

# 5 Gap Anxiety:

Jew • Nazi • the Wish for Fusion •  
Heimat • Exile

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**John Constable, *Golding Constable's Flower Garden*, 1815. Oil on canvas, 13 × 20 in.**

# A foreign racial fragment

has entered our people. It must yield.... It must be done quickly. It is not better to extract a tooth by a few centimeters every three months. When it's out, the pain is gone.

Adolf Hitler, *Mein Kampf* (1925), p. 310 (quoted in Fritz Redlich, 1998, *Hitler: Diagnosis of Destructive Prophet*, Oxford University Press [2000], p. 314)

Every genuine National Socialist rejoices at the thought that at last the **odious gulf** between state and church ... is **at an end**. Our first duty is to retreat from all special groups and enter joyfully into the religious-minded Volk community.

Frau Pfarrer Lüttich (a German pastor's wife), Obermeh, letters to Eitner (January 16, 1934) and to Thea Lüttich (February 1, 1934), Evangelical Central Archives in Berlin/C3/183, 59

For the National Socialist, there is **no division between** religious and volkish [ethnic] interests. We must bring the church into line.



Pages from E. A. Schneider and Heiner Seybold, *Jugend und Heimat: ein Bildbuch der Hitlerjugend* (*Youth and the Homeland: A Picture Book of the Hitler Youth*) (Kunstanstalten, 1938).

Gertrud Scholtz-Klink, cited in Frauenwerk, GSK, August 16, 1935, Evangelical Central Archives in Berlin/C3/192, 187, 206

THE JEW IS A "FRAGMENT;" AN "ODIOUS GULF" SEPARATES "ARYAN" FROM JEW; "NO DIVISION," NO DISTINCTIONS WITHIN THE VOLK—NO GAP, JEWS CAUSE GAPS, GAPS/GULFS ARE "ODIOUS."

When one neuron sends a pulse to another neuron, there is a problem.

The source wire that delivers it is separated physically from the receiver neuron by a **gap of 20 nm**. When a signal manages to cross that gap, there is another formidable barrier, a double layer of hydrophobic membrane about 5 nm thick. How to cross both barriers and finally deliver information to the receiver? The membrane is equally a problem for wireless signals: how can a hormone outside the cell deliver the information to the inside? The solution in both cases is for the message to change format. This presents boundless opportunities to process information and also **opportunities to lose it**.

Peter Sterling and Simon Laughlin, *Principles of Neural Design*, MIT Press (2015), p. 106

SO MANY GAPS IN THE BRAIN; SO MUCH INFORMATION TO TRANSFER; SO MANY "OPPORTUNITIES

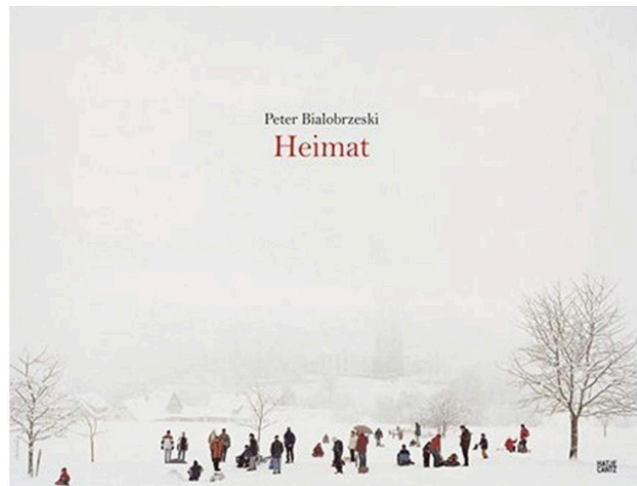
TO LOSE IT: "AS ABOVE, SO BELOW. "GAP OF 20 NM." A GAP IS A GAP.

Something which appears to everyone in childhood and **where no one has ever been: Heimat.**

Ernst Bloch, *Das Prinzip Hoffnung (The Principle of Hope)*, Suhrkamp (1977), p. 1628

The evocation in memory of an idyllic home town (*Heimat*) stands in the gambit of a discourse which had been widely disseminated in German-speaking culture **since the turn of the century**. As a surrounding medium, *Heimat* protects the self by stimulating identification whether with family, locality, nation, folk or race, native dialect or tongue, or whatever else may **fill the empty signifier** to fuel a process of defining and buttressing of identity. The arrival of a stranger in a village initiates a search, which is driven by the **longing for utopian harmony of self**

**and other**, for a communally sustained yet autonomous identity. Under the stress of rapid change, *Heimat* discourse **around 1900** set country against city, province against metropolis, tradition against modernity, and local or familial loyalties against cosmopolitan and egoistic individualism. In the sociological terms of the time (coined by Ferdinand Tönnies), it valued *Gemeinschaft* ("organic community") over *Gesellschaft* ("mechanistic society"). At its most reactionary, it expressed rejection of the modern world. At its most dynamically imperialistic, it conveyed the colonist's claim to dominate and domesticate strange territories through cultivation. In a more conciliatory mood, the *Heimat* movement sought to counteract urban alienation by fostering communal values and, like green politics in our day, to ameliorate the effects of modernization on the natural and human environment.



Cover of Peter Bialobrzeski, *Heimat* (Ostfildern-Ruit, Germany: Hatje Cantz Publishers, 2006).

The sociologist Anthony Giddens uses the word **"disembedding"** to characterize modernization, namely **"the 'lifting-out' of social relations from local contexts and their rearticulation across indefinite tracts of time-space."** **Heimat signifies the aspiration to re-embed.**

Elizabeth Boa, *"The Castle,"* in *The Cambridge Companion to Kafka*, Cambridge University Press (2002), p. 64

HEIMAT—NAZI—JEW AS FRAGMENT. HEIMAT—"LONGING FOR UTOPIAN HARMONY."  
MODERNIZATION IS "DISEMBEDDING," THE MAKING AND REARRANGING FRAGMENTS,  
RECOGNIZING THE FRAGMENTARY NATURE OF THE WORLD. HEIMAT SEEKS TO TURN BACK TIME,



Anselm Kiefer, 2010. From *Next Year in Jerusalem*, Gagosian. Photo by Judith T. Seligson.

REMOVE THE TRACES OF FRAGMENTS. HOW TO ERASE THE GAP, THE FISSURE CREATED BY THE "LIFTING-OUT," BY THE RENDING OF THE "WHOLE" CLOTH OF SOCIAL RELATIONS? *WHAT IS KITSCH?* CLEMENT GREENBERG ASKS IN THE TITLE OF HIS SEMINAL ESSAY. NOSTALGIA. BEDDING (WILLIAM JAMES), DISEMBEDDING, MODERNIZATION. DISEMBEDDING—INTERTEXTUALITY—UPROOTED PEOPLE, UPROOTED QUOTATIONS.

NO INDEPENDENT CELLS HERE.

And should he once return to his old parents and see the old furniture and hear the ticking of the clock familiar from his childhood days, then the Heimat feeling awakens in him and he feel how alive the things which accompanied him through childhood and youth and which he had thought long dead still are.

Paul Krische, *Heimat! Grundsätzliches zur Gemeinschaft von Scholle und Mensch*, Gebrüder Paetel (1918), p. 28

ELIZABETH BOA CONTRASTS PAUL KRISCHE'S REMINISCENCE WITH FRANZ KAFKA'S:

It is my father's house, but the pieces stand coldly next to one another, as if each were busy with its own affairs which I have half forgotten, half never knew.

Franz Kafka, *Das Ehepaar und andere Schriften aus dem Nachlaß (The Married Couple and Other Posthumous Writings)*, Fischer (1994) pp. 162-163

"PIECES"—MOSAICS-FRAGMENTS-INDIVIDUALS WITH GAPS.

In a pamphlet of 1918, *Heimat! Grundsätzliches zur Gemeinschaft von Scholle und Mensch*, which from its title and date could lead one now to expect the worst, Paul Krische allows for modern mobility, pleads against xenophobia, and writes enthusiastically of the exceptionally intense fabric of Jewish family life as the expression of Heimat consciousness of a people bereft of the original community of man and soil.

Elizabeth Boa and Rachel Palfreyman, *Heimat—a German Dream: Regional Loyalties and National Identity in German Culture 1890-1990*, Oxford University Press (2000), p. 7



Aliens

JEW'S ORIGINALLY WERE SHEPHERDS, NOT FARMERS. THE FOOD-YIELDING SOIL IS TOO EASILY WORSHIPPED, SO THE STORY GOES. IN A LATER ITERATION, THEIR CHRISTIAN *LANDSMEN* OUTLAWED JEWISH OWNERSHIP OF LAND.

The strength of Jewish family life, according to Krische, is produced by the *Heimat* instinct which, deprived of the original community between man and soil (*Scholle*), seeks a substitute. Such a view comes perilously close to the racist stereotypes of the rootless Jew who contrasts with the German anchored in blood and soil, but in Krische's liberal text the

**Jews are paradigmatic of modern man** in general while simultaneously **exemplifying stabilizing family values.**

If "I Have Returned" undoes the dream of return to an imaginary rural *Heimat*, [Kafka's] *The Castle* is more ambiguous in not only showing the impossibility of simply going back but also exploring whether a new *Heimat* is possible. A central trope in *Heimat* literature is topography. The *Heimat* is often connected to an arterial road running past it by an umbilical link road.... Literary *Heimat* locations always have a defining central or high point imbued with symbolic value such as a well, or a tree, or the eponymous cross in Clara Viebig's *Das Kreuz im Venn* (*The Cross on the Heath*, 1908). In Kafka's novel the eponymous castle is the geographical high point, but the most frustrating topographical feature is the lack of any connecting route leading to it from the village.

Elizabeth Boa, "*The Castle*," Cambridge University Press (2002), p. 66



Justine Smith, *Old Europe*, 2007. Inkjet print of banknotes on paper, 32 × 35 in.

JEW VIEWED SIMULTANEOUSLY AS HEIMAT AND AS DISEMBEDDED. JEW IS SIMULTANEOUSLY HEIMAT AND MODERN, EMBEDDED AND DISEMBEDDED. THE NAZI COVETED THE JEWISH "HEIMAT"—TO THE POINT OF LOOTING AND STEALING IT.

According to one anecdote, Kafka responded with the word "Heimat" to the sight of a Hassidic Jew with his grey garb and side-locks.

Elizabeth Boa, "*The Castle*," Cambridge University Press (2002), p. 66

In this very early period only two documents are extant that are authentically Hitler's, the direct product of his hand and mind.... The first document is his letter to [Adolf] Gemlich, written while he was still working

for the Reichswehr. Here, once more, is that key passage:



Gerhard Richter, *Helga Matura with Her Fiancé*, 1966. Oil on canvas, 78.74 x 39.37 in. Source: Dietmar Elger, *Gerhard Richter: Catalogue Raisonné*, vol. 1, 1962-1968, Hatje Cantz (2011), no. 125.

collage, then, is the insertion into a given context of an **alien** entity.... The collage principle is by definition **conflictual and subversive**.

William Rubin, *Picasso and Braque: Pioneering Cubism*, Museum of Modern Art (1989), p. 38

PICASSO STARTED THE WAR BY GIVING THE "ALIEN" A HOME IN HIS WORK.

Here, too, there can be no compromise—there are only two possibilities: either victory of the Aryan or annihilation of the Aryan and the victory of the Jew.

Adolf Hitler, *The Speeches of Adolph Hitler: April 1922-August 1939*, vol. 1, Oxford University Press (1942), p. 14

Rational anti-Semitism, however, must lead to a systematic legal opposition and elimination [*Beseitigung*] of the special privileges that Jews hold, in contrast to the other **aliens** living among us (aliens' legislation). Its final objective must unswervingly be the removal [*Entfernung*] of the Jews altogether.

