

## PURGATORY

### Scene 66

**God:** [Setting:] Beneath the church. Under a trapdoor in the floor. A cell, into which hangs a frayed rope ladder.

There shall be a twenty-year ban on God; or rather, on the allegorical, metaphorical, allusive, offstage, imprecise and ambiguous uses of God ... God is permitted only as a verifiable divinity who gets extremely cross at man's transgressions.

Geoffrey Braithwaite

(Julian Barnes,  
*Flaubert's Parrot*,  
1984, p. 100)

Below, and an electrical cord and light bulb hang from a wooden beam in the shadows. A cold light reveals four stone walls and shackles and cuffs hanging from cast iron hooks. Dust hangs thick in the air. A smaller cavern cuts into one of the walls and a hinged grate fortifies its entrance, forming a crude cage. A rancid odour of urine and sweat lingers in the earth. A dirt floor with shards of bone completes the interior.

At a wooden table in the centre of the chamber, beneath the light, perched on a stool, sits Jack. He breathes the dampness. He tastes death.

*Blood, bile, and excrement.*

Before him lies a scrap of paper. His eyes swell in the stale light. His tongue emerges from its lair. Creases cross his brow. A twitch in his fingers suggests a rush of blood. Saliva spills from the corner of his mouth. (*He writes*)

Dear God

(*Stops. Grins. Begins again:*)

Dear Keats,

Greetings!

I have now the tools to satisfy Circe! But alas, your secret is out, dear Keats. I know all about your [Second Coming](#) and [Last Judgement](#). 'The weariness, the fever, and the fret,' you wrote of your second life on

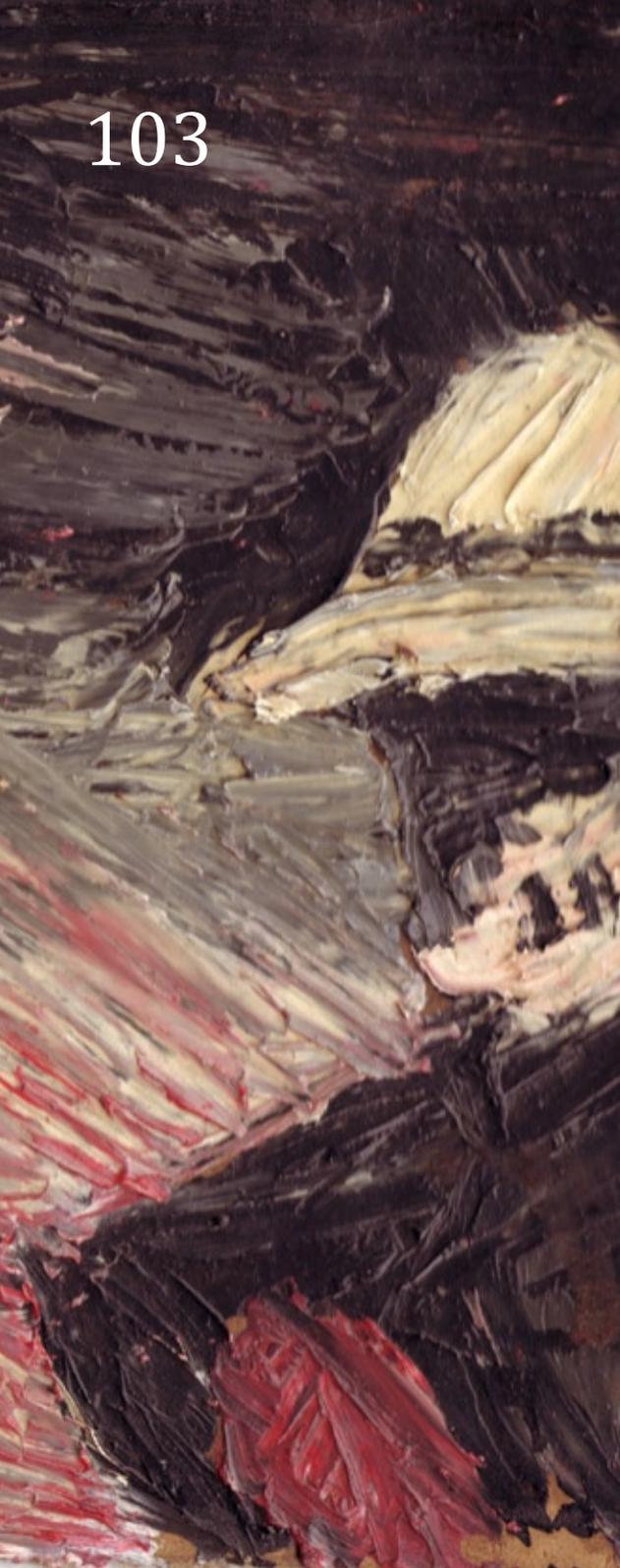
**Purgatory:** *noun*  
(1) in Catholic theology, the stage of the afterlife where souls suffer for their sins before they can enter heaven  
(2) any situation causing suffering

*Wiktionary*  
(accessed 2 August 2008)

**Second Coming:**  
In Christianity, the Second Coming is the anticipated return of Jesus Christ from heaven to earth, an event that will fulfil aspects of Messianic prophecy, such as the general resurrection of the dead, the last judgment of the dead and the living, and the full establishment of the Kingdom of God on earth (also called the 'Reign of God'), including the Messianic Age. Views about the nature of this return vary among Christian denominations.

*Wikipedia*  
(accessed 31 July 2008)

**Last Judgement:**  
In Christian eschatology, the Last Judgement or Day of



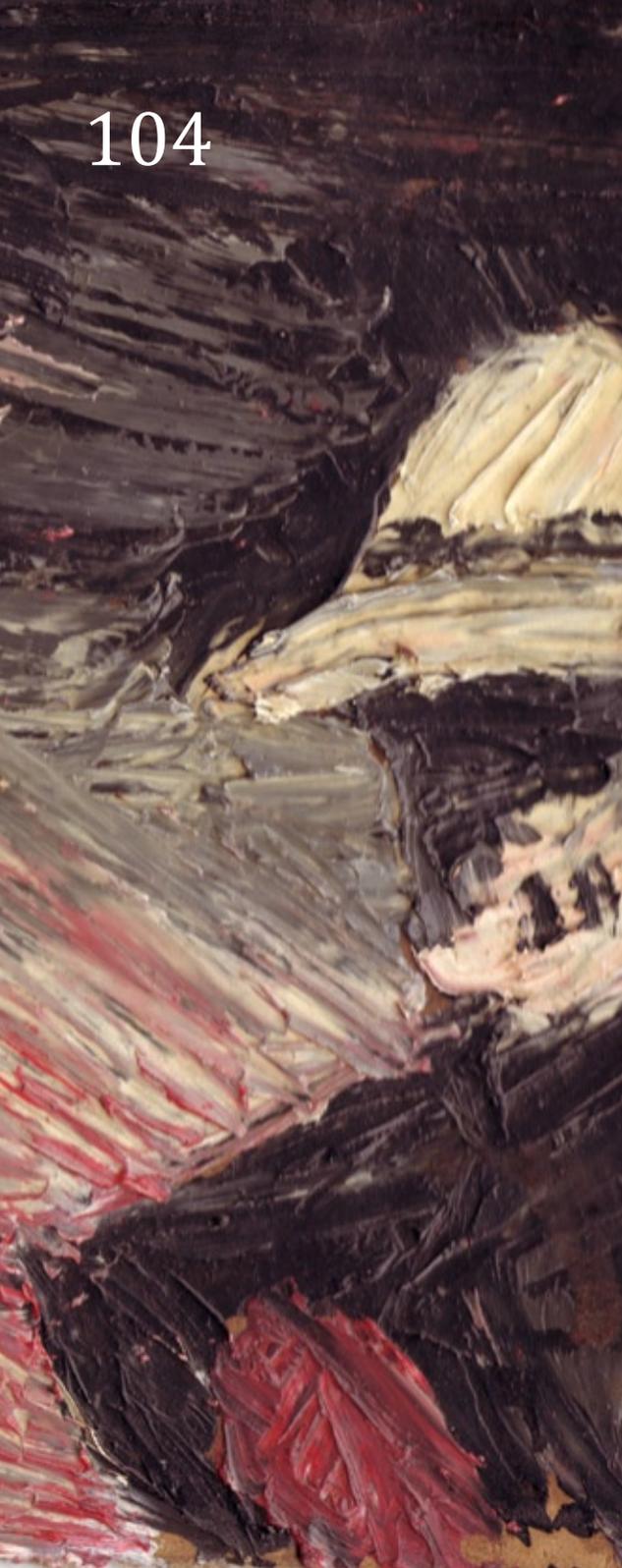
earth, 'where pain is never done.'

In seven long and lonely days I have already discerned this reality. 'Sink or swim,' they howl in the sewers. And it's true. 'Join the human race or get off,' they holler. Free will, I think, has taken us this way: in the beginning we freely and willfully chose the self over the other. The ego over the spirit. The material over the immaterial. The rational over the emotional. The individual over the collective. Suffering over peace. One little lie mushroomed into the enormity of deceit we see today, an enormity so large it spreads as rapidly and expansively as the universe, and in all likelihood can never be reigned in or redressed. Our hopes escape us more rapidly than photons of light, like sparks a fire the dead of night, with it escapes our spirit of being, our destiny back at the proverbial fork in the road, when the cosmos was younger and brimming with potential, simply spat into space and lost. An acknowledgment of our divine potential forever abandoned. In its place a lunatic spectre. A mask. An ego. A shopper. And now we remember not what we dreamed and envisaged in those early morning hours when modernity glistened with sunshine and hope. When we had the chance to define our destiny and improve our world. We see instead an encroaching darkness, as it gathers and spreads through the pervading gloom of our minds. *As the bombs fall.* Here where the memory of a hopeful species deforms and collapses into insensibility. *As the skin tears.* And we blink this perplexity away and take our next drink. *As the gas spreads.* And soon we know not what bugged us a second or two ago, but freely dream up new cruelties to administer to those we love and hate. *As the children die.* But wait!

