

MIASMA

Scene 73

[Setting:] The Disputed Territories.

Jack steps from the church into the gale. Clouds, set low in the sky, and black, like soot, heave and brood in the west beyond the chimney stacks. An amorphous tide menacing the horizon and gathering fast. Within moments the whole landscape is engulfed by rolling black spume, with flashes of silver. The surrounding hovels recede and vanish and reappear in the gloom, momentarily grim and stern, then glaring and ablaze in the strobing light. A clap, the likes of which Jack has never heard before, then breaks like a tidal wave through the slums. *Boom*. Windows burst. Screams echo from the asylum. Bricks crumble and timbers crack. Then silence. Stillness. Nothing. The madman feels his ears. He thinks he is deaf. He cries out and then cowers. For now the rain smacks hard against his cheeks. Ears burning with noise and fright. Hair flattening grey against his temples. Chipped teeth gleaming beneath his cracked lips and gaping mouth.

Piss streaming down his thighs.

Staring skyward.

One small being in the flickering cosmos. Defenceless. Helpless. Powerless. Both day and night in the same moment, time-lapsing eternity, rumbling. Jack's arms hang in their sleeves, motionless. His whole body appears to tilt as the elements bunt against him. The stench of the bogs sweeps in on the tide. A sheet of iron lifts from the church and is sucked away.

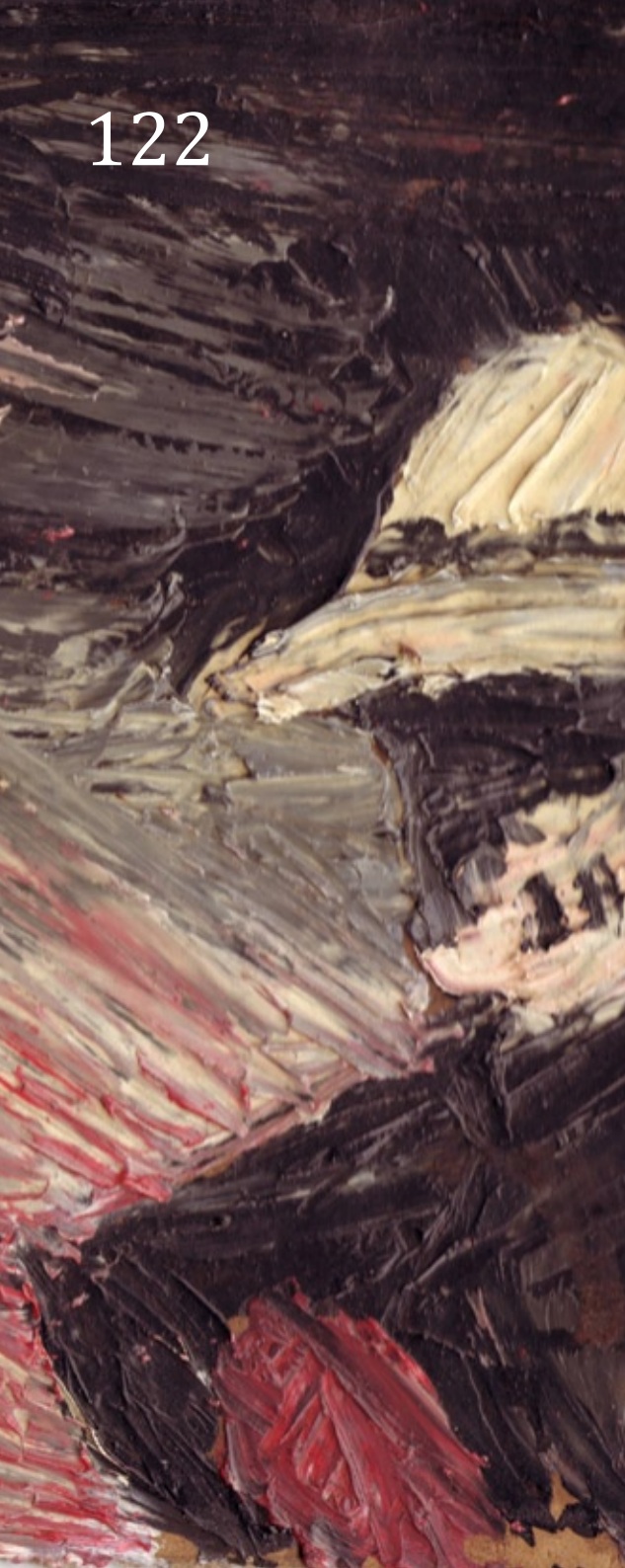
It begins raining rats.

Blood and intestines puddle at his feet. Vermin lie torn and splayed in the empty streets, thick in their thousands and dying. Jack's face swells under the barrage of rain and rats. One eye reddens and puffs. His face stings.

He thinks he is blind.

Miasma: noun
(*miasmas or miasmata*)
(1) *A noxious atmosphere or influence.*
(2) *A noxious atmosphere or emanation once thought to originate from swamps and waste to cause disease.*

Wiktionary
(accessed 2 August 2008)

**Belief:**

There isn't now, nor will there be, a power human or satanic that can challenge the hope of believers.

(Cardinal Martini, as cited in Umberto Eco & Cardinal Martini, *Belief or Nonbelief: A Confrontation*, 2000, p. 26)

Staring skyward—into the face of the cosmos, eyeball to eyeball with a power greater than himself.

Blood and rain streaking his flesh.

Face throbbing.

Heart pounding.

Peering into the void.

He sways and is finally uprooted as the tail of the tempest smacks down and unleashes one last wave of might. Tumbling upward and over, hither and thither, like flotsam, he discovers a world without boundaries. Adrift on a tide of chaos and life, a force beyond his humanity, and he stops kicking and is swept along, this way and that, in the surge. He neither adds anything to the universe in this eternal moment nor takes anything away from it. He just is: an observer of the ever unfolding stream of life, still for a moment in the tumult. His body cushioned by rats and rain when he lands. The squelch of rib cages and blood beneath his buckled body. As he sinks into the physical realm and the tide withdraws. On his back, limp and deflated, staring through rain and tears into the clearing sky above, exhaling his fears.

Here, Jack takes his first real breath in eons, a deep, lung-filling breath, and inhales the death of the world.

But no, remarkably, faces peer from the void, small pale spheres in dark square windows. Life picks itself from the flood and plague and reasserts itself. At first murmurs of bewilderment, then shouts of consolation and reunion, a sob for the dead and battered, a cry for the survivors. Then cheering and laughter.