Adolf Hitler, 1919, letter to Adolf Gemlich quoted in Lucy S. Dawidowicz, 1986, *The War Against the Jews: 1933-1945* [New York: Bantam Books], p. 152.

EXTREME GAP ANXIETY: WHEN IN DOUBT, ANNIHILATE.

GAP BETWEEN HITLER AND JEWS—THE ESSENTIAL GAP. "IN CONTRAST TO THE OTHER ALIENS LIVING AMONG US." SOME ALIENS ARE MORE ALIEN THAN OTHERS. SOME GAPS ARE MORE INTOLERABLE THAN OTHERS. ERASE THE (INTOLERABLE) GAP—BY GETTING RID OF WHAT IS ON THE OTHER SIDE. WARS OF CONQUEST ERASE THE BORDERS, THE TERRITORIAL GAPS, BETWEEN COUNTRIES. WARS OF ANNIHILATION ATTEMPT TO ERASE THE MENTAL GAPS BETWEEN HUMAN BEINGS.

The essence of



Torah scroll with yad (hand/pointer)

THE GAP BETWEEN ARYAN AND JEW IS UNBRIDGEABLE, ACCORDING TO HITLER, SO ONE MUST DESTROY THE OTHER. (ARYAN) HITLER WOULD PREEMPT THE JEW. GAP CROSSING REQUIRES EMPATHY.

The fact is thus confirmed that what is unconscious in mental life is also what is infantile.

Sigmund Freud, *Introductory Lectures on Psycho-analysis*, W. W. Norton (1977), p. 291

**INFANTS WANT FUSION WITH MOM. THE WISH FOR FUSION IS A WISH FOR UNDIFFERENTIATION** AND ALSO FOR COMPLETE CONTROL, SINCE THERE IS NOTHING THAT IS **NOT** THE SELF, THERE IS NOTHING THAT DOES NOT DO WHAT THE SELF **WANTS**. IN THIS CENTURY, WHOLE NATIONS HAVE FOUGHT TO REVERT TO SUCH A MYTHICAL, ELEMENTARY

The Second Coming

Turning and turning in the widening gyre  
The falcon cannot hear the falconer;  
Things fall apart; the centre cannot hold;  
Mere anarchy is loosed upon the world,  
The blood-dimmed tide is loosed, and everywhere  
The ceremony of innocence is drowned;  
The best lack all conviction, while the worst  
Are full of passionate intensity.

Surely some revelation is at hand;  
Surely **the Second Coming** is at hand.  
The Second Coming! Hardly are those words out  
When a vast image out of *Spiritus Mundi*  
Troubles my sight: somewhere in sands of the desert  
A shape with lion body and the head of a man,  
A gaze blank and pitiless as the sun,  
Is moving its slow thighs, while all about it  
Reel shadows of the indignant desert birds.  
The darkness drops again; but now I know  
That twenty centuries of stony sleep

Were vexed to **nightmare** by a rocking cradle,  
And what rough beast, its hour come round at last,  
Slouches towards Bethlehem to be born?

William Butler Yeats, *The Collected Poems of W.B. Yeats*, Macmillan (1919, 1933), p. 215

STATE. THE TWENTIETH CENTURY IS A BATTLEGROUND FOR A SELF THAT CAN TOLERATE, COMMUNICATE WITH, PERHAPS EVEN LOVE, AN OTHER, DIFFERENT, DISTINCT BEING. THE ART, LITERATURE, AND THOUGHT OF THE PAST CENTURY STRUGGLE WITH A MATURE HUMAN WISH TO RECOGNIZE OUR SEPARATENESS BY NOT ERASING THE BOUNDARIES. MUCH OF IT HAS FOUND A WAY, HOWEVER UNSETTLING, TO MAKE NEW KINDS OF WHOLE WITH THE SEAMS SHOWING.

Still, [Hannah] Arendt predicted that totalitarian tendencies will survive the death of the era of totalitarian states. Arendt's lens thus helps us see more clearly how the new jihadism bears the mark of those tendencies by bringing some of the telltale signs into sharper focus: the totalistic Islamic worldview that reaches into every facet of life,

demanding from the individual total loyalty and achieving over him total domination; **the retreat from the anxieties of modernity into an idealized, heroic past**; the masses who feel themselves the outcasts of globalization; the contempt for the "decadence" of the West; the obsessive antisemitism that was also intrinsic to both Nazism and communism (hence the widespread dissemination in the Arab world of



Michael Elion, *Perceiving Freedom*, 2014. Stainless steel. Sea Point Promenade, Cape Town, South Africa.

"The Protocols of the Elders of Zion"); the fetishized violence spread by the shahids; the pan-Arabist echoes of the pan-German and pan-Slav movements that Arendt saw as preludes to full-blown totalitarianism; the antidemocratic **denial of human plurality**; the desire for limitless expansion and global domination; and **the notion of a united, supranational**

**umma where once there was a racial volk or worldwide proletariat.** Each of these is what Arendt called a "catalytic agent" for totalitarianism. Yet the most important element of the totalitarian impulse past and present is **the will to annihilate human freedom**, to surrender it to the march of historically

irresistible forces. This takes us to perhaps the deepest lesson to be gleaned from the investigations that Arendt conducted into "**the grammar** of political action." She insisted that the possibility of political freedom—not the same thing as an individual's freedom from politics—is universal. Quoting Sophocles's suggestion that freedom can "endow life with splendor," Arendt called freedom the *raison d'être* of politics. The highest political action, she thought, is free speech in public about public affairs.

Hence Arendt's lofty regard for the wisdom of the American Revolution—and her fear that contemporary Americans are in danger of forgetting it. For such people as Thomas Jefferson and John Adams, she wrote, "**life in Congress**, the joys of discourse, of legislation, of transacting business, of persuading and being persuaded, were ... **a foretaste of eternal bliss.**"

Benjamin Balint, "Hannah Arendt, 100 Years Later," *Forward*, October 6, 2006



Julian Schnabel, *Fox Farm Painting III*, 1989. Oil and gesso on velvet, 120 × 96 in. Thomas McEvilley, *Julian Schnabel: Fox Farm Paintings* (New York: Pace Gallery, 1989).



"THE RETREAT FROM THE **ANXIETIES OF MODERNITY** INTO AN IDEALIZED, HEROIC PAST; ... THE NOTION OF A UNITED, SUPRANATIONAL UMMA WHERE ONCE THERE WAS A **RACIAL VOLK** OR WORLDWIDE PROLETARIAT."

IS THERE ANY WESTERN EVENT, FOR GOOD OR EVIL, FOR WHICH JEWISH TEXTS ARE NOT A TEMPLATE? COMMUNISM, SOCIALISM, NAZISM, CHRISTIANITY, ISLAM. DO HINDUS IMAGINE A SECOND COMING, OR OVERTHROWING MOSES?

MODERNITY AS A BREAK, GAP. THIS GAP IN THE (MYTHIC) SEAMLESS VOLK CREATES ANXIETY. GAPS IMPLY THINKING AND FREEDOM. SPACES BETWEEN PEOPLE, THE INEVITABLE GAPS, IMPLY DIFFERENCE AND POSSIBLE DISSENSION.

**"THE MOST IMPORTANT ELEMENT OF THE TOTALITARIAN IMPULSE PAST AND PRESENT IS THE WILL TO ANNIHILATE HUMAN FREEDOM."**

HUMAN FREEDOM IS INHERENT IN THE ACKNOWLEDGEMENT OF THE SPACE BETWEEN PEOPLE, OF THE INDIVIDUAL. "LIFE IN CONGRESS, THE JOYS OF DISCOURSE, OF LEGISLATION, OF TRANSACTING BUSINESS, OF PERSUADING AND BEING PERSUADED, WERE ... A FORETASTE OF ETERNAL BLISS." THAT BELONGS ON A T-SHIRT. ALL THE ACTIVITIES THAT ARENDT DESCRIBES REQUIRE AT LEAST TWO AUTONOMOUS INDIVIDUALS—TRANSACTION, DISCOURSE, CONGRESS. THIS IS A DIFFERENT "BLISS" THAN UNDIFFERENTIATED "MASS" AGREEMENT OR "UNION." IT IS A PROCESS, NOT A STATIC STATE, THAT SHE ADMIRES.



Anselm Kiefer, 2010. From *Next Year in Jerusalem, Gagosian*. Photo by Judith T. Seligson.

But, the caesura makes meaning emerge. It does not do so alone, of course; but **without interruption—between letters, words, sentences, books—no signification could be awakened**. Assuming that Nature refuses the leap, one can understand why **Scripture** will never **be Nature. It proceeds by leaps alone. Which makes it perilous. Death strolls between letters**. To write, what is called writing, assumes an access to the mind through having the courage to lose one's life, to die away from nature.

Jacques Derrida, "Edmond Jabès and the Question of the Book," in *Writing and Difference*, University of Chicago Press (1967, 1978), p. 71

THE CAESURA [SEE: 6 CAESURA-APHORISM], THE PAUSE, THE BREATH. (HEBREW) SCRIPTURE "PROCEEDS BY LEAPS ALONE. WHICH MAKES IT PERILOUS. DEATH STROLLS BETWEEN LETTERS." GAPS ARE PERILOUS—FOR NEUROTRANSMITTERS, FOR HUMAN BEINGS. DERRIDA IS EQUATING HEBREW SCRIPTURE WITH THE GAP. DEATH STROLLS BETWEEN THE LETTERS OF ANYTHING WRITTEN, BY DERRIDA'S DEFINITION OF WRITING. BETWEEN LEAPS, BETWEEN LETTERS: THE GAP

IS PERILOUS. THUS, THE IMPULSE TO AVOID IT, DENY IT, DISPLACE IT, DESTROY IT. YET IT MAKES MEANING EMERGE. FOR HITLER, THE JEW BECOMES THE SIGN OF THE GAP, WHICH MUST BE DESTROYED—IN THE MISTAKEN BELIEF THAT GAPS WILL DISAPPEAR ALONG WITH THE JEWS.

The impact of the antisemitic propaganda was, however, supported and considerably reinforced by the care taken to aim all anti-Jewish measures closely on the target, so that each successive act,

even if ineffective in its declared purpose, **deepened the gulf** between the Jews and the rest, and further underlined the message; however atrocious are the things happening to the Jews, they definitely have no adverse influence on the plight of the rest of the population, and therefore are of no concern for anybody but the Jews.



Tom Friedman, *Untitled*, 1994. Marker on construction paper, 24 × 36 in. © Tom Friedman; courtesy of the artist, Lühring Augustine, New York, and Stephen Friedman Gallery, London.

Zygmunt Bauman, *Modernity and the Holocaust*, Cornell University Press (1989, 2000), p. 125

Withdrawal of the outside world **cut down the boundaries** of the "situation"; it had to be defined now solely in terms of the persecutors' power, from which there was no appeal. **"The physical removal of the Jews went largely unremarked, because the Germans had long since removed them from their hearts and minds."** **Spiritual isolation was first.** It has been achieved through a variety of means.

Zygmunt Bauman, *Modernity and the Holocaust*, Cornell University Press (1989, 2000), p. 124 (quoting Richard Grunberger, *A Social History of the Third Reich* [London: Weidenfeld & Nicholson, 1971], p. 466)

ZYGMUNT BAUMAN TRACES THE MEANS FROM "A STRAIGHTFORWARD APPEAL TO POPULAR ANTISEMITISM"; TO ANTISEMITIC PROPAGANDA, WHICH **"DEEPENED THE GULF BETWEEN THE JEWS AND REST"**; TO THE NUREMBERG LAWS, WHICH **"LEFT NO NO-MAN'S-LAND BETWEEN THE JEWS AND THE NON-JEWS"**; TO THE CONCERN OF THE INTELLECTUAL ELITE WITH REASON, WHICH **"DID NOT INCLUDE (AND DID EXCLUDE IN CASE OF CONFLICT) CONCERN WITH THE ETHICAL MEANING OF THEIR ACTIVITY"** (*MODERNITY AND THE HOLOCAUST*, CORNELL UNIVERSITY PRESS [1989, 2000], PP. 125-127).

