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## The Debt of a Hand

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# The Debt of a Hand

## **Abstract**

Adam and Eve, summoned by the snake, seize the apple from the tree of knowledge of good and evil, and taste the fall. They find themselves guilty and naked and hide from a god who will damn them both to the mortal and subjugating cultivation of the soil (culture). We are thus already in the very violence of a distance, taking up the form of a political shame. I will be following the way that technique becomes the pharmakon of the privileged being which has broken away from its own nature. In view of a transformative engagement that calls on us, on thought, and on politics, to transgress the passivity of interpreting and of mourning, the necessity a political involvement will have to pass through the dimension of technology.

## **Disciplines**

Philosophy

## **Comments**

This paper was part of the 2013-2014 Penn Humanities Forum on Violence. Find out more at <http://www.phf.upenn.edu/annual-topics/violence>.

# The Debt of a Hand

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2013–2014 Penn Humanities Forum Andrew W. Mellon Undergraduate Research Fellowship

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A snake presents the Garden of Eden to my mind. I am seduced in an external memory of my history, an apple which shines beyond my immediate existence. “Don’t think, you have wings”, Death promises. It confesses in me, establishes in me the tranquility of the beyond. Supposedly all the good return there.

My “consciousness suffers this [genetic] violence at its own hands: it spoils its own limited satisfaction” (*Phenomenology*, 51). I never dreamt with my hands, being credited always to this seductive voice. I want to read the story of the Fall against the violence of what vanishes in my hands. Faced with death, this effort lies entirely in the realm of violence, of what can never be written.

*Voicing Death*

Through the history of thinking, or maybe since its fall into philosophy, Plato's notorious definition of philosophy as the "study of death" is echoed. How then to learn and die?

Thought, through voices, grasping, nakedness, and memories, comes back to the tree of life and reads again the fall of Adam and Eve in *Genesis*. These, supposed first *humans*, created ex nihilo, the only ones to have lived in the absolute past of Eden are seduced by the voice of the snake.

*"For God knows that when you eat from it your eyes will be opened, and you will be like God, knowing good and evil"* (Genesis, 3:5).

We will be setting aside the story and coming back to it, going through detours desired by this delusion. The voice first, for which Hegel provides an insight of its pure taking-place. He wonders about the absolute terror and thunder of the cry that the "ah" of death brings forth (LD, 48). Then, he stands in front of the most obvious, just for a moment: "every animal finds a voice in its violent death; it expresses itself as a removed self" (LD, 45).

For Hegel, "the death of the animal is the becoming of consciousness" (Death, Hegel, Sacrifice, 9). The voice is thus the consciousness of contradiction, the splitting of the subject (LD, 45). It is active hearing for the animal, insofar as in surpassing itself by calling out, it returns into itself. Voice, announcing death even if it not the final cry after which it is modeled, is the expression of the removed self, of an absence. Exiled from this garden, still seeking a fugitive place, we are concerned with this fall into absence.

Adam and Eve listen to the snake's voice. By being heard, the snake becomes its own phantasm, the listened I which exists only through the other. Soon after having listened, the entire Garden

will flee in Adam and Eve's memory, where the snake will abide in its ownmost by vanishing (Phenomenology, 308). The devil of seduction gets eternalized in the symbol which it is. The snake is then not only the other of God which seduces, or rather insofar as it is this other, the snake is the passage into the mythopoetic act (the birth) of thinking. What is the snake but a Socrates, as the student of death, the other of God, the seductor and corruptor of the youth, plunged into the nothingness of a pure thinking symbol with no hands? The devil never writes. For Heidegger listening (hören) is always thought on the basis of a belonging (gehören).

*“Listening-to is Dasein's existential way of Being-open as Being-with for Others. (...) As a Being in the world with others, a Being which understands, Dasein is 'in thrall' to Dasein-with and to itself; and in this 'thralldom' it belongs to these” (BT, 206).*

Listening to this call, Eve tastes the apple's temptation. Adam follows suit. Of course, the apple is death, and by eating it they internalize it and belong to it. “The internalization of man: thus it was that man developed what was later called his ‘soul’” (Genealogy, 84). Soul, as the atemporal source from which this temporal experience of death before death springs, an experience which can only happen because of temporality, our ability to be ahead of ourselves and at the same time tracing ourselves, to relate to the future and the past, on the basis of soul's eternity. Listening to the voice “opens the eyes” to the knowledge of “good and evil”, taken up and internalized in the watchfulness of conscience.