Night once again turns to day.

And the madman finally learns what it is to **pray**. For it is in dying that we are born to eternal life. And Jack survives the onslaught that this day killed millions.

One solitary voice in the din of life, though dumb, calling for help. Calling to the vast places beyond the self, beyond ego. To the hands and fingertips that lay him back to earth.

As his pockets are turned out and his meagre possessions sto-

Prayer: is the act of attempting to communicate with a deity or spirit. Purposes for this may include worshipping, requesting guidance, requesting assistance, confessing sins, as an act of reparation, or to express one's thoughts and emotions. The words of the prayer may take the form of intercession, a hymn, incantation or a spontaneous utterance in the person's praying words. ... Praying can be done in public, as a group, or in private. Most major religions in the world involve prayer in one way or another.

*Wikipedia
(accessed 31 July 2008)*

The Warrior of Light

The warrior of light does not worry that, to others, his behaviour might seem quite mad.

He talks out loud to himself when he is alone. Someone told him that this is the best way of communicating with the angels, and so he takes a chance and tries to make contact.

At first, he finds this very difficult. He thinks that he has nothing to say, that he will just repeat the same meaningless twaddle. Even so, the warrior persists. He spends all day talking to his heart. He says things with which he does not agree, he talks utter nonsense.

One day, he notices a change in his voice. He realises that he is acting as a channel for some higher wisdom.

The warrior may seem mad, but this is just a disguise.

(Paulo Coelho,
Manual of the Warrior of Light,
2004, p. 13)

len.

But who cares?

An acorn from some far flung corner of the world, carried in by the menace, finally lodges in the mud. He feels the presence of eternity within.

[Voice over:] *On the foulest day of his sordid life he found himself foetal again in the carnage. In the belly of **madness**, in desolation, he found himself renewed.*

The voice of stillness calling him home.

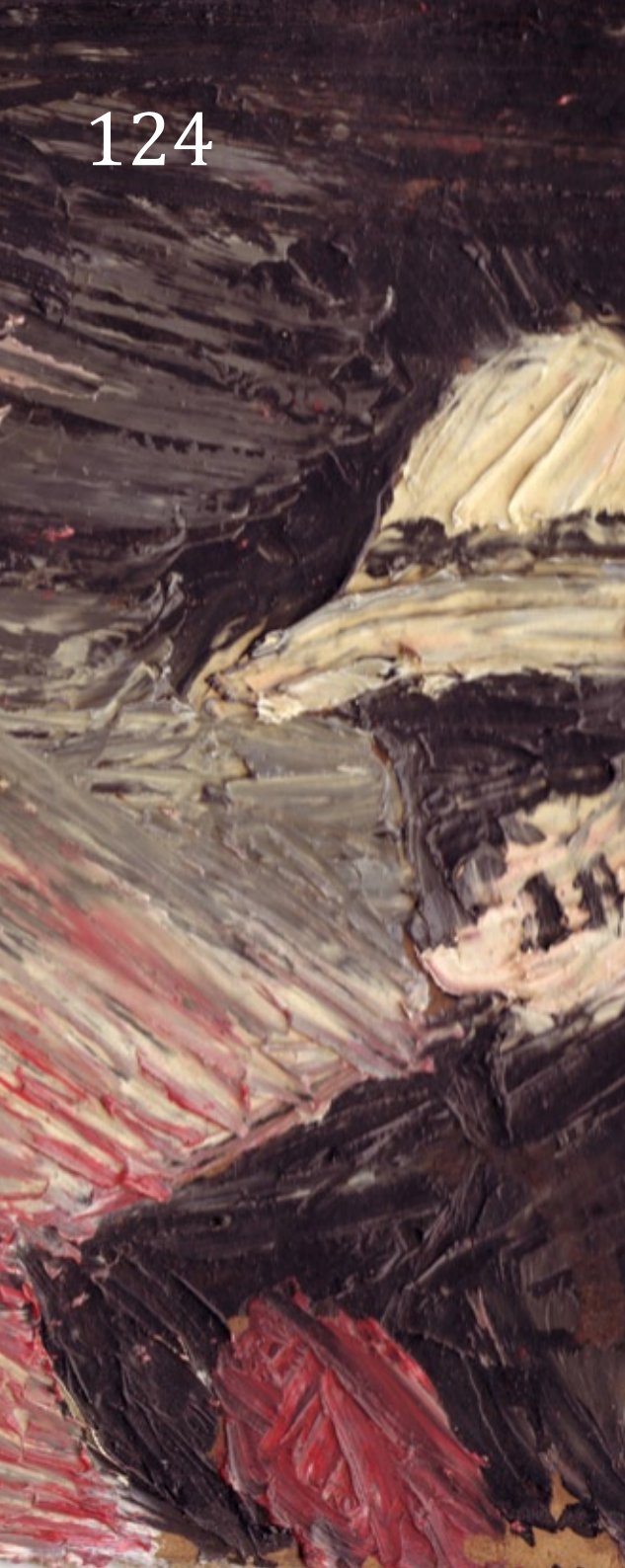
Circe.

Scene 77

[Setting:] The catacombs. Intestines of hell.

Every night, somewhere around eleven, the madman descends into the underworld, eyes like slits seeking out one particular obsession, one answer. *Did she survive the holocaust?* But through the smoke he sees the same blur of bodies. Pale figures like marble statues swooning in the shadows, encaged and mechanical, genitals smooth and elongated, breasts and ribs courting the endless night. The object of his affections could be in the next cage, the next tunnel, almost anywhere. *Binky's Club X* might be a figment of his imagination.

The nightly march becomes a ritual. A refuge from self-analysis and self-hatred. A destination of sorts. His gaunt figure like all the other figures, a waif of expectation, drifting ever deeper into the night world, until he happens upon execution rooms and body dealers, where any imagining is possible. A guttural world of insensibility and horror, where the darkest and most perverse of inclinations take on human forms. At one point the madman stands over the crumpled figure of a naked girl, and a feeling of hatred wells within him as he descends over her. His hands reaching like talons for her neck. A battle ensues between love and hate, excitement and disgust, affection and brutality,



The Underworld:

In her report on the trial of Adolph Eichmann, the former Nazi SS officer charged with sending many Jews to the death chambers, Arendt (1963) made much of the ordinariness of the accused. He was an unexceptional man, dutifully performing the jobs he was asked to do, lacking the imagination to be anything but a 'normal', 'good' worker.