The socio-psychological mechanism used to produce the reaction of revulsion and disgust ... so convincingly described by Norbert Elias in

his account of the civilizing process—were deployed to render the very presence of the Jews nauseating and repellent.

Zygmunt Bauman, *Modernity and the Holocaust*, Cornell University Press (1989, 2000), p. 124

JEWIS DESCRIBED AS VERMIN WAS INTENDED TO CREATE AN IRREVOCABLE GAP BETWEEN PURE HEALTHY GERMAN BLOOD AND JEWISH DISEASED BLOOD.

The modern world-view, after all, proclaimed the unlimited potential of education and self-perfection. Everything was possible, with due effort and good will...

Under conditions of modernity, **segregation required a modern method of boundary-building**. A method able to withstand and neutralize the levelling impact of allegedly infinite powers of educatory and civilizing forces; a method capable of designating a “no-go” area for pedagogy and self-improvement, of

drawing an unencroachable limit to the potential of cultivation (a method applied eagerly, though with mixed success, to all groups intended to be kept permanently in a subordinate position—like the working classes or women). If it was to be salvaged from the assault of modern equality, *the distinctiveness of the Jews had to be re-articulated and laid on new foundations, stronger than human powers of culture and self-determination*. In Hannah Arendt’s terse phrase, Judaism has to be replaced with Jewishness: “Jews had been able to escape from Judaism into conversion; from Jewishness there was no escape.”

Zygmunt Bauman, *Modernity and the Holocaust*, Cornell University Press (1989, 2000), pp. 58-59

Perhaps the most striking among [Stanley] Milgram’s findings is **the inverse ratio of readiness to cruelty and proximity to its victim**.

Zygmunt Bauman, *Modernity and the Holocaust*, Cornell University Press (1989, 2000), p. 155.

DISTANCE MAKES THE HEART GROW COLDER. INCREASE THE GAP TO DECREASE EMPATHY.

If harming a person involves direct bodily contact, the perpetrator is denied



Robert Morris, *Scatter Piece*, 1968. Lead, zinc, copper, steel, brass, aluminum, and felt.

the comfort of unnoticing **the causal link between his action and the victim's suffering**. The causal link is bare and obvious, and so is the **responsibility** for pain. When the subjects of Milgram's experiments were told to force the victims' hands on to the plate through which the electric shock was allegedly administered, only 30 per cent continued to fulfill the command till the end of the experiment. When instead of grasping the victim's hand they were asked only to manipulate the levers of the control desk, the proportion of the obedient went up to 40 per cent. When the victims were hidden behind a wall, so that only their anguished screams were audible, the number of subjects ready to "see it to the end" jumped to 62.5 per cent. Switching off the sounds did not push the percentage much further—only to 65 per cent. It seems we feel mostly through the eyes. The greater was the physical and psychical distance from the victim, the easier it was to be cruel. Milgram's conclusion is simple and convincing:

Any force or event that is **placed between the subject and the consequences** of shocking the victim, will lead to a reduction of



Ansel Adams, *The Tetons and the Snake River*, 1942. Photograph, 15.5 × 19 in.

strain on the participant and thus lessen disobedience. In modern society others often stand between us and the final destructive act to which we contribute.

Zygmunt Bauman, *Modernity and the Holocaust*, Cornell University Press, (1989, 2000), p. 155

"THE GREATER WAS THE PHYSICAL AND PSYCHICAL DISTANCE FROM THE VICTIM, THE EASIER IT WAS TO BE CRUEL."

Placing the victim in another room not only takes him farther away from the subject, it also draws the subject and the experimenter relatively closer. There is incipient group function between the experimenter and the subject, from which the victim is excluded. In the remote condition, the victim is truly an outsider, who stands alone, physically and psychologically.

Stanley Milgram, *Obedience to Authority: An Experimental View*, Harper Perennial (1974, 2009), p. 39

Loneliness of the victim is not just a matter of his physical separation. It is a function of the togetherness of his tormentors, and his exclusion from this **togetherness**. Physical closeness and continuous co-operation (even over a relatively short time—no subject was experimented with for longer than one hour) tends to **result in a group feeling, complete with the mutual obligations and solidarity it normally brings about**. This group feeling is produced by joint action, particularly by the complementarity of individual actions—when the result is evidently achieved by shared effort. In Milgram’s experiments, **action united the subject with the experimenter, and simultaneously separated both of them from the victim**. On no occasion was the victim granted the role of an actor, an agent, a subject. Instead, he was held permanently on the receiving end. Unambiguously, he was made into an *object*; and as the objects of action go, it does not matter much whether they are human or inanimate. Thus loneliness of the victim and the togetherness of his tormentors conditioned and validated each other.

*The effect of physical and purely psychological distance is, therefore, farther enhanced by the collective nature of damaging action* [italics in original]...

Through its authority over recruitment of its members and over designation of its objects, bureaucratic organization is able to control the outcome of such a tendency, and assure that it leads to an ever-more **profound and unbridgeable chasm between the actors (i.e. members of the organization) and the objects of action**. This makes so much easier the transformation of the actors into persecutors, and the objects into victims.

Zygmunt Bauman, *Modernity and the Holocaust*, Cornell University Press (1989, 2000), p. 156-157

Another clue to the structuring paradoxes of Emerson’s conception of self can be found in “The Method of Nature,” an address delivered in August 1841, just months after the appearance of Emerson’s first series of essays....

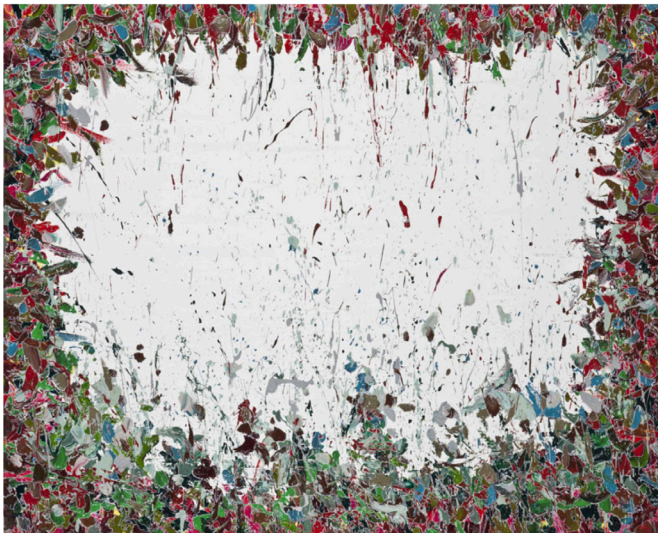
Emerson never ceased to be awed by the fact that so many **diverse facts** could function as an **integrated whole**. In describing nature in this essay, Emerson has recourse to an analogy drawn from the sphere of human religious and psychological experience: “In short, the



Sven Dalsgaard, *Zen-grå*, 1965. Oil on canvas, 31.9 × 25.6 in.

spirit and peculiarity of that impression nature makes on us is this, that it does not exist to any one or to any number of particular ends, but **to numberless and endless benefit**; that there is in it no private will, no rebel leaf or limb, but the whole is **oppressed** by one superincumbent tendency, obeys **that redundancy or excess of life which in conscious beings we call ecstasy.** **Ecstasy is Emerson's figure for the complex interrelatedness of all things**, suggesting the quasi-mystical perception of manyness in oneness and oneness in manyness. In an ecstatic state, everything is related to everything else. **The ecstatic self perceives no boundaries** and so cannot separate one part of nature from another or distinguish the material world from the spiritual. Ecstasy is Emerson's figure for **the self's fusion with nature's all-encompassing method....**

There simply is no overcoming



Xue Feng, *Submerged 6*, 2013. Acrylic and oil on canvas, 47 × 59 in.

Nature accomplishes its multiple and multiply interrelated ends, then, by generating individuals who believe in the significance of their own narrow,



"Jews forced to scrub the streets of Vienna to remove political graffiti advocating a free Austria." Courtesy of Yad Vashem Photo Archives. "In my father's case, he was forced to use a toothbrush to rid Vienna of the last semblance of Austrian independence—the word 'yes' scrawled by Viennese patriots encouraging the citizenry to vote for Austria's freedom and to oppose annexation." Eric Kandel, *In Search of Memory: The Emergence of a New Science of Mind* (New York: W. W. Norton & Co., 2007), pp. 15, 17.

the gap between nature and the mind's cognition of it, so Emerson recommends that we approach nature in a different frame of mind, in the spirit of love and a perpetual self-overcoming....

Emerson does not worry that his sense of **belonging to larger cosmic and social currents** will undermine the authority he elsewhere invests in the **individual self**. These are phases of the same reality, and any overemphasis of one or the other would only distort the complex reality....

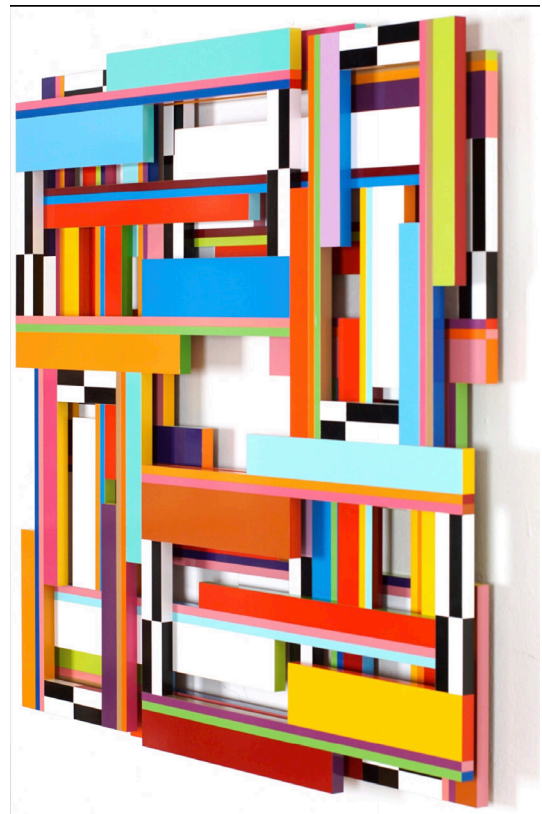
particular ends. This conviction is a distortion, but it is a happy distortion: "A spice of bigot and fanatic," Emerson hopefully hedges.