*Memories of Guilt*

In the manual that aspires to the death of *Genesis*, to its impossible forgetting, in the *Genealogy of Morals*, Nietzsche follows these exact moments. The first book is titled “‘*Good and Evil*’, ‘*Good and Bad*’”. The second book is titled “‘*Guilt*’, ‘*Bad Conscience*’, and the Like”.

The rational animal, the political animal, is thought in this essay as the animal that promises. Nietzsche’s synthesis: the promise is a logos coupled with a political contract. Nature set the task to “breed” this animal with “the right to make promises” (*Genealogy*, 57). The promise, introduced by the time of the future, and what is already past in the future, is a mechanism that represses the act of forgetting (*Genealogy*, 57). The promise represses these forgetful “doors” that shut themselves in the tremor of the potential, the impossible, totality, truth, and the beyond. Repression returns on itself: remember. The doors open. The liberation granted by the first repression of forgetting, the dyspeptic compulsion to purge any other repression, gets repressed.

The promise is the instrument of this “mnemotechnics” that facilitates the “memory of the will” (*Genealogy*, 58). It inflicts pain, its punishment, in order to obstruct the vomiting of forgetfulness (how well it knows of silence) by introducing a lack that traverses time, and which lack requires to be filled, as if it needs to be healed. The human is painfully bred by the human, by the human’s own nature, by the remembrance of the promise. A politics of pain? Yes, since the founding of a people and their conscience is based on sacrifice.

*“If something is to stay in the memory it must be burned in: only that which never ceases to hurt stays in the memory”* (*Genealogy*, 61).

Memory is brought about by the question of the economy of the moment, the investment in it, the necessity of discounting and producing. Through mnemotechnics passes then a proto-

economy. The sacrifice as the founding of the authority must be paid back by subjugation. “The pain of the culprit”, the traitor, having injured the master by not paying back the latter’s, phantomatic, sacrifice can only get exchanged by the split sacrifice of that culprit, when that pain finds and partakes in “the right of the masters” (Genealogy, 65). This debt weighs on in the remembrance of guilt.

Guilt demands debt to be paid back. Nietzsche utilized here the German *Schuld* which means both guilt and debt (Genealogy, 63). The master enjoys this pain of subjugation because of the recognition of his superiority. We are still at the rupture of guilt, where we are searching for clothes.

### *The Refuge of Nakedness*

“Then the eyes of both of them were opened, and they realized they were naked” (Genesis, 3:7)

Insofar as the first reflective act of conscience realizes the subject’s nakedness, we get summoned to guilt. The phone rings. “It’s the creditors” (Undercommons, 62). In fact, immediately after Adam and Eve have eaten the apple, God calls in, he comes to search for them, and Adam and Eve, like fugitives, hide afraid of their nakedness (Genesis, 3:10).

The God, credit, that sees everything, finds them and asks, “Who told you that you were naked?” (Genesis, 3:11). “Credit keeps track”, while “debt forgets. You’re not home, you’re not you, you moved without a forwarding address called refuge” (Undercommons, 62). It was credit that placed the seducer in the form of the snake to ask for the debt of desire to be paid. “Bad debt is senseless, which is to say it cannot be perceived by the senses of capital” (Undercommons, 66).



Good and evil, the dichotomy that adds sense, seduce the creatures of God into transgressing His word.

Adam and Eve are “told” they are naked. Nakedness is this state of shame in being oneself, because one is not oneself. In nakedness I face who I am, through who I am not. I look at myself. The significance of this process lies in the fact that the beginning is already a fall, a being lost. Jean Hyppolite writes that “for Hegel self-formation is only conceivable through the mediation of alienation or estrangement” (LoS, 285). Alienation is the refuge of bad debt. “Excessive debt, incalculable debt, debt for no reason, debt broken from credit, debt as its own principle”, running “in every direction”, “scattered”, “escaping” (Undercommons, 61). From the very beginning, or rather before the beginning, the beginning is when I am lost, a stranger to myself, naked. So, we begin...

