, is “but dust and ashes” (Genesis, 18, 27).¹¹ Perhaps his consternation is a recognition of his botched existence and there is no reconciliation or solution to continuity. Spatially, if Man's being is not continuous, if it is dislocated in *at least* three loci – ontologically speaking, this is a question of nature, identity, and telos that permeates in all spheres and spaces of existence that governs Man's nature; hence the cosmic provocation that plagues his being, and lyrical dance in which Man is in constant mis-step and meter with the universal rhythm and purpose of things. On the contrary, “Revelation of a sacred space [man's origin] makes it possible to obtain a fixed point and hence to acquire orientation in the chaos of homogeneity, to ‘found the world’ and to live in a real sense.”¹²

Lyrical madness, that flickering light in a blacked-out cosmos, at best is chimera and does not so much provide security or warmth of a special revelation of Man's cosmic origin; rather, it is a prologue, a montage that previewed the cosmic accident in which Mankind was not aborted – a senseless birth. Weighing in the balance is what Camus identified as the first order of provocation in which Man can make amends – suicide.¹³ As is the Knight's case, there are more reasons for

¹⁰ Dupre, *Religion in Primitive Cultures: A Study in Ethnophilosophy*.

¹¹ Eliade, *The Sacred And The Profane: The Nature Of Religion*, 10.

¹² Eliade, *The Sacred and the Profane: The Nature of Religion*, 23.

¹³ Camus, *Le Mythe De Sisyphe: Essai Sur L'absurde*.

him to die than there are to live. Suicide is always tenable, but Man always kills himself too late.

Man is the only animal who knows the value of suicide; [nevertheless,] he reaches into himself and finds purposefulness and meaningfulness. He knows that at the point of [indifference], life is not worth living. Others will run forth and tell us that life is a precious gift, but we wonder and we doubt.¹⁴

Camus and Cioran's insight should not be passed over as existential drivel. Whether there is a transcendental sign that confirms the significance or insignificance of Man's birth, he is a conscious being who brings incessant violence to his being with each interrogation and affirmation of his existence, be it in good or bad faith. Approximating the value of suicide, how then does man endure as the Knight and Death concur that all is nothingness, that God's silence neither verifies nor denies his presence? As a consequence, if God is dead, is there a surrogate – a suitable reason for living? And if he is alive, is that reason enough to die? Regardless, whether one lives beyond the next moment or if his life stretches through time immemorial is of no consequence; nothing changes but the length of the shackle, not the gravity of being. In either case, living or dying is a matter of transgression, a type of action that eventually morphs to negation before decaying into indifference.

Despite everything, man continues and will continue until he has pulverized his last prejudice, and last belief; when he finally brings himself to do so dazzled and destroyed...he will find himself naked facing the abyss that follows upon the disappearance of all dogmas, and of all taboos.¹⁵

Negation is a source of freedom, and liberation is not tenable; it's only a death drive posturing as a survival mechanism in which Man temporarily re-enters the garden for repose, only to find sulfur-laden dandelions scenting the air; beyond the vistas of debris, larvae breeding on decayed carcasses; and at the precipice, an inverted waterfall that

¹⁴ Kluback and Finkenthal, *The Temptations of Emil Cioran*, 18.

¹⁵ Cioran, *Drawn and Quartered*, 28.

violently bleeds ammonia and methane amid suffocating temperatures. Killing God is not an option; neither is living with him. Transgression is always a matter of Man thinking against creation, unmaking and revising history as it unfurls. As Job wrestled with God's allegiance and faithfulness, so do we vacillate between belief and disbelieve. In all cases, the provocation begins and ends with the seeds of consciousness – man as *homo religiousus* in which the symbolic orders of the sacred and profound shackle and straitjacket us from transgressing beyond the annihilation. In no way is this to cast shadow on man being *homo religousus* in favor of man, the *homo faber* (tormented beings at best, we must acknowledge our cursed existences; there is no Paradise to gain, only Paradise lost).