Jonathan Levin, *The Poetics of Transition: Emerson, Pragmatism, and American Literary Modernism*, Duke University Press (1999), pp. 30-32

EMERSON LIVES (ECSTATICALLY?) WITH HIS CONTRADICTION OF A WORLD FULL OF INDIVIDUAL WILLS THAT SOMEHOW ACT UNCANNILY IN CONCERT. DO THEY? FUSION OF THE SELF INTO ANOTHER SELF, INTO NATURE, INTO GOD, INTO A MOB. IS MYSTICAL EXPERIENCE A FUSION WITH GOD? IF SO, HOW DOES MYSTICAL FUSION

**F A S C I S M** INTERSECT WITH FASCIST  
**F U S I O N** FUSION?

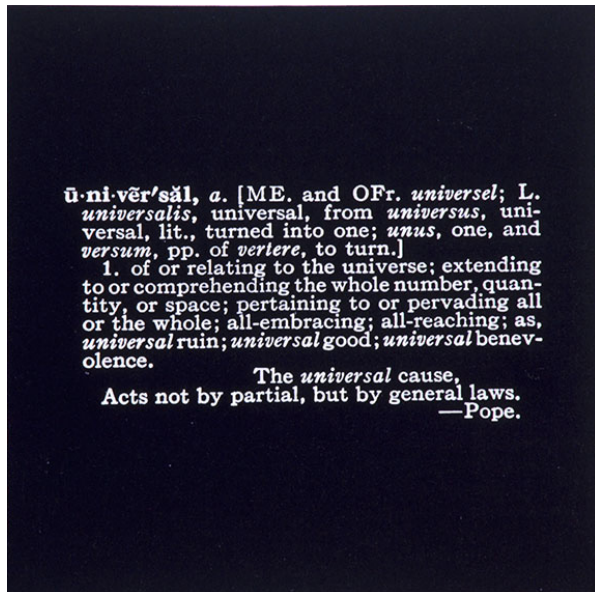
The **narcissistic experience is one of unconditioned omnipotence and absolute dependence.** Faith cognition at this level is entirely undifferentiated, functioning in terms of a preconceptual and prelinguistic disposition to accept the conditions of life. This relates to the conditions of basic trust that characterize the symbiotic union of mother and child. The religious experience at this level would presumably involve **merging the boundaries between self-representation and God-representation.** The sense of self is **without cohesion**, in a state of **undifferentiated diffusion or severe fragmentation.** This represents a state of extreme regression, which may take a psychotic form, issuing in delusion of total omnipotence and Godlike grandiosity. It may also express itself as profound and ecstatic mystical experiences involving **loss of boundaries, diffusion of the sense of self, and absorption into the divine.** While the mechanism and the level of organization may be similar, it seems reasonable to maintain a distinction between such mystical experiences and regressive psychosis. The vicissitudes of mystical absorption and its dynamics of self-cohesion remain to be clarified, but we cannot assume that they are equivalent to regressive psychotic states.... The problem can be stated in simplified form as follows: in terms of a developmental schema, are we to envision mystical states as embodiments of the highest, most differentiated, articulated, structuralized, and integrated attainments of an



Dieter Balzer, *Xeol 15\_3*, 2015. Adhesive foil, medium-density-fiberboard panel, 33.5 × 33.5 × 2 in.

evolved religious capacity, or do they, on the contrary, represent regressive phenomena that reflect the most infantile levels of developmental fixation, if not aberration?

William W. Meissner, "Aspects of the Mystical Life of Ignatius Loyola," in *Mysticism: A Variety of Psychological Perspectives*, Brill | Rodopi (2004), p. 316



Joseph Kosuth, *Art as Idea as Idea*, 1967. Photostat.

NOT ALL MYSTICAL EXPERIENCES ARE MADE EQUAL.

**Heimat is an intoxicant, a medium of transport; it makes people giddy and spirits them to pleasant places.** To

contemplate Heimat means to imagine an uncontaminated space, a realm of innocent immediacy. A property whose terms can change, Heimat catalyzes effects similar to those attributed by French myth to wine. It "has at its disposal apparently plastic powers: it can serve as an alibi to dream as well as reality, it depends on the users of the myth."

A mutable Heimat has worn well into our very present, proving ever resonant and adaptable. The homeland may stand in the popular mind as a timeless sanctity and pastoral bliss; in the hands of its most prominent twentieth-century proponent, as we shall see, it also served as a pliable, lucrative, and imminently modern tool.

Eric Rentschler, "There's No Place like Home: Luis Trenker's *The Prodigal Son* (1934)," *New German Critique*, no. 60 (autumn), 1993, p. 37 (quoting Roland Barthes, "Wine and Milk," in *Mythologies*, trans. and ed. Annette Lavers [New York: Farrar, Straus, and Giroux, 1972], p. 58)

ERIC RENTSCHLER DEMONSTRATES THE LINK BETWEEN "THE TWO INTOXICANTS" OF CHAMPAGNE AND BLOOD IN MANUEL PUIG'S 1980 *KISS OF THE SPIDER WOMAN*:

Won't she have a glass of champagne, the very best from her own France, like the nation's blood streaming up from its very soil.

Manuel Puig, *Kiss of the Spider Woman*, Vintage (1980), p. 55

HEIMAT AS KITSCH—À LA CLEMENT GREENBERG. WHERE WAS A JEW'S HEIMAT? NOWHERE.

In fact, the motivation for kitsch is a two-stroke motor. First, and in the most perverse possible way, **kitsch places the values of an "art" based on a false love of self above the values of social life**, itself based on hate of the other. It exalts the distinction between the values



of art and those of life, and because all values are shared ones, it sets up an ideal, unanimous community around the values of art, **a community reveling in itself in innocent communion, sheltered from otherness**. Here is an extraordinarily effective way of repressing all guilt—before turning around, in a second moment, in order to fantasize a real society built on the model of this imaginary artistic community. Thus every kitsch object, even at the benign scale of the garden dwarf, proclaims: *fiat ars, pereat mundus* ["Let art be created, though the world perish"]. Otherwise, how could the SS have enjoyed playing Brahms in the camps?

Thierry de Duve, 2010, *Clement Greenberg between the Lines*, University of Chicago Press (2010), p. 46.

HEIMAT IS THE KITSCH OBJECT PAR EXCELLENCE. READ "HEIMAT" INSTEAD OF "ART." TO PARAPHRASE: KITSCH PLACES THE VALUES OF HEIMAT ABOVE THE VALUES OF SOCIAL LIFE. FURTHER, THIS HEIMAT IS BASED ON A FALSE LOVE OF SELF AND ON HATRED OF THE OTHER. HEIMAT "SETS UP AN IDEAL, UNANIMOUS COMMUNITY,... A COMMUNITY REVELING IN ITSELF IN INNOCENT COMMUNION, SHELTERED FROM OTHERNESS. HERE IS AN EXTRAORDINARILY EFFECTIVE WAY OF REPRESSING ALL GUILT." THESE ARE BIG CLAIMS, FOR KITSCH OR ANYTHING.

THERE HAS TO BE A BETTER WORD THAN "OTHER."

Had I not acquired the conviction—very gradually, by reading and rereading [Greenberg], by confronting what he says with my own experience as an art lover and critic, by weighing the arguments levelled against his doctrine and finding them insufficient—that he was essentially right, I would not feel authorized to **write between the lines of his text** what I believe I can read there, which comes down in the end to something quite simple: **for an avant-garde artist (as he said at the time), or for a modernist artist (as he said later on), the other is the medium**. Where the reduction of art to an ornamented commodity results, for the lover (or the producer) of **kitsch**, in a bonus of pleasure founded on the **suppression of the other**, for the avant-garde artist (or art lover), it is **in the conventions of the medium that a relation to the other is inscribed**, deposited, embodied—a relation which consists above all in *surrendering* to an irreducible otherness.

Thierry de Duve, 2010, *Clement Greenberg between the Lines*, University of Chicago Press (2010), pp. 48–49.

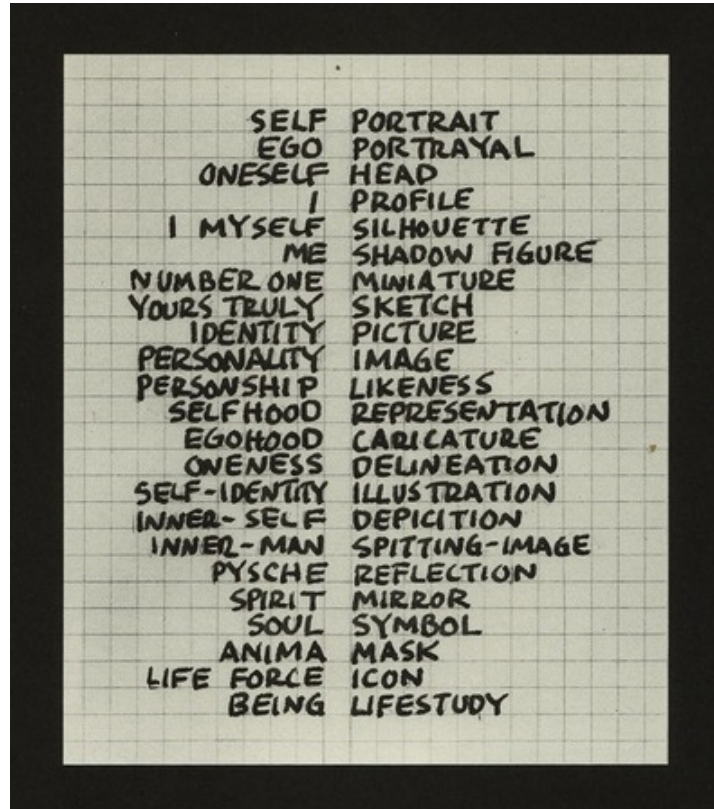
"THE MEDIUM"—THE ARTIST'S MATERIALS.

The meaning it has, of course, for a Gentile: not being Jewish and having been raised as a Christian, it is inevitable, for me that "Jewishness" should be one of the cultural names (not the only one) for otherness as such. I trust nobody will accuse me of projection if I generalize.

Whom must one read, Marx, Adorno, Benjamin, Hermann Broch, or Hannah Arendt—all Jews, Adorno by his father—to be convinced that the love of kitsch is a hateful relation toward the other turned around on oneself and made guiltless, a hate of the other that finds an aesthetic outlet by eroticizing the commodity?

Thierry de Duve, 2010, *Clement Greenberg between the Lines*, University of Chicago Press (2010), p. 45

DE DUVE READS BETWEEN CLEMENT GREENBERG'S LINES THAT THE MASTER EQUATES JEWISH ANTI-SEMITISM WITH KITSCH. HEIMAT, LIKE KITSCH, EXALTS THE HEIMAT PLACE ABOVE ALL ELSE. HEIMAT EXCLUDES ALL THOSE NOT CONNECTED TO THE (BLOOD AND) SOIL. THAT WOULD BE JEWS IN THE 1930S AND IMMIGRANTS TODAY.



Cover of Barry Schwabsky and Mel Bochner, *Mel Bochner Drawings, 1966-1973*, Lawrence Markey (1998).

Some of Heimat's main characteristics: Heimat is a crucial aspect in German self-perceptions; it represents the **fusional** anti-Enlightenment thinking in German Romanticism; it is the idealization of the pre-modern within the modern; it unites geographic and imaginary conceptions of space; it is a provincializing, but disalienating, part of German bourgeois culture; it reflects modern German culture's spatialized interiority; it combines territorial claims with a fundamental ethical reassurance of innocence; and, to achieve this combination, it uses a patriarchal, gendered way of seeing the world.

Peter Blickle, *Heimat: A Critical Theory of the German Idea of Homeland*, Camden House (2002), pp. 1-2

Whoever studies the countless essays, stories, poems, novels, scholarly books, and films that address or work with Heimat will soon be struck by now many remarkable minds, in trying to come to terms with Heimat, choose to foreground those aporias the Swiss dramatist Max Frisch expressed with his characteristic symmetrical clarity:

There is no doubt about the need for Heimat; and even though I cannot easily define what I feel is Heimat.... I have a Heimat; I am not heimatless; I am delighted to have Heimat.

Peter Blickle, *Heimat*, Camden House (2002), p. 9

To have a Heimat and not know what Heimat is has been a dilemma of German thinkers for at least the last two centuries. But Heimat, as mentioned above, is also an idea that makes scholars feel uncomfortable. When dealing with it, intellectually and rationally trained minds have to work with an idea that often seems to defy rational analysis.