### *Midnight Hands*

*“He must not be allowed to reach out his hand and take also from the tree of life and eat, and live forever” (Genesis, 3:23)*

The grasping of the apple is performed by the hand, and Eve hands it over to Adam. Clothing is the first act after the opening of the eyes in conscience: “So they sewed fig leaves together and made coverings for themselves” (Genesis, 3:7).

We must follow these moments of the hand because it is what liberates and enslaves. The hand fights, it heals, and it shields peace (εκεχειρία/truce). The “liberation of the hand as what is proper to man” (B&S, 182), writes Derrida, echoing an irreducible legacy bringing together, to say the very least, Marx and Heidegger. Our guiding question then is precisely this, concerning the hand, in virtue of the eternal question of servitude and mastery, of what gives rise to both,

and in virtue of propriety and alterity. The question, if we can call it *the* question, is not who speaks, whose voice *this* is. I can remain silent, I can cancel myself, I can say too many things. It wouldn't matter, there is nothing to be said.

The fall into alienation is concretized in the hand, the hand which is paralyzed in public, in which I throw my eyes oedipally when I no longer want to see, the hand's reach which would be my home. The same hand though that they "taught me" (they first taught me about the hand, how to use and thus "respect", not to grab the apple). The hand prohibited movements and objects (I remember how they forbade me to touch history and "art", they directed its touch, they were always threatened by it). The hand that I had to wash (that has to always be washed before and after the sacrifice), that same hand that Pontius Pilate washed in declaring his innocence for the blood of Christ, for which "you shall see" ("λαβὼν ὕδωρ ἀπενίψατο τὰς χεῖρας ἀπέναντι τοῦ ὄχλου, λέγων, Ἀθῶός εἰμι ἀπὸ τοῦ αἵματος τούτου· ὑμεῖς ὄψεσθε") (Mathew, 27:24). The hand of an other that has built in unison a world carved in a memory and thrust upon me from the dead. The hand of belief whose touching is all (remember the doubt of Thomas). The hand that is rent out to systems and machines, that is and is not granted a sign or a name, and has done so forever in the name of so many gods, as in the hand that the judge pounds. Handcuffs...

Where is the hand with which I would relate to my friend, the hand that in freedom would belong to an impossible lover, the hand which is only yours, the hand which empties and bends last? The hand that prays, somehow. The hand is the vehicle of my beyond. It is where the 'I' and the not-'I', my essence and eccentricity, my inside and outside, merge.

"O my brother blind clock hands we climb towards midnight" (Trakl, poem *Decline*).

*Yesterday's Hands*

*“Whence things have their origin, there they must also pass away according to necessity (χρεών); for they must pay penalty and be judged for their injustice, according to the ordinance of time.” (Anaximander, 576)*

This is the oldest fragment of western thought, translated by Nietzsche. Derrida, on his essay on Heidegger's hand, insists on Heidegger's treatment of χρεών. Heidegger says that in χρεών speaks the hand (χείρ). But for Heidegger it is the hand which orders the need, and thinks of the idea of constraint and debt (χρέος) (Anaximander, 619) as a secondary aspect of necessity. What is before necessity, thought juridically, is that “I get involved with something, I reach for it, extend my hand to it” (Anaximander, 619). Hofmann will admit that it is possible, yet not certain, that the χρεών is related to the proto-indo-european gher-, which refers to grasping and the hand (Hofmann, 502): thus habit, habitat (to dwell), and habitus (Latin for clothes).

Χρεών is related to temporality via the Indo-European ghr-onos, the root being again the gher-, which in Greek becomes χρόνος. The receiving of the debt of time: heritage. Interestingly, in the Indo-European languages, the heir and the orphan are closely linked. The Latin root ‘hered-’ is linked to the Greek χηροστής (collateral heir) and also to χήρος (deprived of a parent, the parent sacrificed) (I-E Lang. and Soc., 68).

*“In Homeric Greek, kherostes is the member of the family who inherits in default of children, he is the relative who receives a property which has become ‘abandoned’” (I-E Lang. and Soc., 68).*

The kherostes inherits the sacrifice. The receiving of heritage is then historically also founded on the idea of an abandoned ‘property’, the tree abandoned to the snake, the devil whose fertility is barred. This property one receives not from one's parents, not biologically, but from the external

realm of the world, to which one owes, and from which one is found guilty. The orphan, naked and fugitive, is credited by this sacrifice. “In Indo-European (...) heirs were only those who inherited in default of a son” (I-E Lang. and Soc., 68). Heirs receive this abandoned call and are indebted to it.