What is quite clear here in our discussion thus far are primordial acts of transgression: (1) Man's lyrical birth, (2) knowledge – be it scientific or metaphysical – is an intellectual cul de sac, a fun house of mirrors, and an echo chamber where Man realizes his birth is possibly an accident; regardless, he is the lone bastard of the universe, forever wandering from temple to temple, looking for traces of Eden. (3) Left to his own devices, out of *indifference*, tinged with megalomania and a need for certainty, convinced of his pre-ordained value, Man gives way to image making and idolatry. It is here where we see Man as both *homo faber* and *homo religiousus*, hence the blasphemous nature of his condition and the genesis of his provocation. When Adam was expelled from Paradise, instead of vituperating his persecutor, he busied himself baptizing things; this was his sole way of vindicating himself. Here lies the basis of idealism. Idolatry, then, is the lyrical “Om” – a silent prayer that dwells in the frigid cellar; thawing, it breaks free, eventually resonates, and gives inexhaustible hope. Regarding the symbiotic relationship between knowledge and idolatry, Cioran wrote, “Men's minds need a simple truth, an answer which delivers them from questions, a gospel, a tomb [which assures man's continuity unto death].”¹⁶

¹⁶ Cioran, *The Temptation to Exist*, 15.

Transgression: Gravedigging and A-history

Once interviewed, Cioran reported bouts of insomnia, a condition he sought to remedy with midnight promenades through graveyards. I imagine that each step Cioran took erupted a chain of erotic moans that brought quake, fissure, destruction, and discord to the melody of the Universe of both the living and the dead, a sinuous and narrative pitch of sorrow, a moral equivalent of eternal damnation. Cioran reminds us of the book of Ecclesiastes 1:9–10, which is a seditious account of violent tensions between being (Historical) and becoming (A-historical). Both histories have root in Man’s cosmic condition, an ongoing tension of being and becoming, thus the provocation with being born and his inability to find a rationale to justify his existence. A footnote in History, Man is seemingly an afterthought, but consciousness suggests otherwise as if History is the untainted stream of truth that vomits from God’s mouth ingested by man whereby he is granted privilege of a divine revelation, whereby earthly, cosmic, and religious revelation triangulate and reveal all? No. History is best understood as Paradise before the Fall in which Man and God were in perfect gaze. As long as Man’s eyes were fixed on his maker, his purpose and providence were clear and absolute, for in the image of God, he is made whole. In “On the Exegesis of Failure”, Cioran noted that Man is born corrupt and has a propensity to transgress.¹⁷ Incapable of being faithful, Man’s heart is naïve as he stares into God’s eyes; instead of seeing grace and absolution, he sees a sliver of possibility reflected. Curious, Man breaks gaze with God, and with it commences the Fall, A-history. A-history begins with Man’s desire for possibility, a sense of wonderment, and a juvenile curiosity that quickly becomes a matter of life or death, signifying the tragedy of consciousness in which Man’s condition is driven by two tensions – transgression and violence.

Out of Historical necessity, Man does not wander far from the path of his first parents and siblings. Rather than being satiated and content with the order of things, Man digs the cosmos for meaning; even a bad reason for living is reason enough, anything to justify Man’s existence, and offers a palatable *raison d’être*. Whereas all beings have their

¹⁷ Cioran, *A Short History of Decay*.

place in nature, Man remains a metaphysically straying creature, lost in life. A stranger to creation, Man finds his way by means of excavating archaeological sites in which he unearths symbols, signs, idols, ancient spells, and idols through gravedigging. Gravedigging is Man's attempt at resurrecting meaning, and in doing so, he dispels and curses his given history with one of his conceptions. The business of "making meaning" is not a matter of an archaeological expedition – there is no finding meaning, only rediscovering that which has been forgotten. As the book of Ecclesiastes avows and Solomon confirms, there is nothing new under the sun, so Man resuscitates meaning one séance at a time; his idols, images, and fictions are mediated *vis-à-vis* language in which he forges a new mythology, his own A-history. The symbiotic relationship between gravedigging and A-history can't be more stressed. Man's very existence depends upon this cosmic tension.

At grips with the world, [Man] is often a weakling, a rachitic runt, all the more virulent for realizing his own biological inferiority and suffering from it. The more he is rejected by life, the more he tries to master it, to subjugate it, though unable to do so...[Man] suggests a synthesis of beast and ghost, a madman who lives by metaphor.¹⁸

And what is the epistemic value of the metaphor – but an infinite chain of vaporizing syllogisms vanishing into air, the ongoing narrative sequence of the *imager* whose "hero" silently curses the creator. A-history is Man's invention; it is his attempt to create a new Adam, unchain Prometheus, to give repose to Sisyphus and rebuild the Tower of Babel. In other words, the A-historical Man creates a mold for himself cast with his cosmology, mythology, lexicon, fraught with memory and meaning, whereby he erases the old order of things. "...We dream out of a need to hope against ourselves, of seeing ourselves overrun trampled down, 'saved.'"¹⁹ A-history is tantamount to Man committing violence and aggression against himself in which he perpetuates the same sin as his father – hubris, resulting in a botched creation whereby he haphazardly

¹⁸ Cioran, *History and Utopia*, 69.