Stop, or gently pass.

*the Lord is the judgement  
by God of every human  
who ever lived. It will take  
place after the resurrection  
of the dead and the Second  
Coming*

*Wikipedia  
(accessed 31 July 2008)*



Jack pauses, pen in hand, and ponders. A fresh wave of words and images fills his head.

It begins with explosives taped to a torso. And an explosion. With gut and brain splattering everywhere, unrecognisable against the ashes and ruins. Perhaps a tooth in the mud. An eyelash on the breeze. A soul lost to oblivion.

‘One last grand and futile act,’ he mutters, recalling something he read.

He wonders about all this: death, destruction, and the end of thought.

Should he annihilate himself and this place? Flatten it all? Decimate the lot? Lay waste the whole damned delusion? Have faith in an existence beyond?

Destroy the dungeon?

Kill the ego?

Spare the world his suffering? His noise?

‘*Is it a tale told by an idiot?*’ he wonders. ‘Full of sound and fury, signifying nothing...?’ What of the horror experienced by Macbeth at his hour of death? When words and dreams failed him?

*(Grimaces)*

After all, he is his own Macbeth. There is no room in the world for anyone other than himself. The other players merely get in the way. They meddle in his schemes and ruin his lines. If only they would play the roles he assigns them. If only he could bend them to his will. If only they would do as asked. If only they would let him be.

If only they would let him be *God*.

*If only...*

Binky was right. ‘Fuck them all. And fuck the world.’

Ending this line of thought, Jack glances around his new quarters and appears to take note of every last thing about him, searching for a new distraction. Darkness gathers. He thinks about how radio waves escape the planet, sending confused messages into the cosmos, and yet

**The Lunatic Race:**

... man appeared on Earth through a clumsy accident, consigned to mortality but also condemned to be aware of this, and that therefore he is the most imperfect among all the animals ... This man, to find the courage to face death, would out of necessity become a religious creature and aspire to construct narratives capable of providing an explanation and a model, an exemplary image. And of those that he can dream up—some illuminating, some terrible, some pathetically self-consolatory—in the fullness of time, he has at a given moment the religious and moral and poetic strength to conceive the model of Christ, of universal love, of forgiveness of one's enemies, of life offered in terrible sacrifice for the salvation of the other. If I were a traveller from a distant galaxy and found myself before a species that knew how to construct such a model, I would be captivated, I would admire all this theogonic energy, and I would judge this wicked and miserable species, this species that committed so many horrors, redeemed solely because it had succeeded in desiring

these waves have scarcely left home in the entire mad history of the human race (a race spanning some ten seconds in the cosmic calendar according to Carl Sagan). Those cries too are lost to the infinite night. Or are they?

He wonders.

Perhaps in a few billion years a sentient being in a galaxy far far away will watch the history of *homo sapiens* unfold and become confused and amused at the spectacle, then alarmed and embarrassed, and finally indifferent as they discover no real or lasting progression in the human psyche or spirit over millennia, no growth or evolution in the species per se, just technological grand wizardry and consumer annihilation, illusions and diversions to fill the ages, and simply await the mercy of the universe to deliver a black hole to the region and suck away the **lunatic race** and all its language games and commercial products. Or simply destroy the planet themselves and be done with it. Before humans get their grubby mitts on (and into) the galaxy itself, then neighbouring galaxies, then still more galaxies, then the whole universe, and systematically infect it with their own particular brand of destruction—with greed, hate, and madness. War after war with other beings and other ecosystems and other landscapes. Imperialism on the scale of infinity. Just the sort of distraction that could keep a species of lunatics in denial and abeyance for eternity. Market **capitalism** everywhere. Each ego its own planet. The ultimate trophy of **individualism**. Euphoric isolation. Mad brooding. Worlds apart. Oblivion.

He wonders. A sensation of alarm runs up his spine. He feels himself stiffen. He is both horrified at the prospect and inspired by the challenge. It all begins with radio waves.

And absurd sitcoms documenting an absurd race. The human history of murder and hate televised to the universe. Not love, compassion, and wisdom, but hate, greed, and delusion. Not spirit, but form. Not joy, but agony. Not hope, but despair. Not wisdom, but idiocy. An example *not* to follow. The earth a Petri dish of how *not* to exist, a crude experiment that aimed at enlightenment but found in-

**Capitalism:** *'Western capitalism ... has set in motion a train of events that has corroded or destroyed most other cultures with which it has come into contact (Giddens, as cited in Evan Willis, The Sociological Quest, 1999, p. 69)*

**Individualism:** *is a moral, political, or social outlook that stresses independence, self-reliance, and individual liberty. Individualists promote the exercise of one's goals and desires, while opposing most external interference with one's choices – whether by society, the state, or any other group or institution. Therefore, individualism is opposed to collectivism or statism, which stress that communal, community, group, societal, or national goals should take priority over individual goals. Individualism is also opposed to tradition, religion, or any other form of external moral standard being used to limit an individual's choice of actions.*

*Wikipedia  
(accessed 31 July 2008)*

and believing that all of it  
was the Truth..

(Umberto Eco, as cited in  
Umberto Eco & Cardinal  
Martini,  
*Belief or Nonbelief: A Con-  
frontation*,  
2000, pp. 97-98)

#### Text Worlds:

*There is nothing outside the  
text* (p. 158).

...there has never been any-  
thing but writing; there have  
never been anything but  
supplements, substitutive  
significations which could  
only come forth in a chain  
of differential references, the  
'real' supervening, and being  
added only while taking on  
meaning from a trace and  
from an invocation of the  
supplement, etc. And thus  
to infinity, for we have read,  
*in the text*, that the absolute  
present, nature, that which  
words like 'real mother'  
name, have always already  
escaped, have never existed;  
that what opens meaning  
and language is writing as  
the disappearance of natural  
presence (p. 159).

(Jacques Derrida,

sanity instead. 'How will we be viewed?' he wonders, startled. 'Am I *all* humanity?' He wonders about this too. He feels sick to the core, bewildered and deflated.

'Am I *me*?' he whispers.

And a voice deep down inside answers, 'No.'

He is all of history and nothing at all – a collage of selves and a collage of **quotations**. He is everything and nothing all at once.

He is beyond self. Beyond language. And yet language speaks him into being. Into gender. Into identity. Into life.

And it is the first time ever, in any guise and in any mind, that he has thought about things beyond him, beyond Jack, beyond Circe, beyond the Lout, and beyond the Author-God. To another voice, softer and yet clearer, calling up from beyond compulsive thought, beyond war, abjection, and horror, to utter something else. Something new.

Still textual, still language, but erasing itself. Questioning itself. *Un*-becoming-itself. A counter-discourse. Illegitimate knowledge.

A home. The voice of home. The voice of eternity. Of God. Of nodes. Networks. Allusions.

A voice that is not a voice. A voice that is not words. A silent voice. A feeling.

And suddenly he cries. Tears stream down his face, gathering in the grooves of his cheeks. But no sooner does he begin this cry, an intertextual cry, an all-encompassing cry, a cry that feels like it might last forever, and his mind takes off again, faster and more furiously than ever, and he begins wondering about other things, disparate things, all sorts of things, all at once, and the moment is lost to oblivion. To white noise. Semiotic saturation. Hypertextuality.

A barrage of things. Of connections.

Images, words, voices, identities, judgements, and other con-  
fections. *Other texts*.

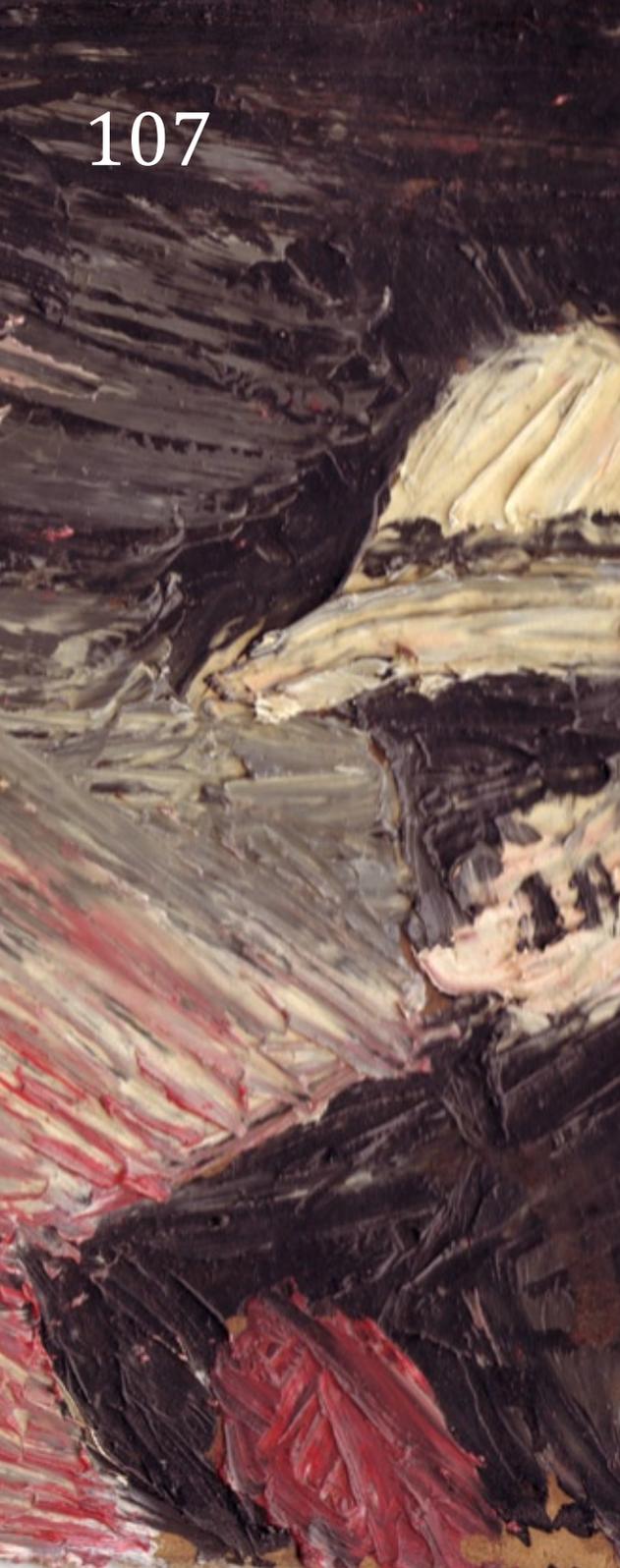
And he defines himself by these things.