This is a religious discourse, but also a discourse of religion on religion. Religion needs the auto-foundation in order to find itself and faith is necessary after the fall. Πτώσις, the Greek term for the fall, is etymologically linked to the ancient Indian word patman, which also means a flight, a path, and hence the Greek word for flight, πτήσις, will reasonably be phonetically connected to πτώσις (Hofmann, 327). Hegel will thus write in the *Phenomenology of Spirit* that “faith, in so far as faith is a flight from the actual world, is [thus] not a self-complete experience” (PhS, 297).

Only after being expelled from Eden can faith begin as a reality, in a world created but left with no parent/master. Then, Adam and Eve are damned to the mortal and subjugating cultivation of the soil (culture) (Genesis, 3:18). The soil of the abandoned property must be worked on, must be cultured. Faith and technique, disparate and non-separate, become thus the *pharmaka* of a being which has broken away from its own nature.

What is significant given the voice’s work is that this supplementarity of faith, its guilty technique, is not only a non-experience, being as it is a-temporal and springing from an absolute past, but the experiential rendering of non-experience. Encountering in experience this non-experience is the incompleteness of our existence and hence the possibility of transcendence. The lack to which we owe.

This lack is inserted in time via technology. Technology, as chronothetic, is always a process of presencing and absencing, since such is the passage of time. Our own techno-logical mastery

over the world, to which we enslave ourselves, begins in this double process of being abandoned by (forgetting) and resisting (remembering) the master, as death or as God. Thus, the Freudian child's technical game of the presencing and absencing of the toy occurs at the time when the child stops protesting the departure of his mother/master (BPP, 600). The child, in a dialectical fashion, "revenge[s] [itself] on a substitute" (BPP, 601). Conscience arose from the voice of the animal's death, but its sealing, its insistence and its history, is the history of faith, the indebted hand's memory.

### *Finitude and Excess*

This master's abandoning of property is translated in our need for a substitute/support. The human animal, as the animal of the loss, is thus techno-logical. An animal guilty of the promise?

For conscience's gaze, its metrics, we are not sufficient to ourselves, we are naked. "The inscription of elementary supplementarity in the empirical is originary" (Derrida and Technology, 254). For Stiegler, the origin of technics, of supplementarity, is found in the form of the origin of mortality (TT, 16). Techno-logy hence as "thanatology", from which the proto-Indo-European stem tek-, of techne, is related to the debt via the Greek τόκος (interest, the penalty of debt) (Pokorny, 3058). The technical world reverberates the sacrificed parent, from whom I am abandoned, whose credit cannot be appropriated.

This call of credit comes "from beyond and over me" (BT, 320). Beyond me, as the master? But then who is the master in me? "Man", writes Heidegger, "is also master and servant of the world in the sense of 'having' world" (Animal, 153). We are dealing thus with the possession of an abandoned world. We are in yet also stand against the world, and thus we can 'have' world, we

can form world. Or is the world lost? We are both master and slave, lacking from and exceeding ourselves in finitude.

We shall insist on consciousness and not on conscience here, assuming this distinction lies in the latter's being supplemented with guilt, as we attempt to approach the question of technology through memory. Derrida breaks up on itself Husserl's distinction between a being-in-the-now (primary retention), as it slips past, and a re-collection of that now (secondary retention).

*“The presence of the perceived present can appear as such only inasmuch as it is continuously compounded with nonpresence and nonperception, with primary memory and expectation”* (Derrida and Technology, 242).

It is not that there are not vast differences between primary and secondary retentions, but more so, that the opposition cannot sustain what Husserl wanted it to, namely the distinction of immediate perception (which would be the primary retention) from representation or recollection (the secondary retention). I always remember a moment, and I remember in the moment. The totality of the primary retention, which I forget, includes memory and its forgetting. For Derrida it is a difference between two modes of nonperception (Derrida and Technology, 243).