¹⁹ Cioran, *The Temptation to Exist*, 57.

created Man in his image, similar to Pygmalion's idyllic Galatea. Unlike the obedient Galatea, Man rebelled and continues to do so. "Greedy for a nomenclature of the irremediable, we seek relief in verbal invention, in the lights suspended over our disasters. Words are charitable: their frail reality deceives and consoles us."²⁰ Likewise, Man finds it difficult to escape the sins of his father, constantly creating and naming images – breathing life into them, worshipping them, only for them to outlive their utility in which then he casts spells to resurrect them. It is in Man's very nature to grave-dig for scraps and caucuses of meaning. Even at these hellish depths and temperatures, naming and meaning stutters, mutters, stammers, and fizzles into oblivion, hence the ineptitude of all linguistic systems that marks all of our successes. Man weaves language out of his own being and unfurls a symbolic mythical world filled with phantoms that serve as an ontological framework for his finitude.

Man is the symbol-using (symbol-making, symbol-misusing) animal, inventor of the negative (or moralized by the negative), separated from his natural condition by instruments of his own making, goaded by the spirit of hierarchy (or moved by the sense of order), and rotten with perfection.²¹

Several points of interest were brought out of the shadow in our discussion on gravedigging and A-history; both elements are co-dependent on Man's *being* and his continued existence. Whether in bad faith or senility, Man fails to remember that knowledge is a projected image of his anxieties, imagination, priggishness, vanities, and inability to be alone. Scared of the dark, he searches for *raison d'être* inventing new myths – he needs to keep busy, conjuring new spells, poets, and prophets, which all play deaf to his inquiries. Man is at home and closest to God in cemeteries, constantly at work digging (where there is never a shortage of time, spells, shovels, bodies, and images). At times, I imagine Man manically stumbling through the primordial graveyard, only to find an open plot; tired, he gazes into the abyss – contemplates taking a rest; he sighs...but declines the honor for now.

²⁰ Cioran, *A Short History of Decay*, 39.

²¹ Burke, *Language as Symbolic Action*, 16.

Transgression: Necrophilia

Necrophilia is an erotic practice by which the deviant derives pleasure by sexually violating the dead in any number of ways (e.g., haptic, mutilating, fantasizing). The history of erotic practices is not my concern here but rather Man's obsessive fetish with life/death, which bare similarities to the deviant's sexual neurosis. Here, necrophilia begins with Man's primordial rupture with Paradise and the orgasmic transgressions (bliss/consciousness, *being/nonbeing*, waking/dead, episteme/doxa, History/A-history) that seduce him. His obsession with life is well documented, yet his transgression is buried amongst decayed corpses. Less we forget: "The LORD God formed man of the dust of the ground, and breathed into his nostrils the breath of life; and man became a living soul."²² Following in his father's footsteps, Man grave-digs and breathes life into the dead; temporarily he experiences nostalgic simultaneous moments of Paradise. Each dead idol that he resuscitates offers short-lived moments of permanence and bliss – no different than the deviants that soiled the corpse of the beautiful dead woman in Herodotus's account in Ancient Egypt.

Cioran knew that both Man and God were victims of their own misfortune – God's desire to God – thus the accidental birth of Man; and Man's desire to make sense of this cosmic accident – his desire to know and obsession with resurrecting meaning. Postponing his mortality, Man resuscitates the dead, breathes in and consubstantiates his being with them, pleasuring himself with possibilities of worship and being worshipped. Each image resuscitated is an attempt to postpone his mortality. What drives meaning is the erotic desire to have absolute knowledge of the earthly, mystical, and cosmic, whereby the secret of the dead and the waking are divulged. We must remember Man's origins; he is a product of two Falls – one cosmic and the other earthly. In either case, he was never comfortable with God in Paradise, nor was he altogether satiated with his absence. Dislocated from time, Man hides in Styx – a temporary space where neither living nor dead dare venture. Meaning here crumbles as it approaches the event horizon, with gravity so extreme that life becomes heavy and insufferable,

²² Genesis 2:7.

yet Man transgresses even if it means obliterating his *being* – he is a monger for meaning! Meaning for Man is not solely a matter of filling in the gaps; it is a matter of transgression with living and waking in which life expands and contracts. “The discovery of Life annihilates life.... In itself, every idea is neutral, or should be; but man animates his ideas, projects his flames and flaws into them; impure transformed into beliefs, ideas, take their place in time...”²³ Analogously, the discovery of meaning creates the need to annihilate and transcend it, too. Without it we relapse into the marshes of Styx. One can say meaning is the hourglass of Man’s finitude in which he is bottle-necked and trapped between two bulbs/layer of existence – the dead and the waking. Excavating through these layers is more than busy labor, though. With each dig, Man’s being diminishes, which he obliges; nevertheless, he is still seduced by the erotic – pleasuring *vis-à-vis* self-destruction. For what greater dread and turbulence is there than to be able to imagine or impulsively annihilate one’s life?