... One thing the myth of pure evil does, therefore, is allow us to avoid discomfiting questions about the origins of cruelty, violence, hatred and oppression. More specifically, it allows us to be distracted from the possibility that the 'good', 'normal' social order might have a nasty underbelly, that things can go badly wrong, that people can get hurt, not in spite of but because of the way we organise our social affairs 'normally'.

(Wadham, Pudsey, & Boyd, *Culture & Education*, 2007, p. 162)

and he stops as his fingertips touch her jugular. Here he rises and dares not delve deeper. Some sights and some thoughts cannot be unmade, and thoughts are the things he fears most. And he fears everything, even fear.

Instead he lifts her limp figure from the blood and shadows and carries her back to the surface, where he rests her in the arms of an old woman in the street. No words are exchanged, no eyes meet, but a limp child passes from the [underworld](#) to the over-world.

Turning away, he despises himself for not having exploited the situation.

For not having unleashed his innermost perversions.

For not having killed himself for thinking such thoughts.

In this dizzying madness he plunges his penis into the mouth of an old man, throws back his head and screams her name: 'Circe.' Two waifs on a stairwell, one crouched, the other howling like a madman at the pervading darkness beyond.

Calling, 'Circeeeeeee—'

(While ejaculating)

And every day, somewhere around eleven, the madman slides out of his hole in the dungeon wall, and paces his cell. One question plagues him: *Did she survive the holocaust?* Two tables of oddities stare back at him. A glint of metal reminds him of the activity he means to engage in, a calculated and measured gesture of love, Circe's body the topography of his obsession and fear, like Fanny Brawne melting under the deft touch of Keats as her breath is kissed away. And he loses himself in this thought, in Circe. He imagines every last tedious moment of the butchery, scrutinises every last tedious gesture of the desecration, until he can hear her voice echoing around him.

And he hasn't seen her in days. Nor knows anything about her. She is the guardian of the Wasteland. Gatekeeper of Hell. She may be dead. Just a memory. An elaborate construct. No more real than her namesake.

Pure Relationship:

The 'pure relationship' [Anthony Giddens] tends to be the prevailing form of human togetherness today, entered 'for what can be derived by each person' and 'continued only in so far as it is thought by both parties to deliver enough satisfactions for each individual to stay within it.'

(Zygmunt Bauman, *Liquid Love*, 2006, p. 89).

Liquid love:

Don't let yourself be caught. Avoid embraces that are too tight. Remember, the deeper and denser your attachments, commitments, engagement, the greater your risk (p. 58).

The fading of sociality is boosted and accelerated by the tendency, inspired by the dominant consumerist life mode, to treat other humans as objects of consumption and to judge them after the pattern of consumer objects by the volume of pleasure they are likely to offer, and in 'value for money' terms

He even takes to resenting many of her comments and beliefs, *the ones he imagines in her absence*, creating lifetimes of anger and guilt all in the space of seconds and minutes, as his mind churns, as armies of authors go to work to construct lifetimes of interactions, ever more fantastic and theatrical, ever more maddening, until a very vexed madman even imagines stamping his foot and pointing to the rope ladder and demanding her departure, *to leave him be*.

And he hasn't seen her in days, years even. And she probably hasn't thought about him at all, ever. And this thought makes it positively worse.

He is invisible. A **subject** on the strings of history.

And the very thought of demanding her departure flies in the face of his obsession: to possess her, to lock her away in a dungeon and brutalise her with love. Real love, as it is practiced now. No more lollipops, no more orchids, but golf balls and flays. Pain, suffering, and madness. The 'pure relationship' and 'liquid love' (Zygmunt Bauman) in the age of simulacra (Jean Baudrillard).

And this both saddens and delights him, both intrigues and disgusts him, makes him sick and bewildered.

And she may be dead.

At this rate he could live centuries in any one day, crowding his mind with memories and emotions from nothing. Plucked from thin air. His mind in very real danger of becoming too full, with no synapses left for actually living.

Dead.

And beyond reach.

A self created entirely from language: traces of traces and signs of signs. Networks of meanings deferred and delayed. *Différance. D-i-f-f-é-r-a-n-c-e. D-i-f-f-é-r-a-n-c-e.*

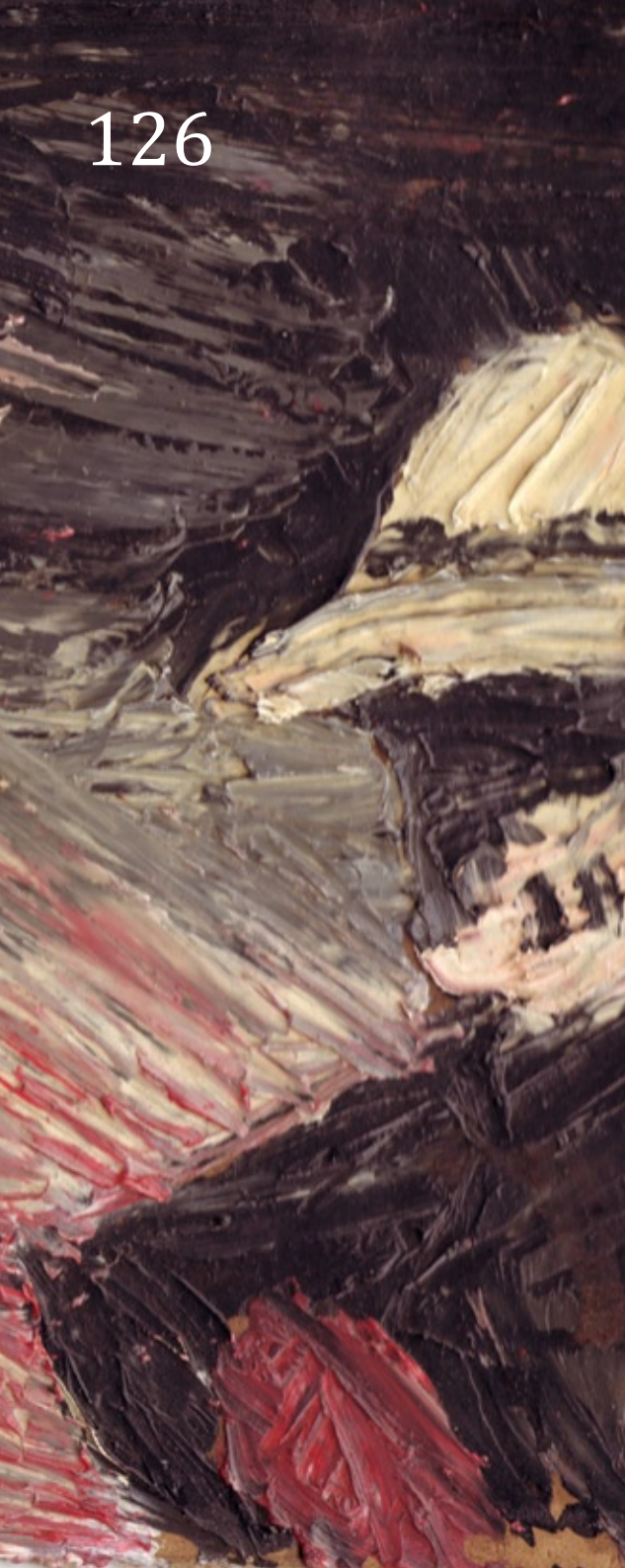
[Voice over:] *He was a prisoner to thought and a slave to thought. It was the only stage available to him. The curtains drew back whether he liked it or not. And he was the audience too. He was all things*