So, the distinction proved inadequate even in Husserl's later thinking, as he would revise his distinction, only though to hint at what Stiegler calls “tertiary retentions” (Theater of Individuation, 46). These tertiary retentions, the objects which make possible re-collection but also a certain kind of transmission, are the products of technique and of signs (Derrida and Technology, 249), depending on the logic of instrumentality and support. Insofar then as these thanatological supports are “always already there”, the attack on the present's privilege is justified by the compounding of the “living of consciousness, given its retentionally finite structure, (...) with the dead” (Derrida and Technology, 245).

Through absence we face our “retentional finitude” (Derrida and Technology, 247). The need for the supplement, as the tertiary retention, comes from finitude and its support is its own essence transfigured, or, the cry of death inscribed in external memory. Yet, the inscription fades, it effaces itself, as the whole or even the essence of tertiary retentions lies beyond our finite capacity and consequently authorizes manipulation and guidance. This is the structural axiomatic we want to insist on as it points to the necessity of forgetting and remembering, of the selection and exclusion of paths, and of being-lost. That we remember, and that we have forgotten, is evidence of exceeding ourselves as subjects. The ‘I’ includes its being-lost.

Still, this exceeding, already there, can only be retroactively constituted (Derrida and Technology, 259) by the supplement. For example for science to progress, the technological reserve must enable the storage of collective memory so that scientists can pick up this work in developing scientific principles, assumptions, and deadlocks. Work need not be done always from the beginning, even if science is obsessed with a beginning it cannot grant itself. Unless it views itself as technology. And a similar process is at work in the realm of habits, behaviors, and values in which we catch ourselves. Not merely an opening to objects of cognition then, but also to the constancy of others, which the objects also inaugurate. These objects are the primary way into the memory hold, the memory of others, to which we are given. Memory and technics are indissoluble (Derrida and Technology, 249).

*The Shifts of the Origin*

If through the memory in tertiary retentions we remember the past, thought naturally inquires into the origin. This is thought's resistance to itself, its dream of a natural way. This is the thinking of destiny, a hermeneutics, in which Hermes, the messenger of the gods and of human history, surfaces. Precisely this we must not, simply, do. For Derrida,

*“it is crucial for the temporality of an immanent lived experience to be the absolute beginning of the appearance of time [for it to be an uncontaminated primary memory], and yet it only appears to itself as an absolute beginning thanks to a “retention” [which is chronothetic]; it only inaugurates within tradition; it creates precisely because it has a historical heritage. It seems illegitimate, then, to exclude from the beginning of reflection all temporal transcendence and any constituted unity of time”.* (Derrida and Technology, 245)

To think of an originary experience or phenomenon, a consciousness, preceding technique is inconceivable. “It is impossible to dissociate anthropogenesis from technogenesis” (Derrida and Technology, 258). The origin, even of this supposed experience speaking now, cannot be thought, but it cannot remain completely exterior to thought either. It concerns us fully; it is already there as an instinctive insistence.

*“This impossibility of reanimating absolutely the manifest evidence of an originary presence refers us therefore to an absolute past. That is what authorized us to call trace that which does not let itself be summed up in the simplicity of a present. If the trace refers to an absolute past, it is because it obliges us to think a past that can no longer be understood in the form of a modified presence, as a present-past”* (Derrida and Technology, 255).



This past, Eden, we are always searching for. Destiny though can never be lived and experienced, we have fallen from it and can now experience the non-experience of faith. Such memory cannot be our own and so mnemotechnics can never be dissociated from an irretrievable absence and loss, a nostalgia, the home-sickness of alienation.

To this nostalgia Nietzsche feels repulsion. A grand technician, he longs to forget what is forced on us from an origin that must not tame us. His appeal to thinking is for it to get attuned to the semi-transcendental structure of the technic. The absolute past pollutes and falls into history. Then history becomes an exercise on the becoming of this never of the *a priori*. What escapes, the essence, if we can speak of one, only partially determines its reorderings. We want to inhabit this genealogical limit, which perceives

*“how in each individual case the elements of the synthesis undergo a shift in value and rearrange themselves accordingly. So that now this, now that element comes to the fore and dominates at the expense of the others; and under certain circumstances one element (the purpose of deterrence perhaps) appears to overcome all the remaining elements”* (Genealogy, 80).

Our thinking here is already chained by history, even though it seems as if we have been evoking a transcendental structure. This struggle, now, is also the technical struggle of a hermeneutics of hermeneia (interpretation), of destiny’s destiny.