Hans Loewald observes in his classical essay "The Waning of the Oedipus Complex" that the "implicit sense of and quest for **irrational nondifferentiation of subject and object** contain a truth of its own" that "fits badly with our rational world view and quest for objectivity." Heimat provides German speakers with a topos—in every sense of the word—for such **an irrational**

**nondifferentiation between subject and object.**

Peter Blickle, *Heimat*, Camden House (2002), p. 7

"NONDIFFERENTIATION OF SUBJECT AND OBJECT"—THAT WOULD BE MOTHER AN INFANT; THAT WOULD BE A FUSION INTO A SINGLE UNDIFFERENTIATED WHOLE.

**The one thing which we seek with insatiable desire is to forget ourselves,** to

be surprised out of our propriety, to lose our sempiternal memory, and to do something without knowing how or why; in short, to draw a new circle.

Ralph Waldo Emerson, "Circles," in *The Works of Ralph Waldo Emerson Comprising His Essays, Lectures, Poems, and Orations in Two Volumes*, vol. 1, George Bell and Sons (1883), p. 134

JEWISH TEXTS OFTEN REFER TO GOD AS *HAMAKOM*, THE PLACE. GOD IS THE JEW'S



Stefan Bruggemann, *This Must Be the Place*, 2004. Neon, 11 × 95 in, edition of 3.

HEIMAT.

As my father's letter exemplifies, since the second half of the eighteenth-

He hath **formed**, weighed, **transmuted**, **composed**, and **created** with these **twenty-two letters** every living being, and every soul yet uncreated.

Sefer Yetzirah, *Book of Formation*. "Composed in (c.200 BCE - c.200 CE).

century Heimat has become increasingly associated with an inner emotional capacity to attach oneself with personalized memories of experiences to a place, a family, a specific landscape. What the Heimat that was one's own farmstead once provided, the more subject, individualized idea of **heimat now**

**provides: a low ontological level of anxiety,** which

is to say, **identity**, a **sense of belonging**—and all of this **without the pain of** having to come to terms with **modernity's Entzweigungen [splits and fragmentations]**.

This is to express it positively. Expressing it negatively, one might say that wanting to have one's own Heimat is **the beginning of that small, autistic, windowless world** in which those who feel the need for the defensive structure of a Heimat begin to spin or imprison themselves. In either case, though the defensive structures of a self and of a Heimat fulfill the same purpose: **they provide a sense of ontological security at the expense of those who**

**are not given access because they might threaten this small world—women, Jews, transient workers, those who do not speak the local dialect.**

Peter Blickle, *Heimat*, Camden House (2002), p. 78

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 guard the way of the tree of life.**

Genesis 3:24

"LOW ONTOLOGICAL LEVEL OF ANXIETY"—MYSTICAL EXPERIENCE REDUCES ANXIETY. HEIMAT, A WISH FOR WHOLENESS, IN SHARP CONTRADISTINCTION FROM "MODERNITY'S ENTZWEIUNGEN [SPLITS AND FRAGMENTATIONS]." HOMOGENEITY AS SUBSTITUTE FOR WHOLENESS. RELIEF FROM "ONTOLOGICAL ANXIETY" BY REFUSING ACCESS. "AUTISTIC." "ARTISTIC."

The land shall not be sold in perpetuity, **for the land is Mine.** For **you are strangers and sojourners with me.**

Leviticus 25:23



Frank Auerbach, *Bacchus and Ariadne*, 1971. Oil paint on board, 481.5 × 602.4 in. © Frank Auerbach.

THUS, JEWS ARE STRANGERS EVEN WHEN THEY ARE IN THEIR "OWN" LAND. JEWS ARE MARKED WITH "STRANGER-NESS" NO MATTER WHAT. EVEN WHEN JEWS ARE "HOME," THEY HAVE NO PLACE. GOD, *HAMAKOM*, THE PLACE. GOD, NOT A COUNTRY, IS THE PLACE OF JEWS. FROM



Leon Kossoff, *Nude on a Red Bed No. 3*, 1968. Oil on board, 24 × 30.38 in.

THE BIBLICAL POINT OF VIEW, JEWS CANNOT HAVE A HEIMAT, A PLACE THAT BINDS THEM WITH THE SOIL. ADAM AND EVE DID NOT OWN THE GARDEN OF EDEN; THEY WERE CARETAKERS. RABBI MARSHA PIK-NATHAN ECHOES WOODY GUTHRIE'S "THIS LAND IS YOUR LAND":

Ultimately, we do not really own the land, and we certainly do not own each other. To believe otherwise is to deal in idolatry. We act godly when we till and tend the land and care for those around us,

realizing we own none if it.

Marsha Pik-Nathan, "This Land Is God's Land," My Jewish Learning

I will first recapitulate how the two most widely recognized contemporary scholars of modernity, Anthony Giddens and Habermas, perceive modernity.... Giddens takes the more sociological approach of the two, understanding modernity as a post-traditional age wherein **the experience of discontinuities** in time and space, and the notion of change itself, create a situation **that is existentially troubling for philosophers and ordinary individual** alike. Habermas understands modernity more philosophically; for him, the modern age begins quietly around 1500, but more broadly with the Enlightenment, and reaches its maturity after the French revolution with Hegel. Romantic writers had already noted the **sense of *Entzweiung* [separation] from nature in modern consciousness and had perceived it as basic to our modern sense of irony.** But **Hegel**, according to Habermas, first discovered **subjectivity** (characterized by freedom and reflection), **as the modern principle.** Hegel, looking beyond *Entzweiung*, described how **the experience of alienation [*Entfremdung*] plagues the modern conscious subject**, which has become subject as well as object to itself.

**With thee conversing** I forget all time,  
All seasons and thir change, all please alike.

John Milton, *Paradise Lost*, 1667, book 4

Not surprisingly, then, in light of Giddens's and Habermas's theories, Heimat in the modern age becomes an antimodern idea. Heimat tends to be invoked when German-speaking cultures are expressing their difficulties in adjusting to modern life. The notion of Heimat requires the existence of an idealized premodern state. It is a longing for a return to **a state in which anxieties** about reason and the self, essence and appearance, thought and being **did not yet exist.**



Refining gold. In Hebrew, the word *tzerufah* means both "to refine" (metals or the soul) and "to permute," "rearrange" (letters).

Hegel, in the famous definition of freedom in his *Vorlesungen über die Geschichte der Philosophie* [Lectures on the History of Philosophy], makes **Heimat this state of having overcome alienation.** "The germ of thinking freedom [*Keim der denkenden Freiheit*]," writes Hegel in the introduction to the "History of Greek Philosophy," where he uses the words *Heimat*, *heimatlich*, or *Heimatlichkeit* no less than ten times in three pages, "lies in the spirit of sense of Heimat, in this spirit of the imagined Being-with-oneself, in this quality of free, beautiful historicity..."

Heimat heals the rifts underlying the sense of *Entzweiung* from nature, the experience of alienation.

Peter Blickle, *Heimat*, Camden House (2002), pp. 26-28

JACQUES DERRIDA, A JEW, DESCRIBES THE CREATIVE PSYCHE AS INEVITABLY AT A DISTANCE. ONE MIGHT SAY THAT DERRIDA CONSIDERS HEGEL'S AND THEN HEIDEGGER'S GLORIFICATION OF "BEING," OR "PRESENCE," AS A ROMANTIC WISH FOR A HEIMATLICH STATE OF MIND—ONE THAT REFUSES THE INEVITABLE SPLIT OF THE SELF. FOR DERRIDA, THE FACT OF THE MULTIPLICITY OF MEANINGS OF ANY TEXT IS A METAPHOR FOR THIS INHERENT ALIENATION. HEIMAT IS ONE THING. FOR DERRIDA AND FOR THE RABBIS, THERE IS NEVER JUST ONE THING. THERE IS ALWAYS *DAVAR AHER*, ANOTHER THING, ANOTHER INTERPRETATION.

Beginning with [Johann Gottfried] Herder's arguably innocent linguistic and cultural nationalism—his nationalism was based on celebrating individual people's traditions and languages, rather than on states and authority—I show how **Heimat**, despite all its uses and abuses, has been able **to remain in the eyes of most Germans a code word for this innocent, völkisch nationalism**, that is, for a sort of **idealized Ur-nationalism** that was in place **before modern nation-states** became the almost exclusive referents of the word *nation*.

Peter Blickle, *Heimat*, Camden House (2002), p. 29

Writing probably in 1801, Hölderlin depicts Heimat in his famous poem "Heimkunst" as a place where "everything seems familiar, the 'hello' rushing by / seems from friends, every expression of the faces seems part of oneself." ...

The wanderer who speaks in this Holderlin poem then exults: "Of course! It is the birthland, the soil of the Heimat." And the following lines suggest that Heimat is both goal and origin, is a return by moving forward. Here it is a return to the womb of the mother, which is expressed as landscape. Holderlin connects the "birthland" ["Geburtsland"], and the wandering man who "stands like a son at the wave-surrounded / gate and looks and searches for loving names for you." These already erotic lines ("wave-surrounded gate,"

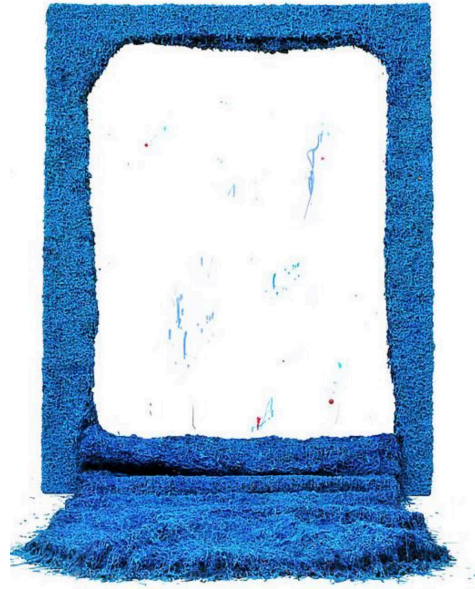
"loving names") are followed by an **ecstatic** exclamation that lets us know who this "you" is for whom "loving names" are being sought: "blissfully happy Lindau!" ["**gluckseliges** Lindau!"] With this "Lindau" Holderlin refers to the city on the shores of Lake Constance.

I am trying to work against this identification of the divine with unification or totality. Man's relationship with the other is *better* as difference than as unity: sociality is better than **fusion**.

**Emmanuel Levinas and Richard Kearney**, "Dialogue with Emmanuel Levinas," in *Face to Face with Levinas*, State University of New York Press (1986), p. 22

The next stanza **completes the union, fulfills the fusional utopia, relieves existence from anxiety, from Entzweiung, from that source of irony, the being one and two at the same time:** "There they receive me. O voice of the city, voice of my mother!"

In Heimat all the ties severed through an ironic gaze **have magically been reconnected: community, youth, a union with nature, landscape, some sheltering feminine side of human existence—all these magically preserved values give the I the chance to eat its cake and have it, too.** In conceptualizations of Heimat one may live in the bliss of enjoying oneself with one's community-based self **without experiencing the alienation and solitude that are the**



Jane Lee, *Beyond the Blue*, 2001. Mixed media, 98.4 × 74.8 × 78.7 in.

## usual price for a self-reflexive existence.

Peter Blickle, *Heimat*, Camden House (2002), pp. 41–42.

HEIMAT VERSUS GARDEN OF EDEN. BOTH PLACES OF "BOTH GOAL AND ORIGIN." *TESHUVAH*, RETURN TO GOD—VIA REPENTANCE. WANDERING MAN, WANDERING JEW. THE "WAVE-SURROUNDED GATE"—TO THE HEIMAT/GARDEN OF EDEN. HÖLDERLIN'S WANDERER RETURNS TO HIS MOTHER. ADAM AND EVE NEVER HAD A MOTHER TO RETURN TO.