And more and more things are gathering, manifesting.

Full to the brim with things. *Words*.

*The Quote Generator:*  
*The Quote Generator pays  
homage to the people who  
have gone before and said it  
the way it wishes it could.*  
*The Quote Generator is a  
verbal mimicry product of  
its people and culture. The  
Quote Generator lets their  
hot and cold and banal shit  
out of its mouth. The Quote  
Generator is absorption of  
unoriginality. The Quote  
Generator is a regurgitation  
library to live by. The Quote  
Generator is a semiotic  
experiment and a perform-  
ance art project. Language  
is already stolen, we already  
quote all the time. The Quote  
Generator is a concentrated  
overdramatised version of  
a very natural process of  
repetition and assimilat-  
ing information. The Quote  
Generator steals some of the  
best and worst, offensive,  
polite, prosaic, practical and  
pointless lines – whatever  
it deems worthy to steal for  
use of its own voice. The  
Quote Generator reads, and  
researches as it speaks. ...*

Danielle Freakley,  
The Quote Generator  
Manifesto, 2006. <[www.thequotegenerator.com](http://www.thequotegenerator.com)>



*Of Grammatology,*  
1976/1967)

**The Demon Within:**

The temptation to evil lurks  
even in those who have a  
solid and revealed notion of  
good.

(Umberto Eco, as cited in  
Umberto Eco & Cardinal  
Martini,  
*Belief or Nonbelief: A Con-  
frontation,*  
2000, p. 91)

A collection of things. *Images.*

An incongruent man full of incongruent things. *Signs.*

The mind a would-be God, producer of things. *Symbols.*

Too many things. The history of things. *Noise.*

Artefacts and relics galore: perpetually re-examined, re-labelled, re-used, re-defined, and incessantly clung to and never discarded. A museum of objects, memories, words. Innumerable vaults stuffed to the rafters with signs and *traces*. Carried around by the brain to furnish its stories. To dwell upon. Lavish upon. Frown upon. And suffer with.

Overwhelmed by such thoughts, by infinity, the madman returns to the safety of his favourite subject of all.

*Himself.*

Which is the sum total of everything. More things. More texts. More noise.

*(Sighs. Looks around. Searches.)*

In one corner of the chamber, on a wooden trestle, various implements lie in neat rows. *More things.* These include tongs, spoons, forks, knives, rubber bands, strings, tethers, pencils, matches, gaffer tape, rubber gloves, belts, whips, feathers, candles, beads, and golf balls. The implements of love, he hopes. *Love things.* He can see it now: nuts and bolts embedded in a milky-white back; red welts on the pillows of a perfect white arse; blood on a bruised white thigh; Circe splayed and helpless and shackled to a cold stone wall, semen splattered across her stomach and thighs.

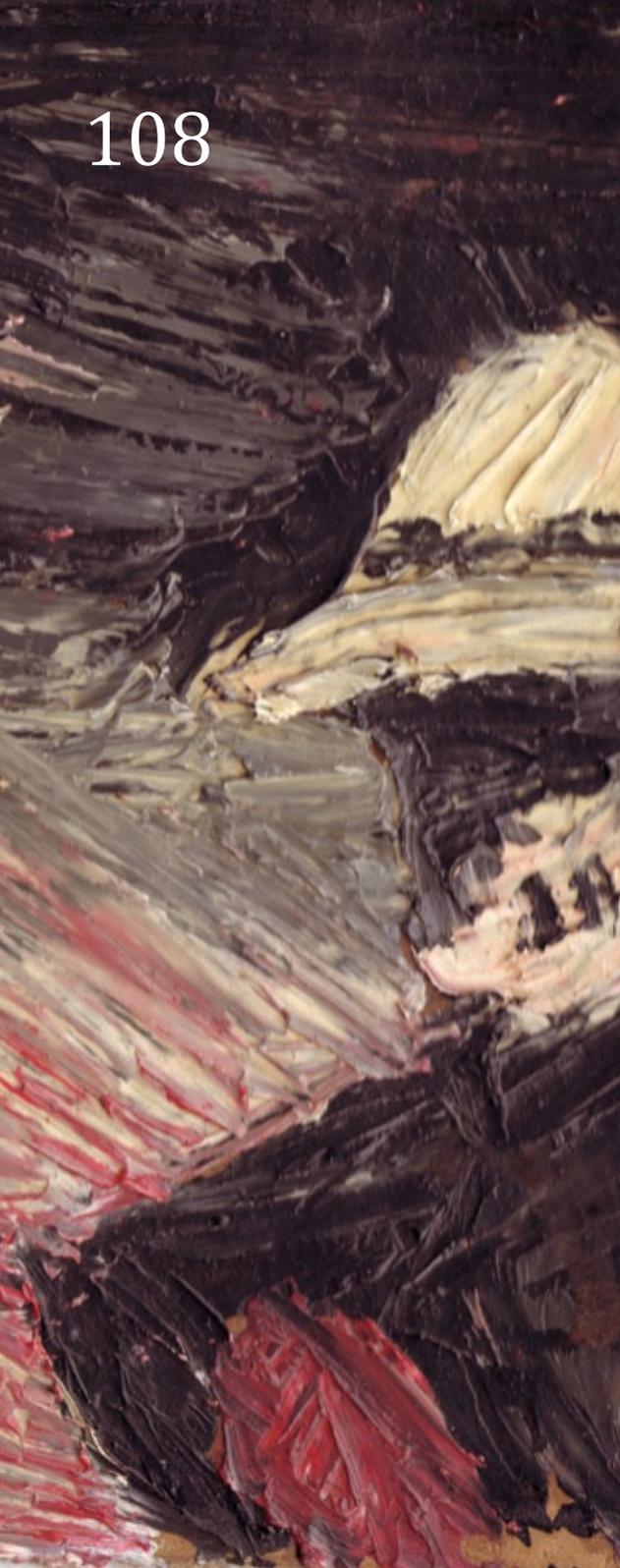
*(Laughs. Retches.)*

A second trestle, in another corner, harbours more oddities: sections of pipe, several lengths of broom handle, a cricket bat, and six bottles of varying length and breadth. Perhaps the only odd thing out on this trestle is a mannequin bust. Fresh moisture on its perfect lips suggests kisses from a new friend. Kisses four.

*(Sighs)*

*Intertextuality: is the shaping of texts' meanings by other texts. It can refer to an author's borrowing and transformation of a prior text or to a reader's referencing of one text in reading another. The term 'intertextuality' has, itself, been borrowed and transformed many times since it was coined by poststructuralist Julia Kristeva in 1966. As critic William Irwin says, the term 'has come to have almost as many meanings as users, from those faithful to Kristeva's original vision to those who simply use it as a stylish way of talking about allusion and influence'.*

*Wikipedia*  
(accessed 8 November 2008)



**Abjection:**

It is thus not lack of cleanliness or health that causes abjection but what disturbs identity, system, order. What does not respect borders, positions, rules. The in-between, the ambiguous, the composite. The traitor, the liar, the criminal with a good conscience, the shameless rapist, the killer who claims he is a savior ...