*“This double movement of abstraction and attraction that both tears away from and attaches back to the land, to the idiom, to the literal, to everything that is somewhat unclearly brought together under the name of ‘identity’”* (Derrida and Technology, 260)

*Of Chains and Cords*

“*[Whence things have their origin, there they must also pass away] along the lines of usage; for they let order and thereby also reck belong to one another (in the surmounting) of disorder.*” (Anaximander, 625, this now is Heidegger’s translation)

If attracted *and* abstracted, I could be torn away and attached mortally. I would stand on both sides. The point is that I cannot stand; I must flee my own position. This is the “necessity of the resolution contained in the solitude that the singularity of Dasein necessarily is” (*Theater of Individuation*, 49). Angst’s foundation demands never to be put aside. In society though, one has to stand in-line. One must enter the realm of an illegitimate determination, as flights cannot be publicized. The fall from the horizon of my beyond occurs because this beyond is not relatable. The realm of “publicness” “proximally controls every way in which the world and Dasein get interpreted, and *it* (i.e. publicness) is always right.” (*Theater of Individuation*, 52)

There, “I am in the realm of regression” (*Theater of Individuation*, 50). Angered at this regression Heidegger embarks in his seminar *World, Finitude, Solitude* to awaken a fundamental attunement “by letting what is asleep become wakeful” (*Animal*, 147). We can here think of sleep, not as unconsciousness, but as “a δεσμός, a being bound, a peculiar way in which aesthesis is bound” (*Animal*, 149). Who doubts that we are so often asleep in today’s technological frenzy? That the monsters are sleeping, remembered in someone else’s dreams. The “they” offers this “tranquility, for which everything is ‘in the best order’ and all doors are open” (BT, 222). And yet, this tranquility, possessed by a feeling that it “possesses everything, or that everything is within its reach”, becomes a movement of “turbulence” that leads to one “getting entangled” in oneself (BT, 223). “Being-in-the-world is in itself tempting” (BT, 221). The form of the question is one of a transformation as an “awakening” into an attunement.

In the realm of regression, we are not allowed to “let be”, to flee from ourselves, and the public projects a “relation of utility, of putting-in-perspective” (Animal, 159). Yet, would an awakening into a letting-be, far from the constant putting-in-perspective, be possible? Arendtian politics sought an impossible exemplariness as an ethical ideal that could guide politics and shape history. There are too few examples though, if any. And how could we ever be released from a mode which we seek to withdraw ourselves, but whose release would be obliged to repeat the principles of this modality of utility and perspective (Animal, 160). It is better to get out, isn't it? This letting-be and the relation of utility is a restatement of the question of the absolute past and its impossible necessity, of attachment and being-torn. A nostalgia, too, of the political, which Arendt mourns as she sees it fall into the social, the privatized world of labor.

Maybe the answer could be found within nostalgia insofar as it pertains by way of death and absence (Animal, 160). Would nostalgia thrust aside utility and perspective, if this possibility occurs in friendship, when friends bear one another in absence and distance, even in death? Maybe though the question of the structural fall within techno-logy, in the conflict of the snake and the hand, can only be accessed and surpassed via technology, through its auto-immunity, the way it seeks its own auto-destruction. The hand which wounds is the hand which heals, notes Hegel concerning the Fall (Encyclopaedia, §24).

The political, insofar as it remains essential, question of technology is animated by the fact that a supplement always points to an environment and an environment is always supported by others. Our being-with, unable to be pure and proper, brings about a ‘distantiality’.

*“In one’s concern with what one has taken hold of, whether with, for, or against, the others, there is constant care as to the way one differs from them, whether that difference is merely one that is to be evened out, whether one’s own Dasein has lagged*

*behind the others and wants to catch up in relationship to them, or whether one's Dasein already has some priority over them and sets out to keep them suppressed.*

*“But this distantiality which belongs to being-with, implies that Dasein, as everyday being-with-one-another, stands in subjection to others. It itself is not; its being has been taken away by the others. Dasein's everyday possibilities of being are for the others to dispose of as they please.” (BT, 163-4)*

This is not some arbitrary occurrence of our “nature”. The inescapable structure of tertiary retentions is both based on and founding of this disposition. Our relation to others is mediated, accessed only through these supports. We are caught not only mid-way but also within the world, through our roles, duties, laws, relatives. The very concept of a ground, which our tension to attach commands, is grounded in others. We receive our own possibilities and their own prescribed limitations.