The subject: the subject is made by/in language and occupies multiple subject positions: the self-in-process as Kristeva might say.

Subjectivity: 'The idea that we learn to think of and conduct ourselves as "free agents" implies that our sense of selfhood is assembled from resources (ways of speaking and acting) supplied to us by society. We might say: the body is born, the person is installed later.

'This view of individual thought and action defines people as subjects. ... Some social theorists argue that human beings become the grammatical subjects of "discourses that speak them into existence". ... Eventually, it is suggested, we internalise these discourses, and they provide the unseen script for our apparently personal actions. ...

'The concept of subjectivity is a powerful one ... because it implies that the texts we read and view might play a role in shaping the "scripts" we follow' (Brian Moon, Literary Terms, 2004, pp. 150-151).



(p. 75). *at all times. It was a relentless race between thinking a thought and deconstructing a thought, one process after the other—an avalanche-effect that smothered all potential for actually perceiving things as they were. He was out of time with the moment, both backwards and forwards, but never present. He was exhausted, with thought, with life, with it all. There was no 'off' button. The true could no longer be distinguished from the false. Life had become one blurring pastiche of all things from all time, presented from one vantage point and one moment like a time-lapse photograph.*

A breakdown beckoned.

Silence in the absence of thought, death in life, amnesia.

But this only scared him and made him think more. And thinking was his problem.

Circe.

'If you had a wish, just one wish,' he says, 'but the only wish you could make was falling madly in love with *me*—thus realising your life-long dream of *loving someone and being loved*—would you take it?'

'Fuck, no,' she replies.

'Why not?'

'Because I don't want you.'

'But you would, you see. That's the point.'

'But I'd be living a lie,' she says.

'But you'd be in love. It wouldn't matter.'

'So?'

'So you wouldn't care that you found me repulsive.'

'You're mad.'

'*I'm mad?*' he says.

'Who else is there?'

'I'm not mad. You're the one that's mad.'

She laughs and looks away.

'You're arguing for a state of mind you would no longer have.'

The Seer & God:

When people consult me, it's not that I'm reading the future; I am guessing at the future. The future belongs to God, and it is only he who reveals it, under extraordinary circumstances. How do I guess at the future? Based on the omens of the present. The secret is here in the present. If you pay attention to the present, you can improve upon it. And, if you improve on the present, what comes later will also be better. Forget about the future, and live each day according to the teachings, confident that God loves his children. Each day, in itself, brings with it an eternity.

(Paulo Coelho,
The Alchemist,
1988/1998,
p. 103)

he says. 'And besides, everything in life is a lie, everything.'

'But I despise you—'

'At the moment.'

'—and I couldn't think of anything worse than loving you—'

'At the moment.'

'—and even if you were the last man alive—'

'I am.'

'—I wouldn't *fuck* you.'

'We're not talking about sex.'

'I am. I like sex.'

'We're talking about a wish that could make your dreams come true.'

'At the expense of how I feel.'

'*Now*. At the expense of how you feel *now*. If you made the wish there'd no longer be a meaningful *now*, but a *then*. An extinct moment, a *then*. *Then* would become *now*, and *now* you would be unconditionally and romantically in love with,' — points to himself — '*me*.'

'Hell of a choice!'

'The alternative's worse.'

'Is it?'

'It means living a life of constant pain. Of constant disappointment.'

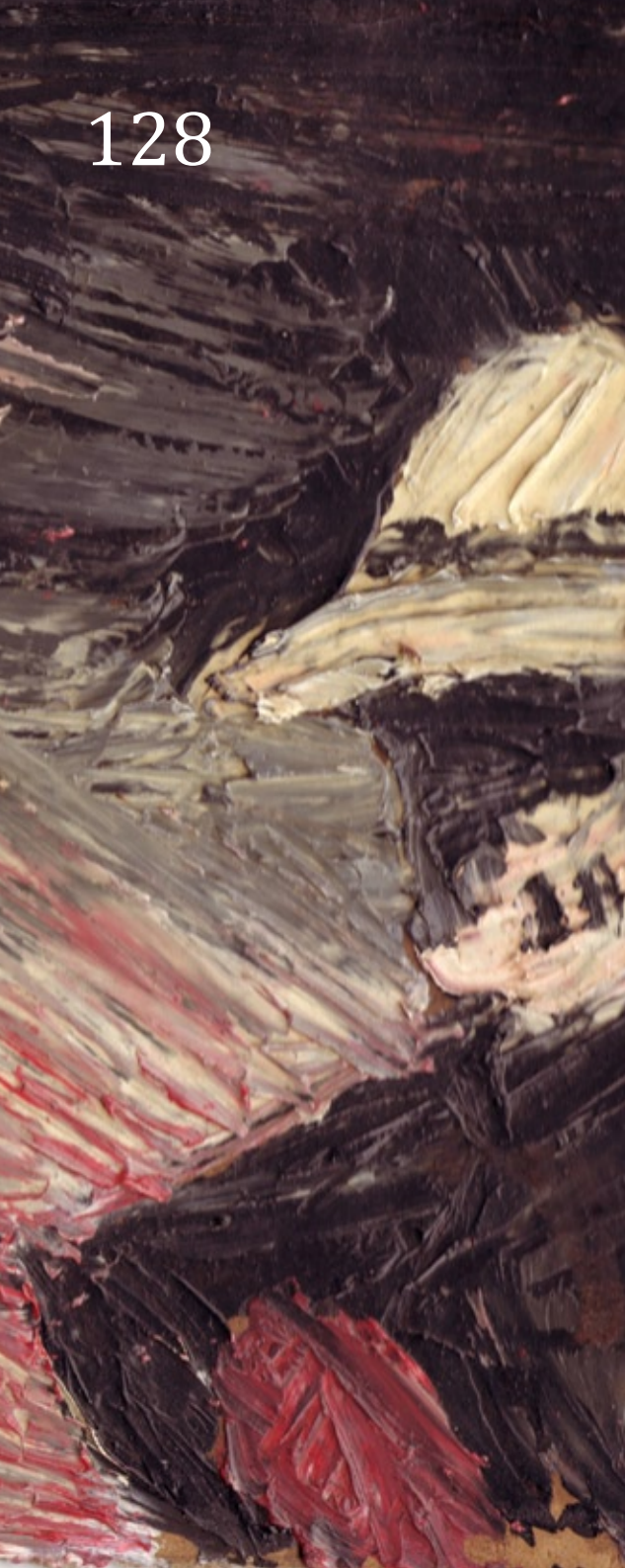
'So?'