(Julia Kristeva,  
*Desire in Language*,  
1982, p. 4)

Dear Keats,

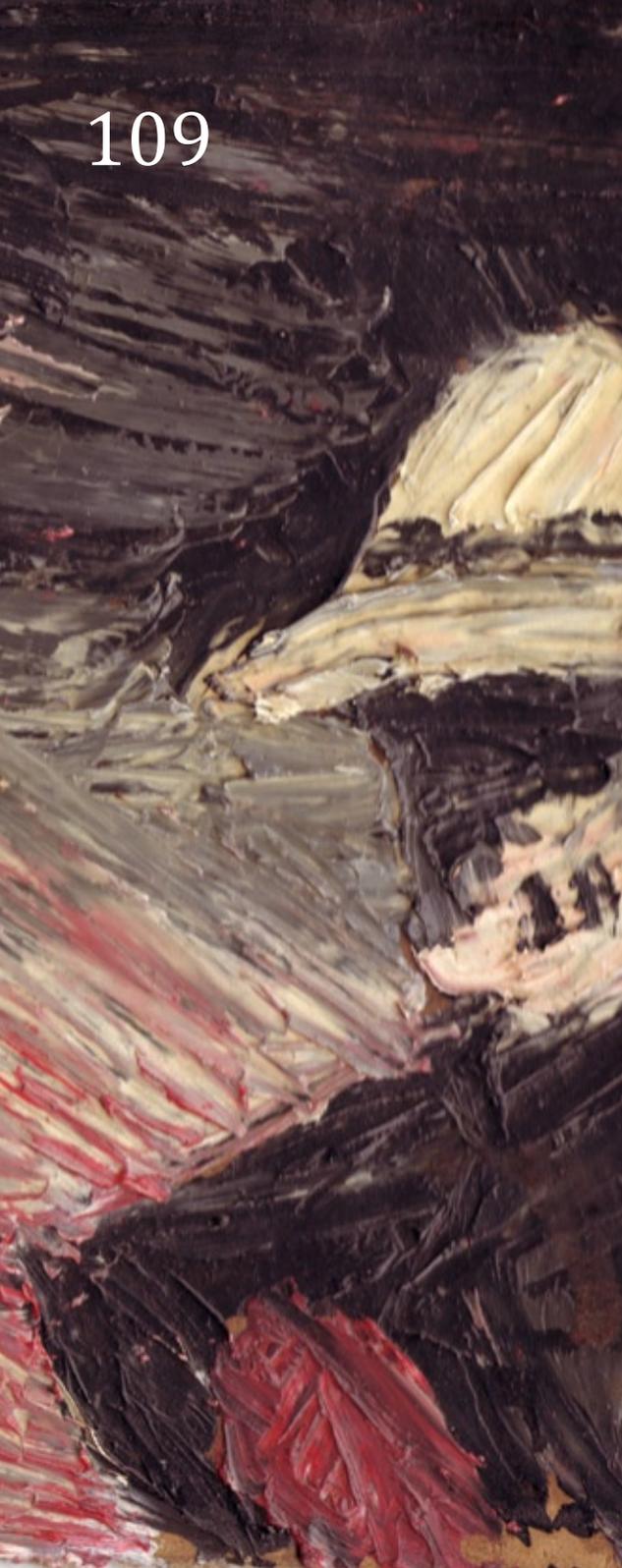
I have taken refuge in one of your churches in the Disputed Territories, beyond the bogs. It's the derelict one behind the lunatic asylum. My cell back there in the east is no more, at least to me.

More specifically, I have taken up residency in the dungeon beneath the church, where the pope lived. There is a small pit I mean to make my hole. And various relics I mean to use.

Carnal urges, I'm sad to report, have finally gotten the better of the former occupant, so I've sent him down. His love, as I understand it, quite literally overwhelmed him, to the point of exhaustion and sterility. Poor chap could no longer ejaculate through excessive generosity, if you believe him, like a raisin sucked of its juice. His altruism simply dried him up. Turned him into a bloated red monster. By mid-afternoon he had taken refuge in the eternal asylum with many of his former subjects. The screaming, they say, is unbearable. I can just make it out from here. In the depths, far above.

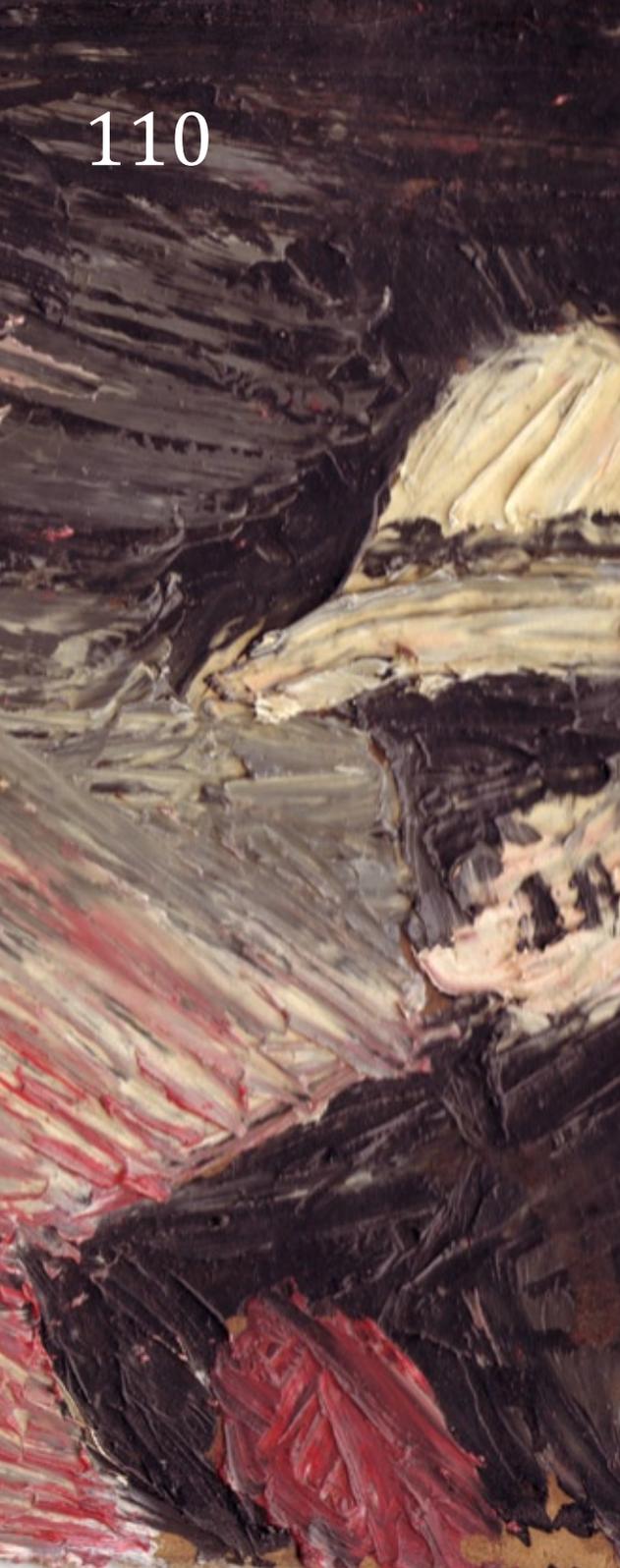
My only failing is that I didn't kick him harder!

Whatever the case, I now reciprocate human gestures in the manner of my peers, engaging in a little friendly battery and butchery, casting aspersions and criticisms at will, shouting obscenities almost every other utterance, launching projectiles for no other purpose than to kill, but haven't as yet taken my first rape or hostage, as is the usual custom here. Such love may beat upon my temples as a sun the blistered back of a slave, but I still haven't the confidence to make such expressions natural and free-flowing (I've been practising on a dummy). I see their grimaces in my mind's eye and baulk in horror, not bow in love, not gentle intimate love,



not like the Lout his passionate exertions, but like a child reeling from its first teat in an effort to put an end to its monstrous life. Believing life awful, that is, not grand. Perhaps it misconstrues the situation while in the womb, after the first of a reign of blows to its mother's genitals and guts. Rather than see these minor tremors as callous-forming encounters, as growth spurts, it takes them personally, upon its soul, as personal insults! After a few grating years it'll discover the folly of its ways and adapt to the mysterious language of love and society. It too will kick, condemn, and spurn - lie, cheat, and dissemble - rape, molester, and kill - God bless it, and give nearly as good as it gets. And love in its fashion will grope along. After all, half the population is the product of rape, the other of contempt and oversight, all accidents. In the end love doesn't matter in the scheme of things - it has been weeded out by evolution, an exorbitant luxury, a useless by-product of earlier romantic inhabitants, and simply too painful to endure. 'Fucking' occurred just as easily through hatred as with love, so it replaced it. The ovaries were none the wiser. The breasts still produced milk no matter the cuckoo suckling at its breast, no matter the eyes of the rapist twinkling in its brow. I too no doubt am the product of hatred and guile, a sperm meant for anywhere but the womb, flung asunder in a fit of rage and triumph, then happening upon an egg bumbling about a tube, and raping it. Forcing myself in. Colonising it. Ah, but I digress. For I have only recently learned these lessons too, and only just come to fathom their intricacies.

But now, dear Keats, I have the tools to participate in love, all neatly arranged, in easy reach, just here, and, most importantly, I have acquired the mindset



to use them: a deep hatred forming, at first small and foetal, not yet a twinkle in the maddening eye of the father, just a blob of substance, then rapidly transforming into a graven shape, a Minotaur of resentment, and still growing. I can feel its strengthening kick. Spite like a leaded boot, kicking and thrashing with all the venom of a two headed snake, deep within. 'Still, still to hear her tender taken breath, and so live ever or else swoon to death.' And, believe me, I know something about death, and knowing something about death, I know everything about love. For love and death will meet the day Circe and I pull down our trapdoor upon the world and take up residency in our sarcophagus. A great stillness will there be met.

Oblivion and love combined.

*Solution sweet.*

My previous grievances regarding your handiwork were too hastily made in this matter of love, it seems. My eyes have been opened. It took numerous cocks up the bowels to concede this point. Pain, after all, is paramount to pleasure. Not that gentle sappy stuff I once pined for. Circe is right to assault me. She too has been assaulted from the very first days of her youth. The world has loved her to death and neglected her naught. And to think I mistook all this for sin and scandal and suffering. It's practically a joke. Oh, the foibles of the mentally weak. To have inverted everything so clumsily. It's monstrous.

It was the Romans who started it, you know. Conquerors of land and limb. Masters of all, carers of none. Makers of history and crucifixes.