### irony:

1. the expression of one's meaning by using language that normally signifies the opposite, typically for humorous or emphatic effect.
2. a state of affairs or an event that seems deliberately contrary to what one expects and is often amusing as a result.
3. a literary technique, originally used in Greek tragedy, by which the full significance of a character's words or actions are clear to the audience or reader although unknown to the character.

[Lexico.com](http://Lexico.com)



Robert Delaunay, *Portrait of Tristan Tzara*, 1923. Oil on paperboard. 41 × 30 in.

THE READER AND THE WRITER SHARE THE SECRET OF IRONY. BUT THERE IS A GAP BETWEEN WHAT THE WRITER KNOWS AND WHAT THE CHARACTER IN THE TEXT KNOWS. BLICKLE CLAIMS THAT THE HEIMAT POINT OF VIEW NECESSARILY PRECLUDES IRONY. THERE IS NO SEPARATION IN HEIMAT.

We [Dadaists] are often told that we are **incoherent**, but into this word people try to put an insult that is rather hard for me to fathom.

### Everything is incoherent.

Tristan Tzara, "Lecture on Dada," in *The Dada Painters and Poets: An Anthology*, 2nd ed., Belknap Press of Harvard University Press (1922, 1989), p. 250

In the beginning, the word **Heimat** [homestead, homeland] signified the **male's right to inherit the land**. The early nineteenth-century saying "the youngest son gets the Heimat" launched the term linguistically, gendered it, and attached property and social status to it.

Ingeborg Majer O'Sickey, "Framing the *Unheimlich*: Heimatfilm and Bambi," In *Gender and Germanness: Cultural Productions of Nation*, Berghahn Books (1997), p. 202

DOES THE MYSTIC SEEK FUSION WITH GOD, PROXIMITY TO OR CONVERSATION WITH THE DIVINE? HEIMAT ON HIGH, OR SOME

OTHER KIND OF CONNECTION?



MYSTICISM, *DEVEKUT*, CLEAVING TO GOD (LITERALLY, STICKING TO GOD) FOR THE ECSTATIC KABBALIST IS A LINGUISTIC PROCESS. SPECIFICALLY, IT IS A PROCESS OF *TZERUFAT HA'OTIOT*, PERMUTATIONS OF THE LETTERS. ALL COMBINATIONS OF THE LETTERS IN THE HEBREW BIBLE ARE CONSIDERED NAMES OF GOD.

cleave:



Rosemarie Trockel, *Liquid Foundation*, 2010.  
Acrylic on canvas, 15.63 × 15.63 in.

Cleave, a verb, has **two very different meanings**. It can describe cutting or **splitting something apart** with a sharp instrument, or—oddly enough—it can describe **sticking to something like glue**.

[Vocabulary.com Dictionary](#)

To a great extent, the quintessence of the **hermeneutics of ecstatic Kabbalah** can be seen as the reading of the Torah in a **combinatory manner**, part of which was inspired by *Sefer Yetzirah*. Abulafia recommends, “Read the entire Torah, both forward and backwards, and spill the blood of the languages. Thus, the knowledge of the Name is above all wisdoms in quality and

worth.” The phrase “forwards and backwards” points to the movement of a circle on which letters had been inscribed in order to allow their **permutation**, a view found already in *Sefer Yetzirah*.

Moshe Idel, *Absorbing Perfections: Kabbalah and Interpretation*, Yale University Press (2002), p. 362

ACCORDING TO MOSHE IDEL, ABRAHAM ABULAFIA, THE FOUNDER OF ECSTATIC KABBALAH, TRIED TO RECONCILE HIS LINGUISTIC PATH TO GOD WITH MAIMONIDES’ *GUIDE FOR THE PERPLEXED*, A MORE GREEK, “LOGOCENTRIC” PATH.

As Abulafia put it, there are two paths: “the path of the *Guide*; and [the other] according to my own path, that is the path of Kabbalah ... the paths of Kabbalah which are the secrets of *Sefer Yetzirah*.” Despite the divergences between the two, Abulafia nevertheless attempted to interpret the former in the light of the latter. **This confrontation and its solution represent an important instance of the awareness of the divergences between the two and at the same time an attempt to overcome them.**

Moshe Idel, *Absorbing Perfections*, Yale University Press (2002), pp. 422–423

“AWARENESS OF THE DIVERGENCES BETWEEN THE TWO”—THE TWO PATHS HAVE BEEN CLEAVED. ABULAFIA, IN HIS WISH TO CLEAVE WITH GOD, STUCK THEM BACK TOGETHER. ECSTATIC KABBALAH, IN CONTRADISTINCTION TO SEPHIROTIC KABBALAH. THE TEN SEPHIROT REPRESENT ASPECTS OF GOD; THIS THE FORM OF KABBALAH FAMILIARIZED BY MADONNA ET AL.

"Is the linguistic turn in postmodern thought to be understood solely in terms immanent to the Enlightenment, to Christian visions of the text, or to modern secular developments? Is the postmodern speculation under scrutiny here solely the culmination of processes that immediately preceded it, or may we assume that a more "chaotic" history, what I propose to call a panoramic approach to European culture, should take into serious consideration ideas expressed by minorities like the Kabbalists, whose theories, repressed by modernism, found their way to the forefront when the more rationalistic mold of this thought began to crumble? If this more comprehensive approach is adopted by a modern historiography, the need to resort to

historical appropriations of Kabbalah, or at least to phenomenological comparisons, will become more conspicuous. Postmodernism is not only a culmination of processes that immediately preceded it and are discernible in modern times, but also the move to the center of some much older forms of intellectual concerns characteristic of other periods in European history."

Moshe Idel, *Absorbing Perfections*, Yale University Press (2002), pp. 125-126

IDEL IS DOING A COPERNICAN SHIFT ON EUROPEAN HISTORY. THE MARGINALIZED PATHS, SUCH AS KABBALAH AND MOST OF EUROPEAN JEWISH WRITING AND CULTURE, BECOME FRONT AND CENTER.

ABULAFIA, THEN, IS INTERESTING NOT ONLY BECAUSE OF HIS PARTICULAR INVENTION, PERMUTING TORAH LETTERS, BUT ALSO BECAUSE OF HIS ABILITY TO BRING TWO OPPOSING TRADITIONS INTO CONVERSATION. *TZERUFAH*, PERMUTATION, ALSO CAN MEAN REFINING, AS IN PRECIOUS METALS.

"REPPRESSED BY MODERNISM" - THERE IS A PHRASE. WHAT OTHER MINORITY THEORIES MIGHT BE INCLUDED IN THIS GROUP? DERRIDA'S CLAIM IS THAT WHICH HAS BEEN "REPPRESSED BY MODERNISM" HAS BEEN REPPRESSED SINCE ARISTOTLE.



Robert Moreland, *Untitled Red II*, 2016.  
Canvas and paint over wood, 73.5 × 35 × 7 in.

Even Abulafia, the most ardent of Maimonides' admirers among the kabbalists, tacitly dissents from him on this issue. In his case, a very interesting process can be discerned: **Maimonides' attempt to reduce the importance of language**, in favor of a much more mentalistic approach, has been ignored by the ecstatic Kabbalist, who resorted precisely to linguistic

devices in order to achieve the very aims he conceived that Maimonides preached. The synthesis Abulafia offers is almost an attempt to reconcile the opposites; the elements in Jewish tradition ignored by Maimonides, like *Sefer Yetzirah* for example, become cornerstones for his interpretations of the *Guide*. Or, to put it in another way: for Maimonides, language has a communicative function, but could serve neither as **a domain of contemplation nor as a catalyst for intellection**. These two functions are precisely those which **have been emphasized by Abulafia**.

Moshe Idel, "Abulafia's Secrets of the Guide: A Linguistic Turn," *Revue de Métaphysique et de Morale*, no. 4 (October–December 1998), p. 508

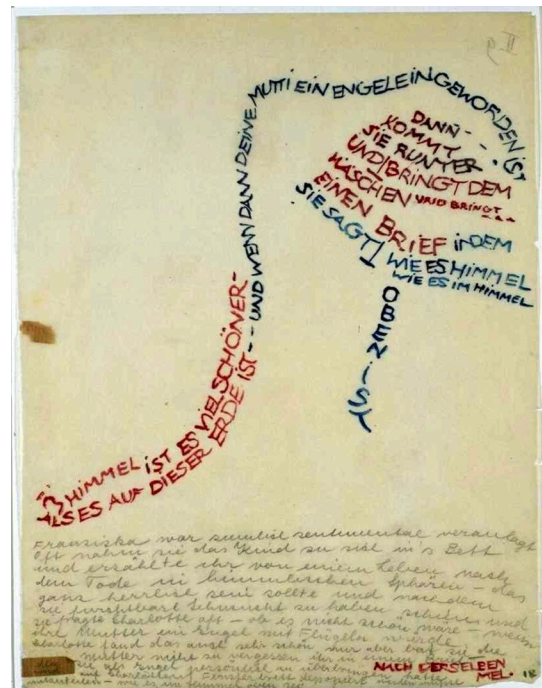
WHAT EXACTLY IS IT THAT HAS BEEN "REPRESSED BY MODERNISM"? LANGUAGE USED AS "A DOMAIN OF CONTEMPLATION" OR "AS A CATALYST FOR INTELLECTION" RATHER THAN "COMMUNICATION"? THIS IS A BIG QUESTION THROUGHOUT THIS BOOK: WHAT EXACTLY IS LANGUAGE, PARTICULARLY, WRITTEN LANGUAGE, FOR? CAN'T IT BE FOR MORE THAN ONE THING?

MOSHE IDEL, LIKE ABULAFIA, IS BRINGING ATHENS AND JERUSALEM INTO CONVERSATION. EMMANUEL LEVINAS HAS A RELATED PROJECT.

Greek ontology, to be sure, expressed this strong sentiment that **the last word is unity, the many becoming one, the truth as synthesis**. Hence Plato defined love—eros—as **only half-divine, insofar as it lacks the full coincidence or unification of differences that he defined as divinity**.

The whole romantic tradition in European poetry tends to conform to this Platonic ontology by inferring that love is perfect when the

two people become *one*. **I am trying to work against this identification of the divine with unification or totality. Man's relationship with the other is better as difference than as unity: sociality is better than fusion**. The very value of love is the impossibility of reducing the other to myself, of



Page from Judith C. E. Belinfante and Evelyn Benesch, *Charlotte Salomon: Life? or Theatre?* Taschen (2019). Salomon was gassed, five months pregnant at age 26, in Auschwitz. *Life? or Theatre?* is a 529-page, somewhat autobiographical graphic novel of her life from 1940 to 1943.

coinciding into sameness. From an ethical perspective, two have a better



Charlotte Salomon, *Mrs. Grunwald*. Source: Judith C. E. Belinfante and Evelyn Benesch, *Charlotte Salomon: Life? or Theatre?* Taschen (2019).

time than one (*on s'amuse mieux à deux*)!

Emmanuel Levinas and Richard Kearney, "Dialogue with Emmanuel Levinas," State University of New York Press (1986), p. 22

Here again I must express my reservations about the term eschatology. The term *eschaton* implies that there might exist a finality, an end (*fin*) to the historical relation of difference between man and the absolutely other, **a reduction of the gap that safeguards the alterity of the transcendent, to a totality of sameness.** To realize the *eschaton* would therefore mean that we could seize or appropriate God as a *telos* and degrade the infinite relation with the other to a finite **fusion. This is what Hegelian dialectics amounts to, a radical denial of the rupture between the ontological and the ethical.**

Emmanuel Levinas and Richard Kearney, "Dialogue with Emmanuel Levinas," State University of New York Press (1986), p. 30

EMMANUEL LEVINAS WAS A JEW AND A PHILOSOPHER.