'So you could amend that trend.'

'I've lived with it so far.'

'But you could live without it. Can't you see?'

'Can't *I* see? Can't *you* see. For all you know my knight might be only moments away, following God's path, and he will only get here when it's right to get here. A moment sooner and he'll be too early.' She smiles. 'They say the universe conspires to bring about the true needs of the heart. No amount of wishing or yearning will actually deliver it. Only **God** can deliver it.' She smiles again. 'Wishing is for restless and impatient children, like you. Children who resent



The Family:

Thought through to its ultimate consequence, the market model of modernity implies a society *without* families and children. Everyone must be independent, free for the demands of the market in order to guarantee his/her economic existence. The market subject is ultimately the single individual, 'unhindered' by a relationship, marriage or family. Correspondingly, the ultimate market society is a *childless* society - unless the children grow up with mobile, single, fathers and mothers.

(Ulrich Beck,
Risk Society,
1986/2007,
p. 116)

their own impotence. Children who resent their own powerlessness. It's called God-envy. So, you see, my miracle might only be moments away. Your way would lead me the wrong way.' Smiles again. 'See? Any state of happiness acquired your way would soon be lost, for it would be too easily met and too easily spent. Your way is the blind way.'

She had spoken.

He rubs his temples, exhales. 'When was the last time you were happy?' he whispers.

'When I was a little girl.'

'Why then?'

'Because I was loved and secure and I was happy.'

Love, stability, and cohesion, he recalls. 'But you could have that again,' he whispers. 'I'd be your family.'

'I didn't have to have sex with them, you know. Those men I told you about. That stuff about being an odalisque.' She pauses. 'Actually, I did have sex with my brother once. Truth and dare, you know? We were kids. Says he hated it. Still came though. Made me eat it too.'

Little beast, he thinks.

'Cat got your tongue?' she says.

'Let me get this straight,' he says. 'You'd have sex with your brother...?'

She blows him a kiss. 'Had to, them's the rules.'

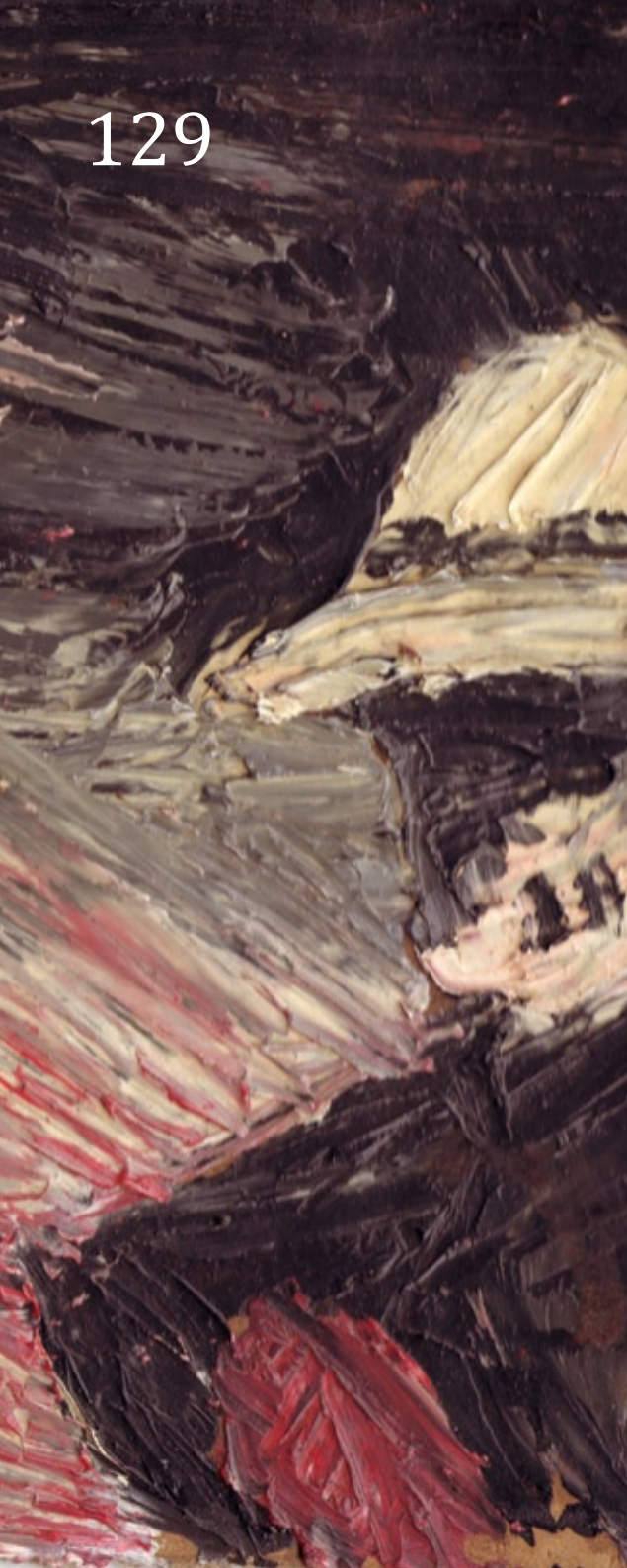
'Rules made by men, I'll have you know. It's a semantic trap, a ruse.' He stops abruptly and begins again. 'But you were happy before that? With your family, I mean? Let's get back to the **family**.'