*“In this averageness with which it [publicness] prescribes what can and may be ventured, it keeps watch over everything exceptional that thrusts itself to the fore. Every kind of priority gets silently suppressed. Overnight, everything that is primordial gets glossed over as something that has long been well known. Everything gained by a struggle becomes just something to be manipulated. Every secret loses its force. This care of averageness reveals in turn an essential tendency of Dasein which we call the ‘levelling down’ of all possibilities of being.” (BT, 165)*

### *Clothed Creatures*

“ I will destroy this temple made with human hands and in three days will build another, not made with hands.' " (Mark 14:58)

The insights read in *Genesis* concerning alienation originate from the principle of creation. The human creature is created by God in His own image. The creature, God’s technical puppet, wants to transgress its role, to betray its master. Consequently, it can be seduced if promised equality with the role of the creator. No wonder it ends up, after the creature’s actual taking of the role, *being* precisely this prohibition, only more damned and weakened.

*“In the Old Testament, there is a sort of jealousy of Yahweh toward the creature. And we say that transgresses the creature”* (Save the Technical Object).

We can see this, for example in Paul, who in the second Corinthians, section 5 titled *Our Eternal Dwelling*, writes

*“For we know that if the earthly tent we live in is destroyed, we have a building from God, an eternal house in heaven, not built by human hands. Meanwhile we groan, longing to be clothed instead with our heavenly dwelling, because when we are clothed, we will not be found naked. For while we are in this tent, we groan and are burdened, because we do not wish to be unclothed but to be clothed instead with our heavenly dwelling, so that what is mortal may be swallowed up by life”.* (2 Corinthians 5)

Mortals must be clothed with the eternal, covering the nakedness of the passing of time. What flees has no existence and faith brings this flight into our horizon by associating it with the dwelling place of the eternal, the divine. We thus hide in front of the gaze of this law that requires of us to wear clothes. Derrida insists on thinking “shame and technicity together” (Animal, 5). Paul’s letter expresses this lack in finitude, this finite and shameful lack that must be clothed with the purity of a divine dwelling.

To this Simondon responds:

*“But is not all creation a transgression? I think transgression, whose origin is the serpent, is the creation of a person. If Adam and Eve never left the Garden of Eden they would have not become human beings or inventors. Their one son was a shepherd, the other a farmer. Techniques were born there. Finally, technics and transgression seem to be the same”* (Save the Technical Object).

For Paul the transgression must only be a temptation, a false departure that permits a return to the word of God, who granted freedom only so that we can learn to obey. On the other hand, Nietzsche revels in nakedness and the daring to grasp beyond ourselves. Of course, this treatment of transgression is reflected in its necessary aftermath: debt and punishment. Nietzsche uncovers these histories and finds the elements that resound to his sense of joy.

In terms of debt and in the place of the Judeo-Christian "I ought not to have done that" of sovereignty and guilt, Nietzsche desires the autonomous basis of a "here something has unexpectedly gone wrong" (Genealogy, 83). Not guilt but sadness, a sadness whose responsibility lies in the effort of overcoming, not in the obedience to an old promise handed over. His fear is that one's life creation might be treated by others' hands, or, more so by the *other* of a hand, by a faceless voice that can judge and punish. Punishment is reduced to consciousness, "our weakest and most fallible organ!" (Genealogy, 84).

*“Thus punishment tames men, but it does not make them "better"-one might with more justice assert the opposite”* (Genealogy, 83).

The punishment of Prometheus is telling. Prometheus brings fire to mankind, but this is the fire of *techne*, not of a Holy Spirit. Prometheus thus says in a dialogue with the Chorus,

*“I took from man expectancy of death. (...)  
I planted blind hope in the heart of him. (...)  
Moreover, I conferred the gift of fire. (...)  
Yea, and shall master many arts thereby.” (...)* (Prometheus Bound)

A whole other salvation. No “blind hope” instilled in *followers*. Prometheus is punished by Zeus and his bandits for stealing fire from their world. Yet, the punishment only adds to Prometheus’ pride and sadness, to his sense of duty in autonomy. Prometheus brings the divine, a blind fiery hope, into life. The betrayal of the Law by love is joyful *and* sad but not sinful.