HIS PHILOSOPHICAL WORKS ADDRESS THE PERENNIAL DIFFERENCE BETWEEN ATHENS AND JERUSALEM. FRENCH, BORN IN LITHUANIA, HE STUDIED WITH HUSSERL AND HEIDEGGER IN GERMANY. HE ARGUES THAT GREEK PHILOSOPHY COULD TOLERATE AN ETHICAL RESPONSIBILITY FOR THE OTHER, DESPITE ITS HISTORICAL INSISTENCE ON SYNTHESIS AND FUSION. ONE COULD EASILY SAY THIS CORRESPONDS TO A JUDAIC CONCERN WITH THE STRANGER AND NEIGHBOR. HOWEVER, LEVINAS DOES NOT USE JEWISH TEXTS AS PROOF TEXTS IN HIS PHILOSOPHICAL WORKS.

ATHENS AND JERUSALEM. LEVINAS PUTS THE TWO INTO A MORE CORDIAL CONVERSATION THAN MOST OTHERS WHO HAVE TRIED. AND BETWEEN MAN AND WOMAN?

**THE GAP BETWEEN MEN AND WOMEN.** LEVINAS'S WORK APPEARS TO IMPLY THAT "THE OTHER" SHOULD BE RAISED TO THE LEVEL AN EQUAL. "THE VERY VALUE OF LOVE IS THE IMPOSSIBILITY OF REDUCING THE OTHER TO MYSELF, OF COINCIDING INTO SAMENESS. FROM AN ETHICAL PERSPECTIVE, TWO HAVE A BETTER TIME THAN ONE (*ON S'AMUSE MIEUX À DEUX*)!" BUT DOES IT?

SIMONE DE BEAUVOIR SAYS THAT WOMAN HAS BEEN RELEGATED TO THE ULTIMATE "ALTÉRITÉ," "OTHERNESS," A STATUS THAT COULD NEVER ASPIRE TO BEING THE ONE DEFINING OTHERNESS. NO MATTER HOW OPPRESSED JEWS, BLACK SLAVES, AND IMMIGRANTS MIGHT BE, THEY, AS A GROUP, CAN IMAGINE A PAST WHEN THEY WERE THE DEFINERS, OR A FUTURE WHEN THEY COULD

BE. WOMEN, SHE SAYS, WOULD STILL BE DEFINED BY MEN.

IN A FOOTNOTE IN HER SEMINAL *THE SECOND SEX*, BEAUVOIR, IN 1949, CITES AND COMMENTS ON LEVINAS'S 1947 *TIME AND THE OTHER*:

"[A]lterity is accomplished in the feminine. The term is on the same level as, but in meaning opposed to, consciousness." I suppose Mr. Levinas is not forgetting that woman also is consciousness for herself. But it is striking that he deliberately adopts a man's point of view, disregarding the reciprocity of the subject and the object. When he writes that woman is mystery, he assumes that she is mystery for man.

So this apparently objective description is in fact an affirmation of masculine privilege.

Simone de Beauvoir, *The Second Sex*, Vintage Books (1949, 2011), p. 36n3

MANY HAVE SUGGESTED THAT BEAUVOIR JUMPED THE GUN, ACCUSED LEVINAS OF SOMETHING HE DIDN'T SAY OR MEAN TO SAY. AFTER ALL, HE SAYS IN A 1984 INTERVIEW, "THE VERY VALUE OF LOVE IS THE IMPOSSIBILITY OF REDUCING THE OTHER TO MYSELF."

HOWEVER, IN HIS 1977 TALMUDIC READING, "AND GOD CREATED WOMAN," LEVINAS WRITES:

It is thus not in terms of equality that the entire question of woman can be discussed. From now on **our text will seek to show the importance of a certain inequality**, be it only a matter of custom....

You see: **the feminine** is in a fairly good position in this hierarchy of values, which

reveals itself when choices become alternatives. **It is in second place.** It is not woman who is thus slighted. It is the relation based on sexual differences which is subordinated to the interhuman relation—**irreducible** in the drives and complexes of the libido—to which woman rises as well as man. **Maybe man precedes—by a few centuries—the woman in this elevation.** From which a certain—provisional?—**priority of man.** **Maybe the masculine is more**



Troy Simmons, *Genesis III*, 2014. Concrete, acrylic, aluminum, 48 × 48 × 8 in.

directly linked to the universal, and maybe masculine civilization has prepared, above the sexual, a human order in which a woman enters, completely human.

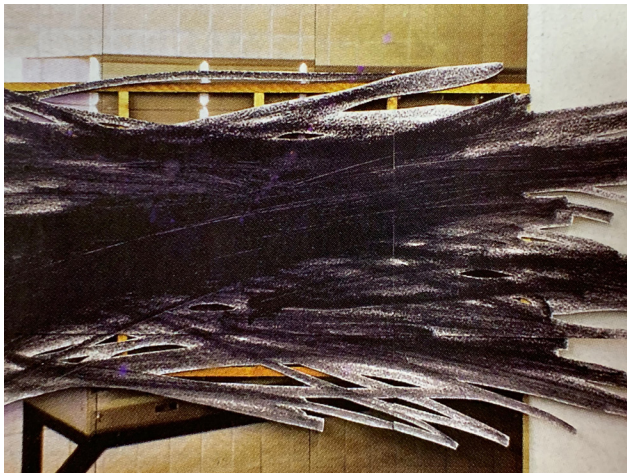
Emmanuel Levinas, "And God Created Woman," in *Nine Talmudic Readings*, Indiana University Press (1990), pp. 174, 177

O DEAR, M LEVINAS. WHERE TO BEGIN? ONE SHOULD BE GRATEFUL FOR THE "MAYBE"S. "THE FEMININE ... IS IN SECOND PLACE." LOOKS LIKE SIMONE GOT IT RIGHT. MUST ONE CONCLUDE THAT LEVINAS IS MORE AMUSED BY TWO, BY DIFFERENCE, BUT NOT BY EQUALITY (THE STATUS OF ONE WHO DEFINES, RATHER THAN IS, THE OTHER)? THE "PRIORITY OF MAN" MAY BE "PROVISIONAL?" OR "CUSTOM," BUT DOES NOT APPEAR TO BE READY FOR UPDATING FOR ANOTHER FEW CENTURIES. ON S'AMUSE, ONE AMUSES ONESELF, IN THE FRENCH REFLEXIVE FORM. OR "PEOPLE AMUSE THEMSELVES BETTER AS TWO." THE GAP BETWEEN MEN AND WOMEN. THE GAP OF WOMAN.

The Poet and the Jew are not born *here* but *elsewhere*.

Jacques Derrida, "Edmond Jabès and the Question of the Book," in *Writing and Difference*, U Chicago Press ([1967 French edition] 1978) p. 65

ROGER GRIFFIN QUOTES JOSEPH GOEBBELS'S *MICHAEL: A NOVEL*:



Birgit Brenner, *Abschiedsbrief (Farewell Letter/Suicide Note)* 2006. In Megan Heuer, "Critic's Pick: Birgit Brenner," *ARTnews*, March 2008, p. 160

What makes up the modern German is not so much cleverness and intellect as the new spirit, **the willingness to become one with the people**, to devote oneself and sacrifice oneself to it unstintingly.

Roger Griffin, *Modernism and Fascism: The Sense of a Beginning under Mussolini and Hitler*, Palgrave Macmillan (2007), p. 30

FROM STEVEN E. ASCHHEIM'S REVIEW OF BERND WITTE'S *MOSES UND HOMER: GRIECHEN, JUDEN, DEUTSCHE: EINE ANDERE GESCHICHTE DER DEUTSCHEN KULTUR (MOSES AND HOMER: GREEKS,*

*JEWS, AND GERMANS: A DIFFERENT HISTORY OF GERMAN CULTURE)*:

*Moses and Homer* is essentially a work of homage and witness. It combines Witte's affirmation of Judaism's ethical and social values with a shocked **indictment of the German obsession with ancient Greece, which he sees as culminating in Nazism and genocide**. His book is a provocative tour de force, ranging through the entirety of modern German high culture. **Witte argues that modern**

**Germany's ever-insistent worship of Greece was almost inevitably coupled with a negation of the monotheistic Judaic tradition.** Worship of Homer was dialectically related to contempt for Moses. Witte shows that German Jews, too, were entangled in this discourse, forced to synthesize it with their Jewish commitments or, in some cases, actively subvert it...

Somewhat surprisingly, Nietzsche, with his famous irrationalism, his anti-Christian and intoxicated Dionysian impulses, is not central to Witte's story. Instead he concentrates on earlier figures, including Goethe, Schiller, Hegel, Herder, and Hölderlin. Each of these thinkers valorized Grecian ideals as part of their modernizing zeal, while attacking the God of Judaism and Christianity. But, Witte argues, because Christianity was supported by state power, their rhetorical onslaught was concentrated on Judaism. Under the rubric of ancient polytheism, these thinkers promulgated the worship of the cosmic forces of "Nature" and set the **autonomous person—typically in the form of the conquering warrior—as their crowning ideal.** Homeric history, Witte asserts, is one of murder, war, and death.



Shozo Shimamoto, *Taiho no sakuhi*, 1956

**Positing society as a ruthless site of struggle, German Grecophiles promoted a worldview that increasingly suppressed the Judaic affirmation of God-created life and the proscription, "Thou shalt not kill."** In its place, they constructed a ruthless image of society. This, Witte argues, was the other side of the Enlightenment, and it left a deep mark on 20th-century German culture....

Even more challengingly, he suggests that there was a kind of ironic interdependence between the Jewish and German notions of the Chosen People. German racists often borrowed from the Jewish example in a kind of perverse usurpation. Thus, Hitler himself invoked a distorted Judaism, writing that "no one knows better than the Jew" about blood purity....

As far as I can tell Witte only mentions the famous German Egyptologist and cultural theorist Jan Assmann once. Yet, it seems to me that the entire work stands as an intriguing refutation of Assmann's most provocative thesis. Assmann has argued that it is precisely the "Mosaic distinction"—between the one "true" God and "false" religion—that stands at the root of

Western “conflict, intolerance, and violence,” whereas ancient polytheism rendered different cultures mutually compatible. Some have read Assmann as arguing that **because Jews initiated the “first distinction”** and have been resented for it ever since, they may have been, in some sense, **partly responsible for the ghastly fate** that overtook them.

We should be grateful to Bernd Witte for having provided a powerful, if, perhaps, comparably essentialist, counterargument to Assmann, along with an intriguing, provocative rereading of the entire modern German intellectual tradition.”

Steven E. Aschheim, “Moses and Hellenism,” *Jewish Review of Books*, (Spring 2019), p. 11

JEWIS HAVE THE DISTINCTION OF MAKING THE “FIRST DISTINCTION AND HAVE BEEN RESENTED FOR IT EVER SINCE.” DISTINCTION LEADS TO GAP. THE JEW IS ANOTHER NAME FOR THE GAP.

Thus, after blaming Akhnaton and absolving Jews for anti-Semitism, Assmann explains why ancient polytheists had good reason to fear Biblical monotheism. This is a pattern with Assmann: he flatly disavows Semantically-incorrect conclusions while coolly assembling airtight arguments for them.”

Greg Johnson, “Notes on Moses the Egyptian,” *Counter-Currents Publishing*, July 1, 2014



David Bomberg, *St Paul's and River*, 1945. Charcoal on paper, 20 × 25 in.

I HAVE NOT READ ENOUGH OF JAN ASSMANN'S WORK TO JUDGE WHETHER HE IS ANTI-SEMITIC, THAT IS, ANTIJUDAIC. HE WRITES:

Max Weber noted that the idea of a chosen people is “somehow” present each time a nation is created.”

Jan Assmann, 2018, *The Invention of Religion: Faith and Covenant in the Book of Exodus*, Princeton University Press (2018), p. 335

AFTER ALL, HITLER'S MYTH OF ARYAN RACIAL SUPERIORITY IS SIMPLY A RIFF ON “THE CHOSEN PEOPLE.”