'But with you it seems so awful. So grotesque. Like fucking a goblin.' She cringes. 'Imagine the babies! And besides,' she says, 'this whole conversation is a semantic trap...'

'Sort of thing,' he says.

'And coercive,' she adds. 'And I don't like the idea of it.' Again her face creases with disgust.

LOVE



‘The idea?’ he says. ‘The idea would be immediately erased if you accepted the wish. Can’t you see?’

‘Can’t *I* see? Can’t *you* see? You forget: I’d remember that I despised you. I’d remember the wish. I’d remember this language game. And you’ll always look like a goblin.’

‘Except that you’d no longer despise me,’ he says.

‘But the memory,’ she says, ‘the memory would be awful. You know that you look like a monster, don’t you?’

‘Yes. But that wouldn’t matter if you were in love? Surely you would laugh at your current attitude? Anyway, how do you think your brother feels? Doing such a heinous thing—?’ He pauses, imagining her doing these very things to him.

Her face in his groin.

Her hair in his lap.

Her mouth slapping against him.

‘He writes such mushy letters actually, but I don’t know. He is very sick. Like you.’

(Am I sick? he wonders.) ‘I just need to know whether—*given the option*—you’d take it? Would you go against your current prejudice in favour of the realisation of all your dreams?’

‘I don’t know,’ she says. She breathes in, composing herself, and finally smiles. ‘My brother said I tasted like a nectarine. Believe that?’

‘Then you’ll simply have to live with the knowledge that you could have had it: *love*, however deluded and fantastic, however romantic and coercive, could have been yours! Even with a monster.’ Veins begin swelling at his temples. ‘See, in this state of mind I should be able to make anything happen, but for some reason I need you to be willing. Not just apparent. The details of the fantasy need to be authentic and believable.’

‘And he says I had the biggest tits and tightest—’

(*Elevating his voice*) ‘You’d be denying the fundamental wish of humanity! Of loving like the lovers of the most famous stories of

Romeo: add quote from Romeo about his love for Juliet and/or a quote of his love's loss.

Heathcliff: as above.

Jude: as above.

history. **Romeo** and Juliet, for instance. Catherine and **Heathcliff**. Sue and **Jude**.'

'They all died miserable, you know,' she says, staring at him. 'And you're ugly, he wasn't.'

Jack feels scared. 'Who?'

'Romeo.'

'But *I'd* be Romeo if you made that wish. I'd be perfect.' She had said something. What was it?

'How awful.'

'But achievable all the same,' he replies. 'I'd take that wish in a second for the chance to be happy. To be loved. To be secure. Ah—' Throws up his arms. *Sighs*.

'Then why don't you then? Make your ludicrous little wish. Fuck me and get it over with.'

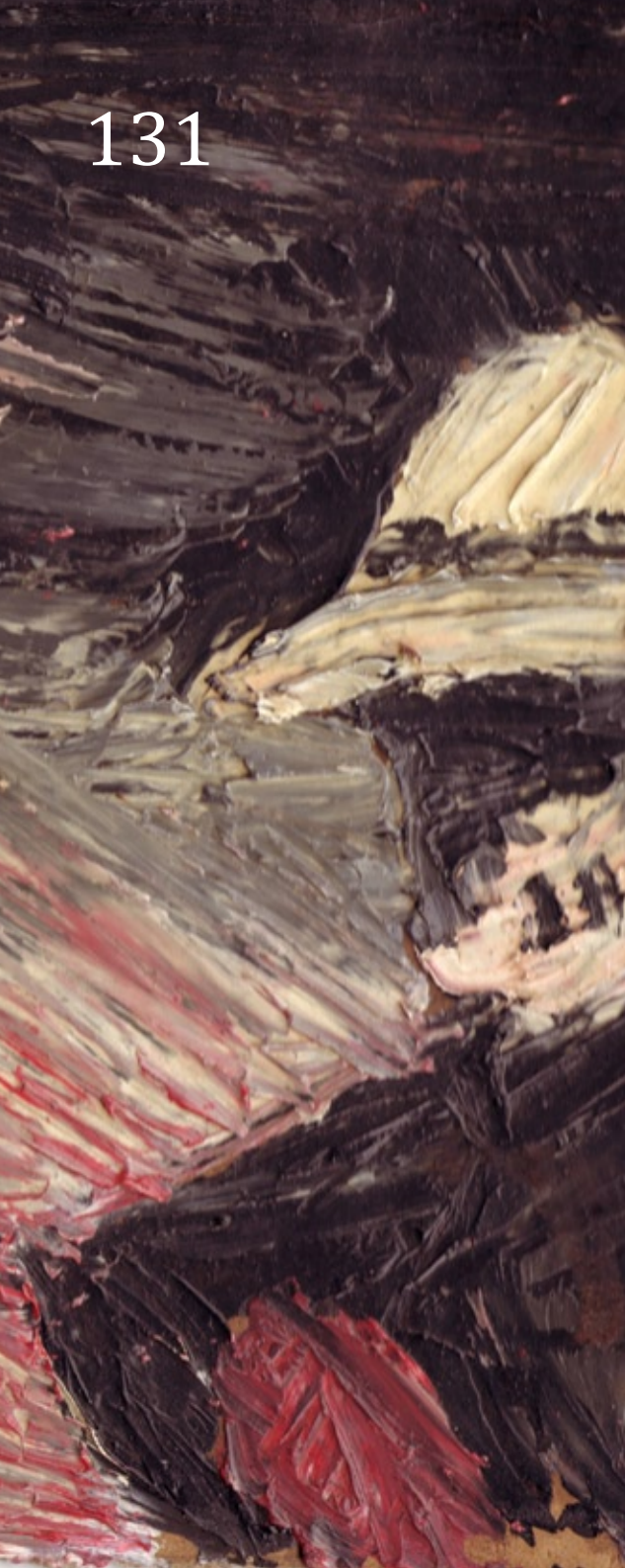
'I've changed my mind.' Pauses, and waves a dismissive hand in her general direction. 'You're a disgusting ... filthy ... good for nothing ... little ... *Slut*.'

'I'm marrying my brother. At least he cares!'

The madman dashes his head against a wall until a more favourable darkness descends. Even his projections and fantasies fail him. Nothing works.