The erotic impulse lies in the stormy vacillation of consciousness in which the will to live is as satisfying as the will to die. By erotic, what I have in mind is the “assenting to life up to the point of death [even in death].”²⁴ Significant here is Man’s desire for communion ipse-being and the possibility of bridging the erotic space between the waking and the dead through sacrifice. Approaching the alter, Man strips naked – exposes his being, revealing a hermeneutic and mystical impasse by which surrendering and submission are still perverse signs of life and supplication; it is only in *indifference* that discontinuity achieves continuity. The rest are cosmic language games. (This is a point that I return to later.) Bataille noted, “We are discontinuous beings, individuals who perish in isolation in the midst of an incomprehensible adventure, but we yearn for our lost continuity.”²⁵ Wherein sacrifice is an act of supplication in return for clarity, bringing to end Man’s History, a new Adam is birthed in hopes of being in communion with the sacred. For when, and for how long? Outside of Paradise, Man is only destined

²³ Cioran, *A Short History of Decay*, 112–13.

²⁴ Bataille, *Eroticism: Death and Sensuality*, II.

²⁵ *Ibid.*, 15.

to fall – his cosmic origin is indicative of such things, his future timed out before his birth. Fallen and still falling, he attempts to grasp any ideal to break it, only to discover that ideas and images dissolve at the proximity of his reach. “What we desire is to bring into a world founded on discontinuity all the continuity such a world can sustain.”²⁶ Once Man broke eyes with God, his condition became anomie, a yearning for grace. No sacrifice is great enough; no petition or repudiation sincere enough; man is denatured and crushed by the gravity of his consciousness. It is only in between breaths of resucciation that his mind detours and gathers just enough strength to live.

On the subjects of transgression and necrophilia, several points were discussed. Man’s origin speaks to his rupture with Paradise – thus the transgressive perversity of necrophilia and cosmic gravedigging; however, what is not so clear in our discussion concerning gravedigging are mystical perversions antithetical to man extricating himself from the grips of God’s history. Gravedigging is the profane act of Man in which he digs for meaning; once finding it, he then proceeds to fill the ruinous plot with scattered soil, a violent attempt to create a new order, and in doing so spawns further disorder. And although it’s true that Man may feel closest to God in the cemetery, he is still possessed by desire/pleasure to worship and be worshipped, to dominate and be dominated. It matters very little which, but to extricate himself from the grips of God is to take a solemn oath of chastity – an act of violence. Cioran noted that language is merely an inessential mode of being, the most effective form of infidelity to ourselves, a metaphysical refusal in which Man commits violence against himself – to deny language is no different than Man digging his own grave.²⁷ Man exists, torn between the shovel and the possibility of digging his own plot.

Transgression: Violence and Indifference

It’s hard to imagine Man taking a solemn oath to linguistic chastity, tantamount to cutting out his vocal cords and de-worlding himself.

²⁶ Bataille, *Eroticism: Death and Sensuality*, 19.

²⁷ Cioran, *History and Utopia*.

Linguistic chastity is not the same as silence; at least in silence prayers have wings, whereas in chastity not even Icarus's wings find altitude. Language is not only our home, it is our house of being.

Language is not just one of man's possessions in the world, but on it depends the fact that man has a world at all... Language has no independent life apart from the world that comes to language within it. Not only is the world 'world' only insofar as it comes into language, but language too that has its real being only in the fact that the world is presented in it.²⁸

Summarizing Humboldt, Gadamer's intention is to show the verbal as inherently human. It is the primary tool by which Man (*homo dialogues* and *symbolico*) takes relation and connection to himself, others, and the world; therefore, acting against language, to transgress it is taboo, an irrational act of violence against the architectonics of Man's *being* (Humboldt would be at odds with my use of transgression to advance the argument; the purpose of incorporating Humboldt is to illustrate man as unique *homo dialogues*, which pervades his everyday being in and of the world). However, this does not hedge transgression because language is also informed by the negative.²⁹ Violence is an act of hubris insofar as Man uses language to transgress the primordial and his being-in-the-world and the possibility to transcend it. This is to say, language allows Man to transgress his facticity in bad faith as his being rushes toward death (History and A-history are an ongoing record of such things, which Man is cognizant of).