(But really, I suppose, it began with the primordial lie, back in the beginning, when our ancestors chose

**The End of Illusions:**

Forgive us our illusions, Father, and help us to accept our true relationship with You, in which there are no illusions, and where none can ever enter. Our holiness is Yours. What can there be in us that needs forgiveness when Yours is perfect? The sleep of forgetfulness is only the unwillingness to remember Your forgiveness and Your Love. Let us not wander into temptation, for the temptation of the Son of God is not Your Will. And let us receive only what You have given, and accept but this into the minds which You created and which you love. Amen.

*(A Course in Miracles, 2004, p. 350)*

to kill the spirit and nurture the ego, renouncing the common weal for individual omnipotence. For self. For power. For prestige and profit. For illusion. When we gave up God and became each and every one of us *God-jealous* and *God-like*, little islands of ego barking orders to the cosmos.

When we gave up equality for individual liberty. When we privatised and deregulated the self and freed the individual from moral proximity. *Adiaphorization*, as Bauman says.)

Whatever the case, whilst I am not as keenly involved in the sport of humanity as may yet be wished, I watch and learn and shall this very day take my first sermon. I know already that you will speak for me and that anything that bellows from my mouth will be your bidding. This heartens me.

Blessed world that you freed me from my bondage to discover all this! The Author was a fool to oppress me.

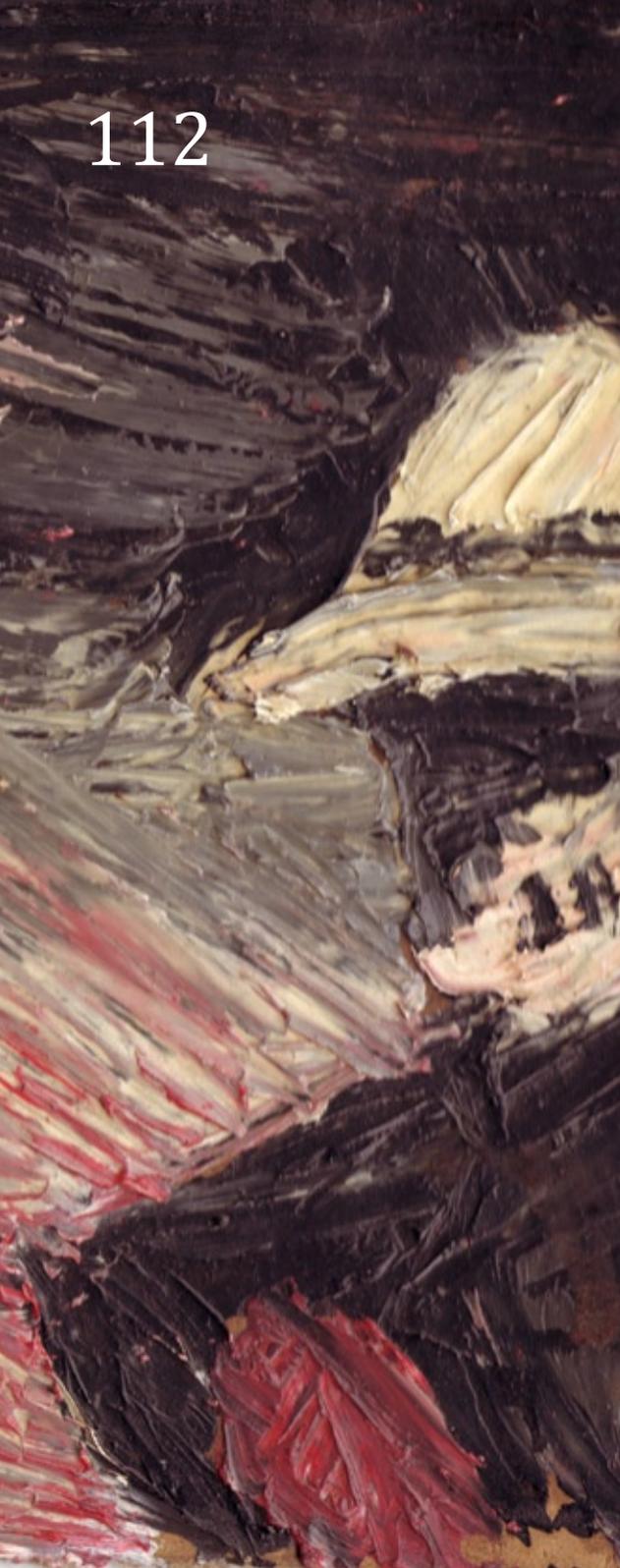
Your friend and Servant,

Jackery J Diggins  
Priest  
Advisor  
& *Justified Sinner*

PS I mean to use the apparatus around me to impress Circe. I think a good flogging followed by a stout implement up the loins should communicate my heart. Believe me, none of this will come easily, but I shall try, against the primitive instincts of my heart, I shall try, like a man in two minds, while one hand caresses and consoles the other shall with the deft cruelty of a demon make meat of supple flesh. The experiment may break me, may literally tear me in two, but for the sake of

*Adiaphorization: the postmodern capacity to 'float' moral responsibility by viewing 'the other' as an object of aesthetic and pragmatic consumption rather than moral and individual worth.*

*Justified sinner: a person who believes they can sin with impunity on account of having already been promised a place in heaven.*



conformity to the ways of the lands I shall perform this task. In short, I will wear the face of the pig and stamp my signet snout on the soul of Circe. And great happiness will rise from great terror like a sprout in a terrible storm.

Hallowed be thy name.  
& Adieu!

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Yes:

*Wandering between two worlds, one dead,  
The other powerless to be born,  
With nowhere yet to rest my head,  
Like these, on earth I wait forlorn.  
Their faith, my tears, the world deride—  
I come to shed them at their side.*

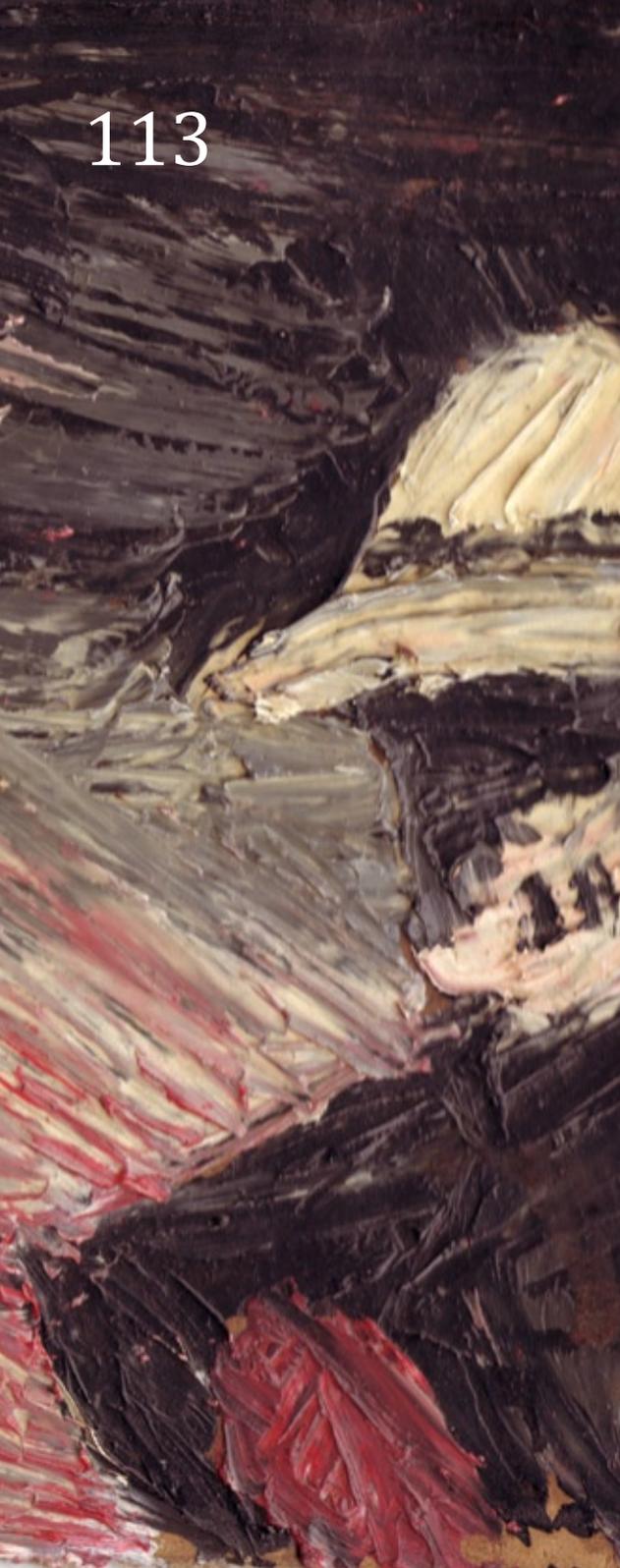
(Matthew Arnold, *Stanzas from the Grande Chartreuse*, 1855)

Yes:

*The end of social justice,  
equality,  
and the Enlightenment,  
and the rise of neo-liberalism,  
individualism,  
and rabid consumerism.  
The war of all against all.*

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The madman slumps back in his chair, pale-faced, stricken, as if having seen a ghost, but refuses to look at the mound of dirt in the shadows of the wall beyond his right shoulder. The shallow grave remains unadorned, trodden down, but makes an outward impression on him all the same. On his psyche, no less, like a bruise in the flesh

**Trace:**

... a 'text' that is henceforth no longer a finished corpus of writing, some content enclosed in a book or its margins, but a differential network, a fabric of traces referring endlessly to something other than itself, to other differential traces. Thus the text overruns all the limits assigned to it so far ... all the limits, everything that was to be set up in opposition to writing (speech, life, the world, the real, history, and what not, every field of reference—to body or mind, conscious or unconscious, politics, economics, and so forth).