His body slumps to the floor. He sees Theotormon and Oothoon at the mouth of an empty lair; and, like the former, he punishes the latter for being a victim, because he cannot and will not comprehend or accept her pain—that he is powerless to change her past. He is no more a God than Theotormon, and yet he stubbornly believes he has been wronged by her damage. His fury stems from his own impotence. A prisoner to yesterday, he finds it impossible to act or live in today.

'*They all died miserable*,' he dreams. That was it. What a heinous thought. Romantic love had savaged them all in its wake. It was no more real or everlasting than any other dream. It was an ever changeable distraction, full of sound and fury, signifying nothing. There would always be a first kiss that could never be re-savoured.



‘If only it lasted forever,’ he hears the knight lament, weeping over the memory of the fairy’s sweet moan.

‘But it can’t,’ he hears father time reply.

For ‘the sedge has withered from the lake and no birds sing.’

Alas, Keats knew it too.

Romantic love, his panacea, was no more a destination than the moon. And the object of this love and fantasy was no more going to make him whole than eating an apple. Another Promised Land had given up its illusion. Romantic love, as a destination, was no more real than a mirage. The *other*, Circe, was no more capable of putting Humpty Dumpty back together again than Joan of Arc.

Love of this type had its place, no doubt, but it was not the solution.

And so he dreams of other things, for he can no more prevent this pursuit than prevent the earth from spinning. Annihilation and salvation cross his mind in equal measure. The machine continues its labour. Synapses fire and blood gushes. Monsters are made and dreams are dreamed.

‘Who are you?’ he asks.

‘I’m me, Guardian of the Wasteland.’

‘How did you come to be here?’

‘You put me here.’

‘What is your name?’

‘You wrote my name.’

‘*Circe?*’

‘If you say so.’

‘What’s in the Wasteland?’

‘All that is shocking and intolerable.’

‘Like love and hate?’

‘Like hate.’

‘Like hell?’

‘Like all things negative.’

‘It must be full?’

Romantic Love: Studies in neuroscience have involved chemicals that are present in the brain and might be involved when people experience love. These chemicals include: nerve growth factor, testosterone, estrogen, dopamine, norepinephrine, serotonin, oxytocin, and vasopressin. Adequate brain levels of testosterone seem important for both human male and female sexual behaviour. Dopamine, norepinephrine, and serotonin are more commonly found during the attraction phase of a relationship. Oxytocin, and vasopressin seemed to be more closely linked to long term bonding and relationships characterised by strong attachments.

*Wikipedia
(accessed 31 July 2008)*

God:

The memory of God comes to the quiet mind. It cannot come where there is conflict, for a mind at war against itself remembers not eternal gentleness. The means of war are not the means of peace, and what the warlike would remember is not love. War is impossible unless the belief in victory is cherished. Conflict within you must imply that you believe the ego has the power to be victorious. Why else would you identify with it? Surely you realise the ego is at war with God ... There is no war; only the mad belief the Will of God can be attacked and overthrown.

(A Course in Miracles, 2004, p. 486)

‘Very very full.’

‘Who filled it?’

‘You filled it.’

‘Who am I?’

‘You are Me, Guardian of the Wasteland. You call me Circe.’

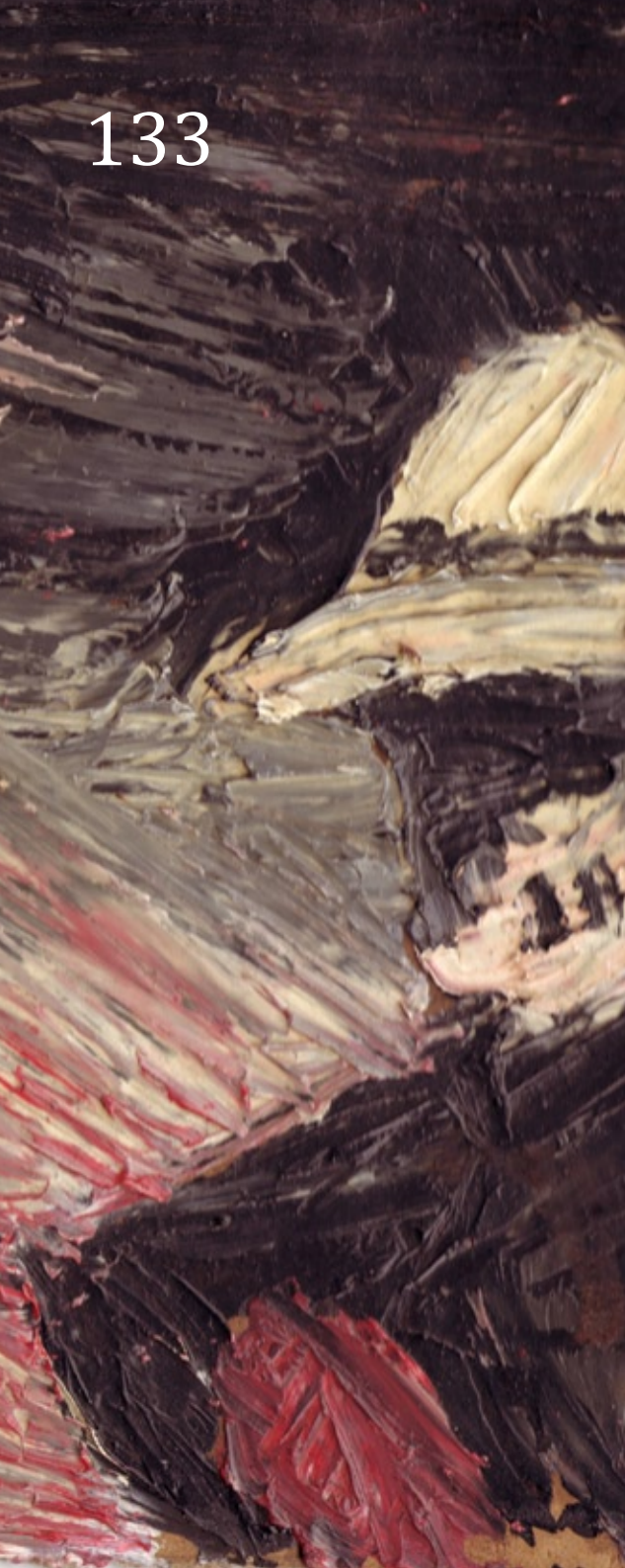
[Voice over:] *The last bastion of salvation, the imagination, had finally revealed itself as hostile and duplicitous. It too was the product of history and culture, and he had as little control over it as he did anything else.*

His imagination was killing him. It manufactured the most offensive and hurtful of imaginings possible. Govern—mentality. It was relentless in its production of unhappiness. It went about its business with the fury and menace of a machine. And he had little or no control over it. His thinking controlled him, not he it.