I like to imagine that, since birth, Man finds himself strapped to train tracks; like all beings he soon recognizes his fate. From time to time, he hears the doppler shift of faint sounds followed by soothing vibrations rattling through his spine. Eventually those sensations become more frequent and recognizable and less than occasional. His senses heighten as he worries and begins to make attempts to extricate himself to no avail. Alas, he remembers that weary day he found himself strapped to the track. The train is within eye shot, the vibrations more violent, splintered shrapnel impales his back. Mysteriously, his straps are loose

²⁸ Gadamer, *Truth and Method*, 82.

²⁹ Burke, *Language as Symbolic Action*.

with enough time to escape, but he remains stationed. Self-perseveration and commonsense compel Man to flee, but hubris keeps him stationed as if the train will detour its path – he can only hedge nature for so long. Once the threshold is breached, he violently rushes toward death. The truth is Man goes on living, although nothing in the universe confirms that he should, dragging himself through the desert of meaning from one day to the next.

When man confined the violent urges of his own nature with bounds, he thought he had done the same for the violence in the world outside himself. But when he saw how ineffectual was the barrier he had sought to set up against violence, the rules he had meant to observe himself lost their significance.³⁰

Cioran observed, “Even though the belief in eternity is necessary as historical man’s unique consolation, the catastrophic ending of this tragedy of life and of man in particular will demonstrate the illusion of such naive faith.”³¹ Existing between violence (discontinuity) and transgression (continuity) is a thin veneer – *indifference*, the core of Man’s paroxysm. Defected from birth, Man’s inferiority made him ill-prepared for living; knowledge compounded that defect. Amputated from the world, *indifference* is a result of the realization that the pursuit of knowledge is not worth pursuing, and what Man gains by knowing is not worth the labor. In this regard, he is no longer self-possessed by History or A-history, as the image no longer transgresses, and is entirely cut off from the impulse, desire, or need that called it into being. “There is no future for those who live in the idolatry of tomorrow.”³² Knowing that all is for not, Man does not retreat; neither does he take solace in the quietude of his *indifference*, even as the universe and everything in it catches blaze, burning beyond its singularity. Man’s *being* becomes the sole flickering amber that hesitates before vanishing. Isn’t *indifference* another form of *violence*, man’s final transgression? On Death, Cioran noted, “Naiveté is the only road for salvation. But for those who feel and conceive life as a long agony, the question of salvation is a simple

³⁰ Bataille, *Death and Sensuality*, 67.

³¹ Cioran, *On the Heights of Despair*, 26.

³² Cioran, *The Fall Into Time*, 47.

one. There is no salvation on their road”;³³ neither is there desire or will – once a wetland plush with possibility is now an infested wasteland of *indifference* in which Man passes over in cosmic loneliness.

Primordial Epilogue: Indifference and Mummification

“Better to be an animal than a man, an insect than an animal, a plant than an insect, and so on.”³⁴

We end where we begin: The provocation with being born and the Fall. “No one recovers from the disease of being born, a deadly wound if there was one.”³⁵ In the primordial garden, where decomposition is the law governing discontinuity and continuity, in a universe that short-circuits and indeterminately fades, where fading is a type of s-t-r-e-t-c-h-i-n-g out into oblivion, the very law of mummification promises that Man is not an end to himself – his very existence is a tautological syllogism. No different than matter that transitions to and from one energy state to the next, Man’s existence, out of necessity, transitions from dreaming to waking and vice versa without any way of detecting which is which. While in a waking or dream state, at the precipice of existence, Man’s gaze pierces through the universe’s smoky belly into a graveyard of skeletons; stretching and yawning, he hears God’s cosmic soliloquy echoed through Cioran’s reportage:

I have loathed the planet’s noon and midnights, I have longed for a world without weather without hours and the fear that swells them, I have hated the sighs of mortals under the weight of ages. Where is the moment without end and without desire, and that primal vacancy insensitive to the presentiments of disaster and life? I have sought for the geography of Nothingness, of unknown seas and another sun – pure of the scandal of life bearing rays – I have sought for the rocking of a skeptical ocean in which islands and axioms are drowned, the vast liquid narcotic, tepid and sweet and tired of knowledge....³⁶

³³ Cioran, *On the Heights of Despair*, 25.

³⁴ Cioran, *The Trouble with Being Born*, 31.

³⁵ Cioran, *The Fall into Time*, 69.

³⁶ Cioran, *A Short History of Decay*, 57.

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