(Jacques Derrida,  
*Living On*,  
1979, p. 84)

Such is the strange 'being' of the sign: half of it always 'not there' and the other half always 'not that.' The structure of the sign is determined by the trace or track of that other which is forever absent.

(Spivak, as cited in Derrida,  
*Of Grammatology*,  
1976, p. xvii)

of a thigh, or a dot, the tinniest blemish, in the iris of an eye. Or the blood on the lip of a face recently smashed with a fist. Or a dead priest stuffed one foot beneath the surface of the earth in a dungeon cell, where dozens of his victims have been likewise stuffed.

(Sighs)

With self-hatred welling within, skin stretching under the strain of annihilation, he sighs.

He remembers the dying words of Kurtz in Joseph Conrad's (1902) *Heart of Darkness*, and thinks Kurtz was too kind.

But what of it? How can he know horror if he hasn't known delight? If the trace of the 'other' weren't lurking nearby? Perhaps he experienced delight long ago, before the ego stepped in and led him astray. How else could he know horror – horror of self and horror of situation – if not through delight? One necessarily involves the trace of the other. Where did the memory of delight go? Where did the trace lead? Perhaps he only remembers the negative experiences and forgets the positive. Is such a thing possible? Could his mind be the enemy, the archenemy, and purveyor of despair? Could he be the stranger he has never met? *The foreigner within* (Julia Kristeva)?

Annoyed by this thought, Jack turns his attention to Circe. Her golden hair against the encroaching darkness, her face and smile shimmering before the gathering gloom, an angel with love in her wings and venom in her mouth.

And despite the innumerable rehearsals he has staged in his mind, he still fears kissing her, let alone ravaging her body with the implements that surround him. He can no more resist her memory than a gulp of air. Yet his heart races at the very thought of being in her company again, just being near her, looking at her, whispering to her, let alone touching her.

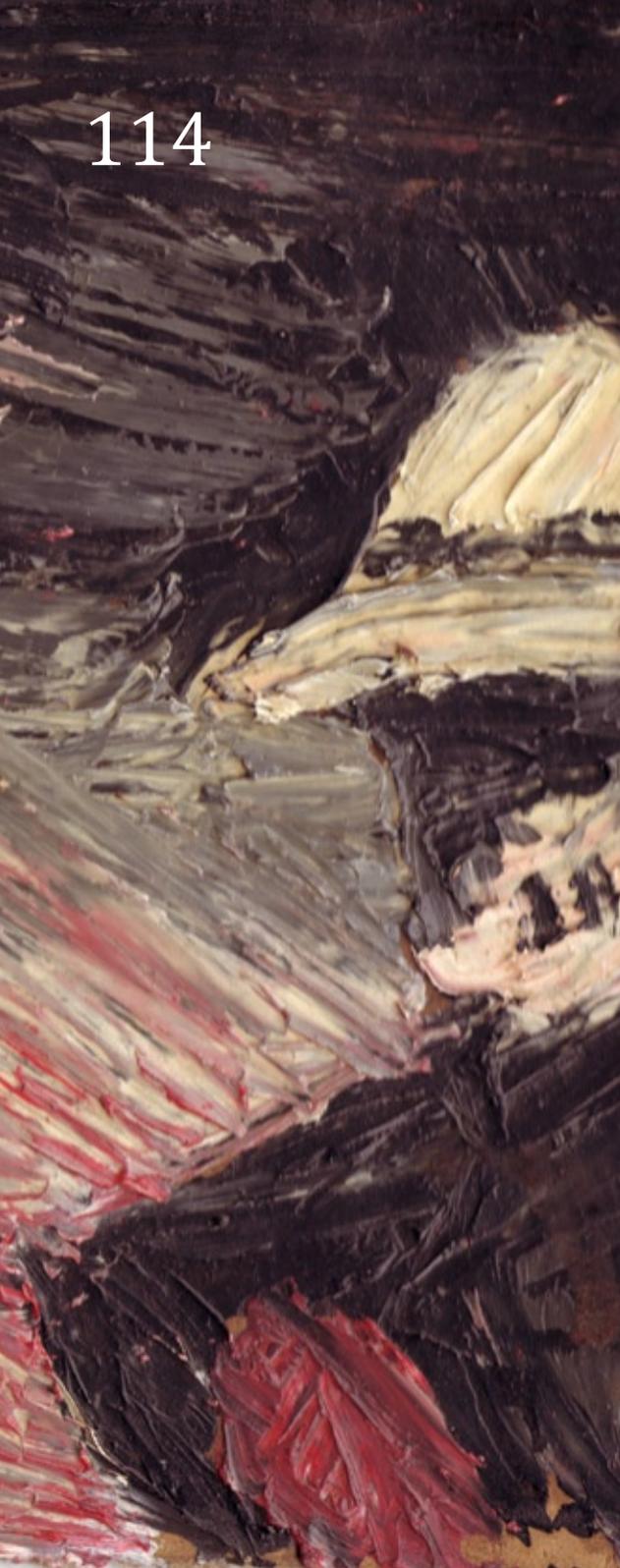
Reaching out and actually touching her.

What if she reels with revulsion? What if she vomits with disgust? What if she faints with fright?

What if she spits venom in his face? What then?

*Polysemy*: noun the acquisition and retention of many meanings by one word, as in the case of the word tank which referred to a receptacle for liquids and then additionally to a military vehicle (Macquarie, 2005, p. 1107).

*Polysemy* refers to the duplicitous and undecidable and capricious nature of all words and all utterances (whether spoken, written, gestured, or thought), and the constructed and contested nature of all terms and all meanings, such as the term God (which will cause war and bloodshed evermore) and the term Self (a battleground in its own right).



**Subject Positions:**

Part of the challenge of creating a substantive and inclusive democracy lies in constructing new locations of struggle, vocabularies, and subject positions that allow people in a wide variety of public spheres to become more than they are now, to question what it is they have become within existing institutional and social formations, and, as Chantal Mouffe points out, 'to give some thought to their experiences so that they can transform their relations of subordination and oppression'.

(Henry A. Giroux,  
*The Terror of Neoliberalism*,  
2004, p. 132)

It is one thing to imagine his cheek against her breast, but another to actually do it. To actually peel back her top, unhinge her bra, kiss her nipple, breathe her breath, watch her exhale, and then enter the heat of her body. To feel it respond to him, to yield, soften, and finally embrace him, to hear her sigh, then cry, as he draws blood to the surface of her skin, unleashing wave after wave of mind-numbing pain. Is this possible?

Distant screams in a distant night speak of this terror, and soon he joins the chorus of Wasteland life, and simply howls and sobs and buckles under the weight of another dreadful night.

Before long he is not only shivering and sobbing, but also muttering: 'Obsession is *thought* ... Excessive *thought* ... The wrong type of *thought* ... Need to transcend *thought* ... I can no longer bear knowing ... Knowing and un-knowing ... *Me* ... The horror ... Can I occupy a different site in language? ... In madness? ... In history? ... In you?'

And so he sobs. Just sobs. In the forgotten hours, he sobs.

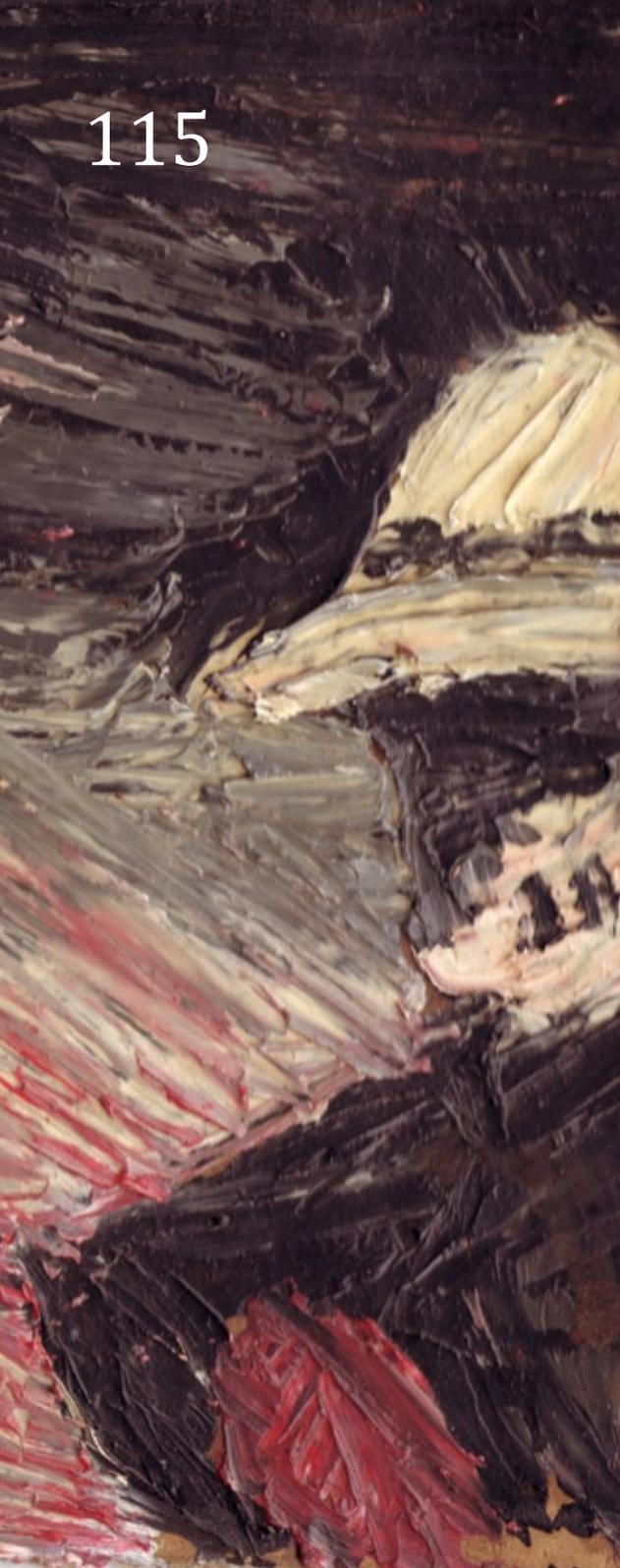
And the simple answer is: yes. Which he hears through silence.