*“Behold what I, a God, from Gods endure!  
Look down upon my shame,  
The cruel wrong that racks my frame,  
The grinding anguish that shall waste my strength“* (Prometheus Bound).

### *Politics of Pain*

Already the traversal of guilt, debt, and mnemotechniques has been too vast and too fast. We would need to stop and stare, and yet the debt of time that weighs on this study wants to go all around. We’ll end with a final note on today’s state of debt. Debt is today’s master signifier. As our governments owe to one another, debt orders the international scene. Lending related to the Greek ‘λείπω’, absence, which means “to be in a deficient state”, “to be missing from the environment where one ought to be” (I-E Lang. and Soc., 151). The loans of credit can be given without one’s consent, they weigh on the people that were never there when they were given out.

Functioning as a medicine for the subject’s retentional finitude, money measures all tertiary retentions. The retentions disclosing a world go forgotten. A sign is given. The forgetting of the support kills the possible transgression through technics. “Don’t mourn, you’re in debt, get over

it”. Memory focuses on credit, on its private stories, on the debt of our parents and on that very debt owed to them. “We’re all your parents”, they say.

Their punishments which don’t even promise liberation, render us calculable subjects.

*“Man himself must first of all have become calculable, regular, necessary, even in his own image of himself, if he is to be able to stand security for his own future”*  
(Genealogy, 58).

An advanced technique of promise, the perfect illusion of a promised stability, for the animal of the loss, the animal that is lost. The promisory note is on fire. It can set everything aflame and blind hope itself. They know it, these moralists that tame, that “without cruelty there is no festival” (Genealogy, 67). We get punished with so much more than guilt. But they don’t want us to be sad.

*“Setting prices, determining values, contriving equivalences, exchanging-- these preoccupied the earliest thinking of man to so great an extent that in a certain sense they constitute thinking as such”* (Genealogy, 70).

Isn’t this still the case? Only that today’s financial system functions through temporality, as a memory-system of exchanges. Today’s economy is completely dependent on registering, tracing, making sure that everything *can* be remembered. Price is not merely then the conveyor of information, as liberalism would have it. This is the thinking of an empty tradition, of the empty tradition as being empty, as he forgets everything the market carves in external memory. The insistence on the present signal and tendency of prices stresses the way in which information is conveyed, but what a selective memory, only of the absolutely new.



This memory might manage to order the absent subjects of credit. The slave might thank the master, depending on and rejoicing with the master, but this is caused by the horrific threat of the Law which lies beyond choice.

We, the fire of a past no one remembers, we promise again to fall naked in a prideful awakening. We owe them, those that are inside us, nothing but our season in hell, the bitter fruit of revenge that forgets them. If we could only raise the question of a new economy through a new mnemotechnological relation to the world...

*“Once, if I remember rightly, my life was a feast where all hearts opened, and all wines flowed.*

*One evening I sat Beauty on my knees – And I found her bitter – And I reviled her.*

*I armed myself against Justice.*

*I fled. O sorceresses, O misery, O hatred, it was to you my treasure was entrusted!*

*I managed to erase all human hope from my mind. I made the wild beast’s silent leap to strangle every joy.” (A Season in Hell, Prologue)*

Credit spreads untouchable. It is the consciousness that doesn’t stop demanding. Our ideals created by hands owe it to a voice that declares the guilt of our nakedness. Don’t have faith in that! Flee with the non-memory of the absolute past that you so painfully forget. Betray for that infinite debt in your hands, the sublime debt located wherever your hands reach, in all you create and caress, and to which you give your life. This debt you will only hand to your death, the death we cannot expect.

The incalculable promise on our side is not to wear the ghostly attire of the Law. They do not want us to fall. They want us to fear their promises, these masters who are still in the Garden of Eve, sleeping in an inert festivity of long broken promises. Transgression, even in memory, is a

delusion for them. Therefore the apple that would turn debt around is supposedly placed beyond anyone's reach. What a museum this is, a temple forgetting that the promise lies open. Don't wear the ghastly attire of the Law. The guards, professing their understanding, murder your fall.

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