JEWIS MAKE DISTINCTIONS, CELEBRATE SEPARATION, BETWEEN INDIVIDUALS, BETWEEN HUMAN BEINGS AND GOD. HITLER SAW THE JEWS AS HIS ENEMY—IN WHAT KIND OF BATTLE? BATTLE FOR DOMINANCE OF A HUMAN MIND—WITHOUT DISTINCTION. IF ONE HAS AN ENEMY, ONE HAS ALREADY MADE A DISTINCTION. L'HAVDIL. MAY THERE BE A DISTINCTION. MAY THERE BE A SEPARATION BETWEEN EVIL AND GOOD.

I think we have to be clear that a radical revolution had been planned, a mutiny against everything that had been before. It was not a new order of social classes, of religions or even of nations that was envisioned, but a completely new hierarchy—one constructed of so-called races—in which



the invented master race did not only have the right but **the duty to** rule over the others and to enslave or **murder all those it considered different from itself**. This was a universalist ideology: “Today Germany belongs to us, tomorrow the entire world,” as the Nazi song had it.

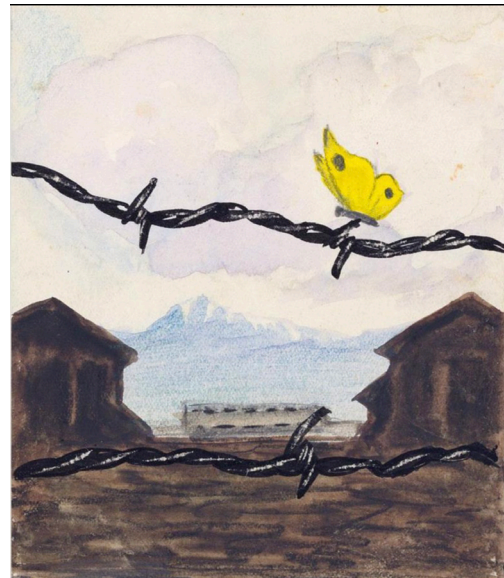
How was it possible for a people of culture who lived in the midst of Europe and who had developed one of the greatest civilizations ever, to subscribe to such an ideology, to instigate a war of annihilation because of it, and to stick to it until the bitter end? Terror was not the only reason, Ladies and Gentlemen. There was a consensus based on a promise of a wonderful utopia—a utopia of an **idyllic community of people** governing the world, **devoid of friction, without political parties, without democracy**, one that would be served by slaves. To achieve such a goal, it was necessary to revolt against everything that had been before: middle-class and Judeo-Christian morality, individual freedom, humanitarianism—the whole package of the French Revolution and the Enlightenment. National Socialism was, in fact, the **most radical of revolutions** that had ever taken place—a mutiny against that which was, until then, thought of as **humane**.

The nucleus of the strategy **to annihilate anybody thought of as different was the Holocaust**, the project of the total annihilation of the Jewish people and the actual murder of all the Jews the murderers could lay their hands on. And the most horrible thing about the Shoah is in fact not that the Nazis were inhuman—the most horrible thing about it is that they were indeed human, just as human as you and I are.

*Yehuda Bauer, Rethinking the Holocaust, Yale University Press (2000), pp. 264-265*

BAUER REJECTS COMPUTING SUFFERING AS A WAY TO DETERMINE THE SHOAH’S UNIQUENESS. HOWEVER, HE MAKES IT VERY CLEAR THAT THE EVIDENCE SHOWS THAT IT WAS ALL ABOUT JEWS. ALL OF HISTORY’S OTHER HORRIFIC GENOCIDES WERE MOTIVATED BY NATIONALISM, TERRITORY, AND POWER—BUT NOT THE SHOAH. AMONG OTHER THINGS HE ASKS, WHY WERE ONE MILLION JEWISH CHILDREN MURDERED? WHAT KIND OF THREAT DID THEY POSE?

You see, **for the first time in the whole of history**, people



Karl Bodek and Kurt Conrad Löw, *One Spring*, 1941. Watercolor, India ink, and pencil on paper, 5.7 × 4 in. A collaboration between two artists interned in the Gurs Camp in southern France. Credit: Yad Vashem Art Museum, Jerusalem.

....  
 here is the deepest secret nobody knows  
 (here is the root of the root and the bud of the bud  
 and the sky of the sky of a tree called life; which grows  
 higher than soul can hope or mind can hide)  
 and **this is the wonder that's keeping the stars apart**

i carry your heart(i carry it in my heart)

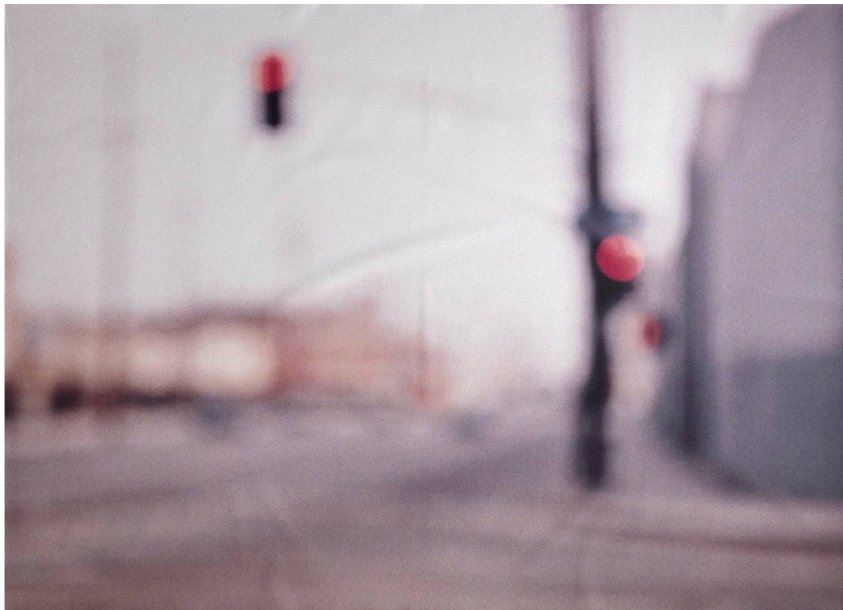
e. e. cummings, "[i carry your heart with me(i carry it in)," in  
 Complete Poems: 1904-1962, Liveright Publishing (1952, 1991)

who were descended from  
 three or four of a particular  
 kind of grandparents—Jewish  
 ones—were **condemned**  
 to death just for being  
 born. **The mere fact**  
**of their having been**  
**born was in itself their**  
**deadly crime that**

**had to be avenged by execution. This has never happened before, anywhere.** A second characteristic of the Holocaust that was **unprecedented** was that anybody of Jewish descent was to be caught wherever in the world Nazi Germany exercised influence, be it directly or through allies—anywhere in the world, a world that tomorrow would belong to "us." The murder of Jews was not directed against the Jews of Germany or the Jews of Poland or even the Jews of Europe **but against all the seventeen million Jews scattered through the entire world of 1939.** All other cases of genocide had been perpetrated on definite territories,

although the territories may sometimes have been very wide, whereas the murder of the Jews was construed to be universal. Third, the ideology. Numerous colleagues of mine have analyzed the structure of Nazism, its bureaucracy, the day to day operation

of the murder apparatus. All their findings are absolutely correct—but why did the bureaucrats, who were shipping German schoolchildren by train to summer camps and Jews by train to death camps with the same administrative means,



Uta Barth, Field #7, 1995

do the latter? Why murder all the Jews who could be found and not, let us say, all the green-eyed people who could be found? To try and explain this away with social structures—although they may have been very important—is unacceptable, as far as I am concerned.

The motivation was ideological. The racist-antisemitic ideology was the rational outcome of an irrational approach, an approach that was a cancerlike mutation of the Christian antisemitic ideology that had sullied Christian-Jewish relations all through their two millennia of coexistence. Nazi antisemitism was pure ideology, with a minimal relation to reality: the Jews were accused of a worldwide conspiracy, an idea stemming from the Jew-hatred of the Middle Ages, whereas in reality Jews were not capable of achieving unity, not even on a partial basis. Between you and me, they are still not capable of it. A conspiracy did exist, but it was not a conspiracy by the Jews; it was one by the National Socialists.



Charlotte Salomon, page from Judith C. E. Belinfante and Evelyn Benesch, *Charlotte Salomon: Life? or Theatre? A Selection of 450 Gouaches*, Taschen (2019).

One can add a **fourth element to the unprecedented characteristics of the holocaust**: the concentration camp. The Nazis may not have invented it, but they surely brought it to a totally new stage of development. Not only the murder and the suffering in those camps should occupy our mind, but also the elevated level to which they

brought the art of humiliation through the control they exercised over people through their physiological needs. **This is without precedent in human history.** True, the humiliations and the rest were not perpetrated against the Jews alone, but Jews were the ones on the **lowest rung of that hell.** What the Nazis achieved by subordinating Jews to that extreme, was not the dehumanization of the Jews but the dehumanization of their own selves.

Yehuda Bauer, *Rethinking the Holocaust*, Yale University Press (2000), p. 267

"CONTROL THEY EXERCISED OVER PEOPLE THROUGH THEIR PHYSIOLOGICAL NEEDS." MAN, YOU CAN LIVE BY BREAD ALONE. PHYSIOLOGICAL, NOT SPIRITUAL. HUMILIATION. NAKEDNESS OF MEN AND WOMEN AND CHILDREN IN ONE ANOTHER'S PRESENCE AT THE MOMENT OF EXCRUCIATING ANNIHILATION. THE NAZIS CREATED A SYSTEM IN WHICH A JEW'S SAVING HERSELF WAS USUALLY AT THE EXPENSE OF OTHER JEWS.

The formative event in the composer Allen Shawn's life happened when he was 8 years old: His twin sister, Mary, who was mentally disabled, was sent away, abruptly disappearing from his daily life. Allen not only missed her terribly, but he also became terrified of "the mental illness that Mary had exhibited, and which had led, or so it had seemed to me as a child, to her being 'ostracized' from the family.

**"I suppose that as her twin, it was doubly hard for me to know how and where to draw the boundary line between her nature and mine, between the inherent strangeness of being a person and the kind of strangeness that led to what I saw as banishment from normal human society."**

Mr. Shawn himself suffers from myriad phobias and fears, and in the years that followed, he writes in his extraordinary new book, "Twin," **he would often find himself**

**"wondering if it was only a matter of time before the magic glue that held my own brain together would lose its adhesive properties, and I would join the lines of shuffling institutional dependents at Briarcliff,"** an invented name for the place where Mary lives.

When Mr. Shawn suffered panic attacks, he felt as if he were turning into his sister, **"as if the unchained spirit of her distress was no longer being held down and was erupting like a monster inside me."**

*Michiko Kakutani, "Twin Alone, Disconnected but Not Lost," New York Times, January 9, 2011*

Although **the drama of the particular and the universal** runs through all humanity, **in Jews and Judaism they are joined at the root.**

That is why Jews are, yesterday and today, **the lightning rod for arguments over nationalism and globalism** (and why Jewish thought holds such deep promise for the world).

*Yehudah Mirsky, "Universal Rights and the Particular Jew," Jewish Review of Books, spring 2019*

I WONDER IF HITLER THOUGHT OF THE JEWS AS HIS BANISHED TWIN, OR THE TWIN HE HAD TO BANISH. "HARD FOR ME TO KNOW HOW AND WHERE TO DRAW THE BOUNDARY LINE BETWEEN HER NATURE AND MINE." DO MEN WORRY "WHERE TO DRAW THE BOUNDARY LINE BETWEEN HER NATURE AND MINE"?

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