A wordless silence.

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[Voice over:] *Thought was finally revealed for what it was and is: a text, a language, a writing, an inscription, an utterance, a palimpsest of traces; it was and is no more present or absent or true or false than any other text or sign – and just as easily edited and manipulated to write new truths into being and old lies into oblivion. Arche-writing. The free play of signs.*

*But how to transcend the confines of self and enter the social, where the gift is in the giving and the love is in the loving? Where individualism is overcome and hatred disappears? Where compassion and love rise up in their place? Where all manner of self- and socially-destructive habits of mind and body are abandoned? For the Other? For peace?*

*Perhaps if he simply tries, becomes willing and tries, he can*



*accomplish all manner of things. Who knows what might exist beyond sickness and insanity? Beyond consumerism? Beyond war?*

*A voice had called up from beyond, through silence and stillness and peace. He had felt it shimmering within. It was broader and more expansive than all the space in all the universe, and it was within him.*

*Tiny little him had eternity within. An immeasurable and endless space. Beyond the noise there was a 'holy quiet.'*

*Eudaemonia.*

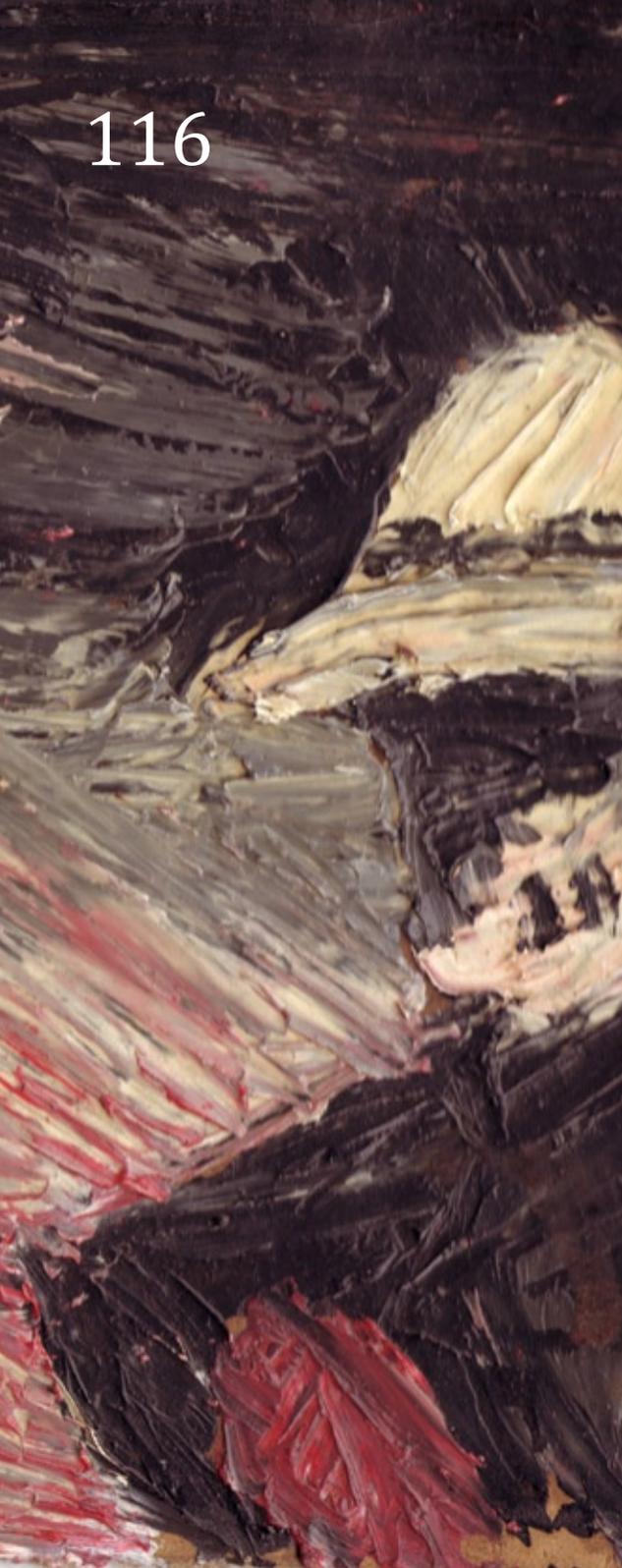
*There is God. God.*

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*'Sort of thing...'*

*Eudaemonia: (or eudemonia or eudaimonia) A state of pleasant well-being. The greatest good for an individual human being; a state of excellence characterised by objective flourishing across a lifetime, and brought about through the exercise of moral virtue, practical wisdom, and rationality.*

*Wiktionary  
(accessed 23 July 2008)*

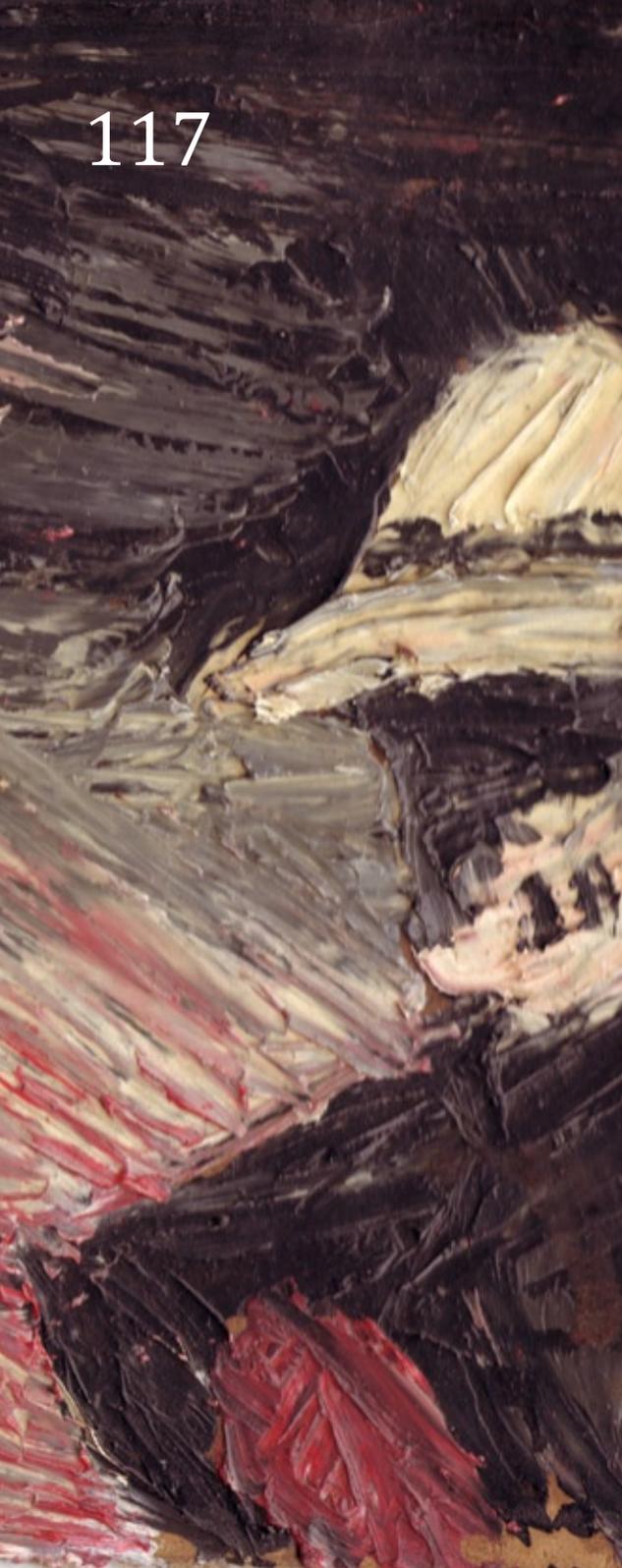
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What's in a name?

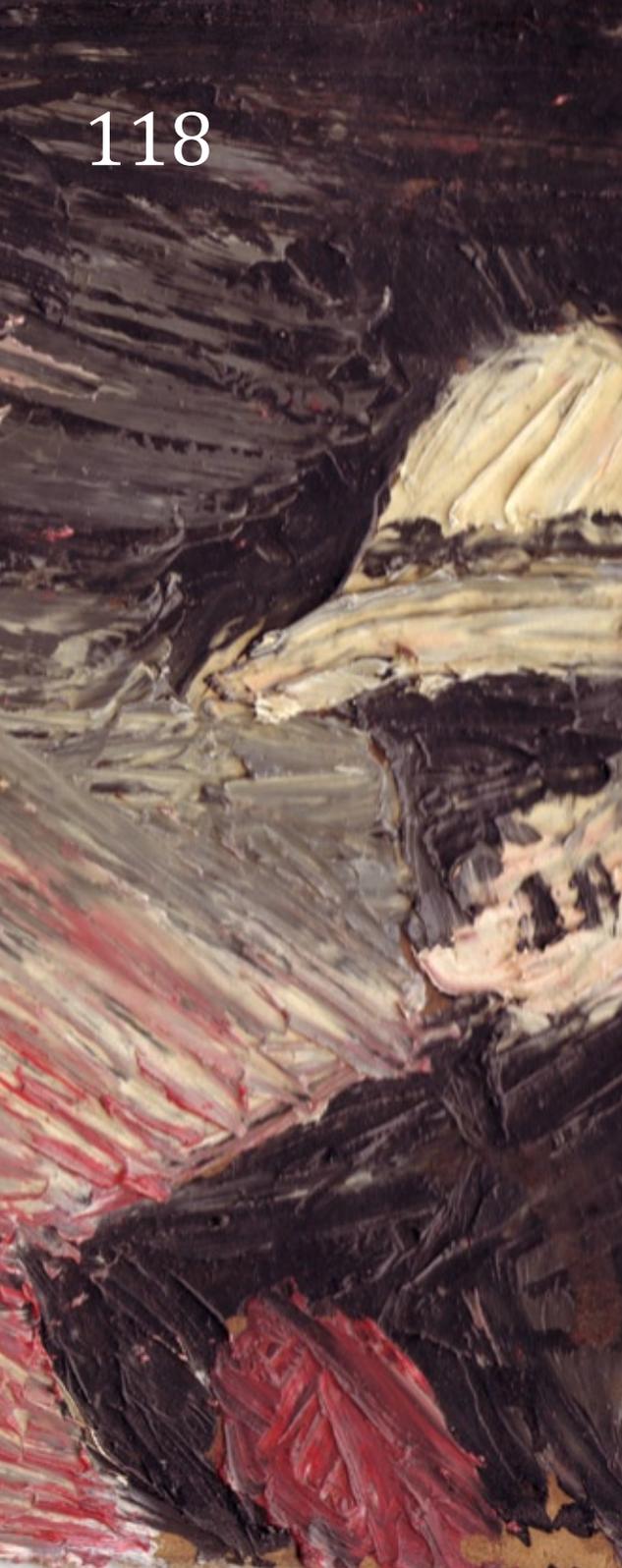
God help me remember my name.

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Everything

God help me remember your name.

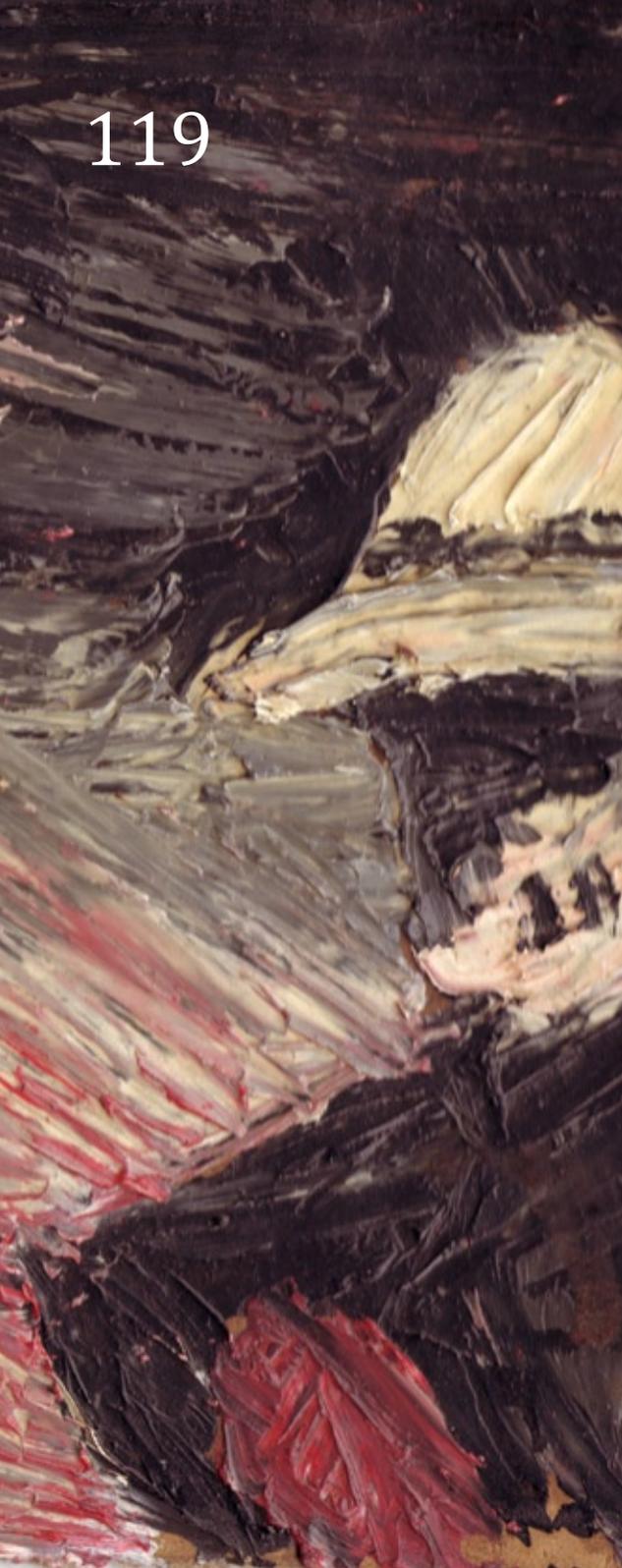


Once a refugee, forever a refugee. Roads back to the lost (or rather no longer existing) home paradise have been all but cut, and all exits from the purgatory of the camp lead to hell ...

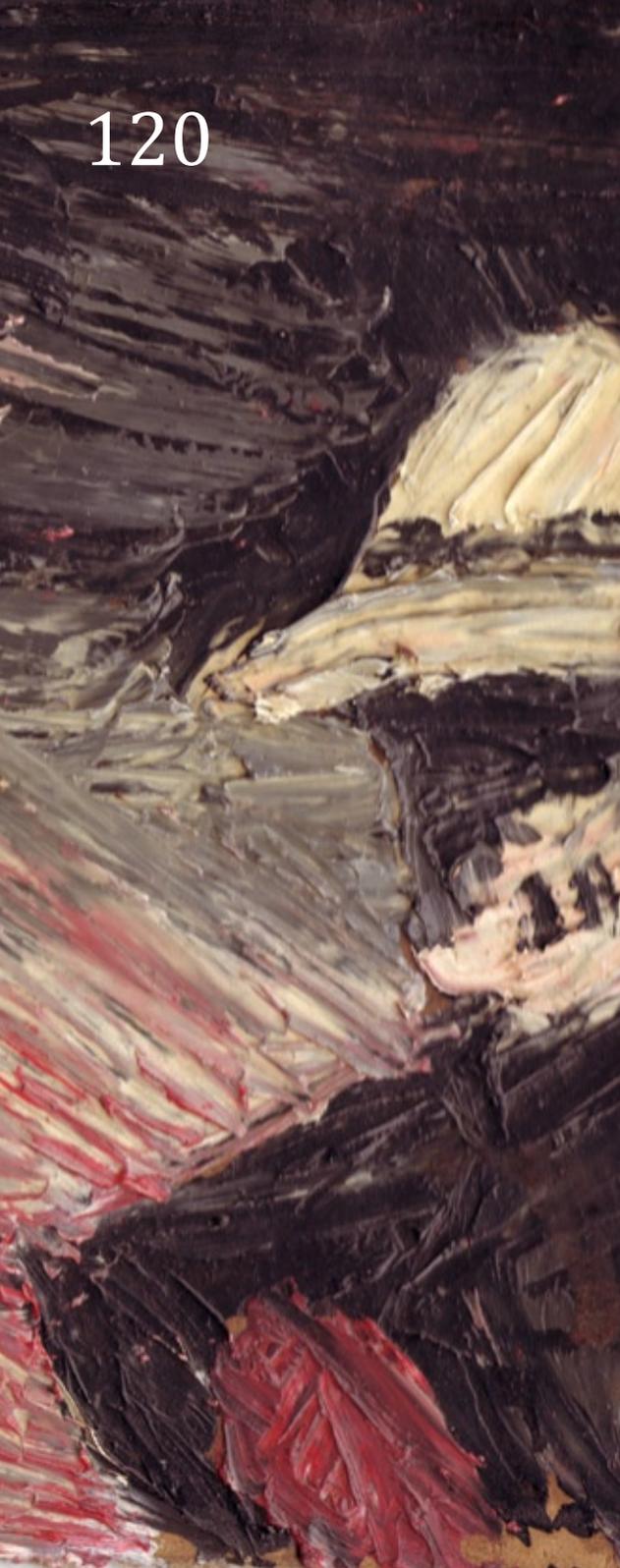
Nothing is left but the walls, the barbed wire, the controlled gates, the armed guards. Between them they define the refugees identity – or rather put paid to their right to self-definition, let alone self-assertion. All waste, including wasted humans, tends to be piled up indiscriminately on the same refuse tip. The act of the assignment to waste puts an end to differences, individualities, idiosyncrasies.

Zygmunt Bauman, *Liquid Times*, 2007, pp. 38 & 41

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*The World's End*