A thousand knives stabbing for a thousand years could not have matched the brutality.

He positively despised himself and hated God for doing this to him. But who or what was God? Circe had alluded to a God that liberated rather than a God that condemned, a God of grace rather than a God of damnation. She seemed happy about this God. She seemed certain. And for a few moments this God seemed to speak through her—from her—to him. So what of this elusive connection? What of this voice from beyond? Was God in every sentient being, just beneath the surface, waiting to speak through the soul to the mind? Or was God simply the inner child, the unspoiled self, the original incarnation, which was overcome by culture and ego long ago? Funny how he couldn't remember when this happened. Or was God the sum total of human good and human love, existing not in any one place or any one being, but everywhere at once? Or was God a particular point in time and space, an entity of sorts, an all-knowing, all-seeing, all-powerful mind—an overseer? Or, more suspiciously, was God simply three innocent letters placed side by side to make a word, the world's largest

God: *‘But admit that even if Christ were only a character in a great story, the fact that this story could have been imagined and desired by featherless bipeds who only knew that they didn't know, would be as miraculous (miraculously mysterious) as the fact that the son of a real God was really incarnated’ (Umberto Eco, as cited in Umberto Eco & Cardinal Martini, Belief or Nonbelief: A Confrontation, 2000, p. 98).*



Holy Spirit:

Brother, the war against yourself is almost over. The journey's end is at the place of peace. Would you not now accept the peace offered you here? This 'enemy' you fought as an intruder on your peace is here transformed, before your sight, into the giver of your peace. Your 'enemy' was God Himself, to Whom all conflict, triumph and attack of any kind are all unknown. He loves you perfectly, completely and eternally. The Son of God at war with his Creator is a condition as ridiculous as nature roaring at the wind in anger, proclaiming it is part of itself no more. Could nature possibly establish this, and make it true? Nor is it up to you to say what shall be part of you and what is kept apart.

(A Course in Miracles, 2004, p. 487)

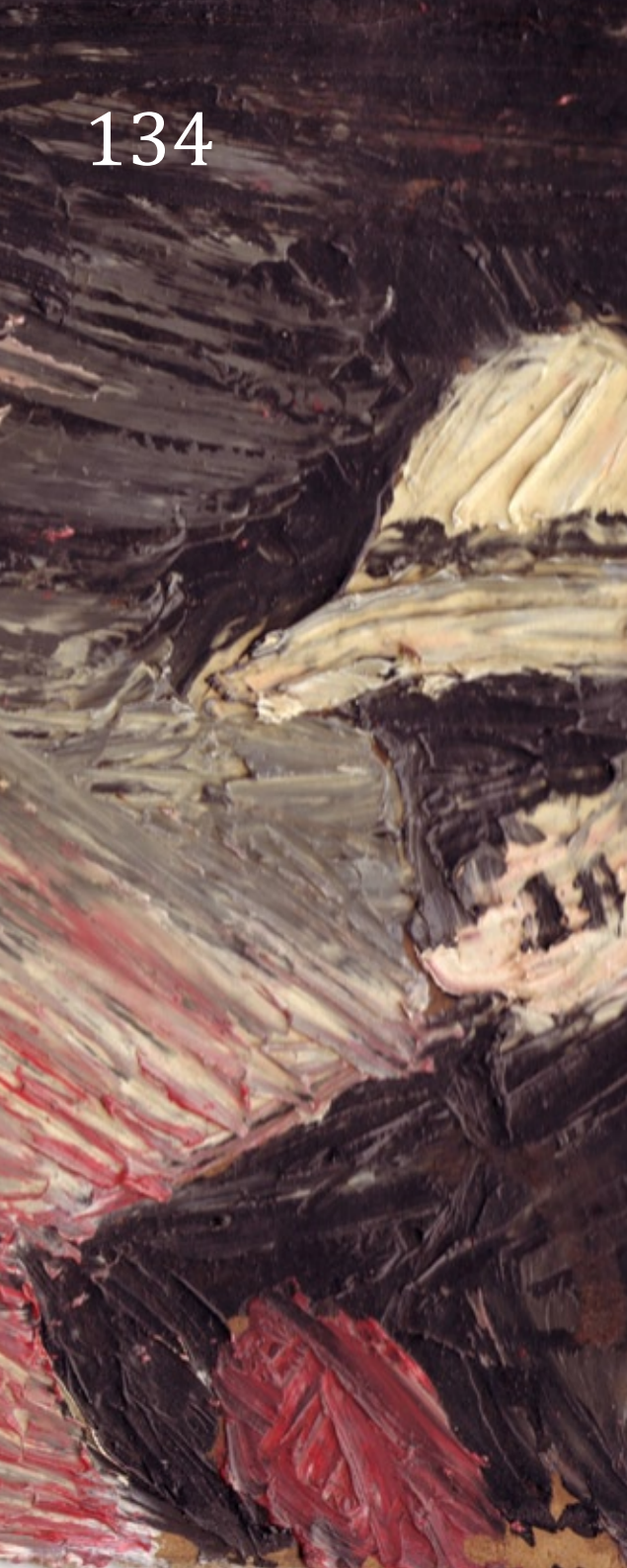
and most perplexing word, the greatest lie ever told, the most fantastic charade ever played, a placebo to control and placate the bewildered masses? Or was God the endless and timeless quiet that opened up within, beyond ego and thought, beyond culture and history, beyond Circe and the Lout, beyond all manner of phantoms and ghouls, which dissolved the illusion of separation between him and others, between himself and eternity? Or was God some part of all these things? Did his hatred of God stem from a deep hatred of his own inadequacy at playing God? His own lack of control? His own confusion? ... But God was close, for he had felt it on the wind and heard it in his heart. Like the ancient mariner, an amorphous feeling did close behind him tread. Some thing, some force, some presence, some sense, lay beyond him and yet was also part of him. It resided within. It had spoken through Circe. He had felt it on the storm. He had written letters to it, confiding in it. Clearly, he was no freer of it than it was he, regardless of his disbelief or fear.

It touched him when he slept. Like a finger in his back in the dead of night. And this sent a chill up and down his spine.

One thing terrified him more than an empty—meaningless—universe, and that was a universe full to the brim with love, hope, and compassion.

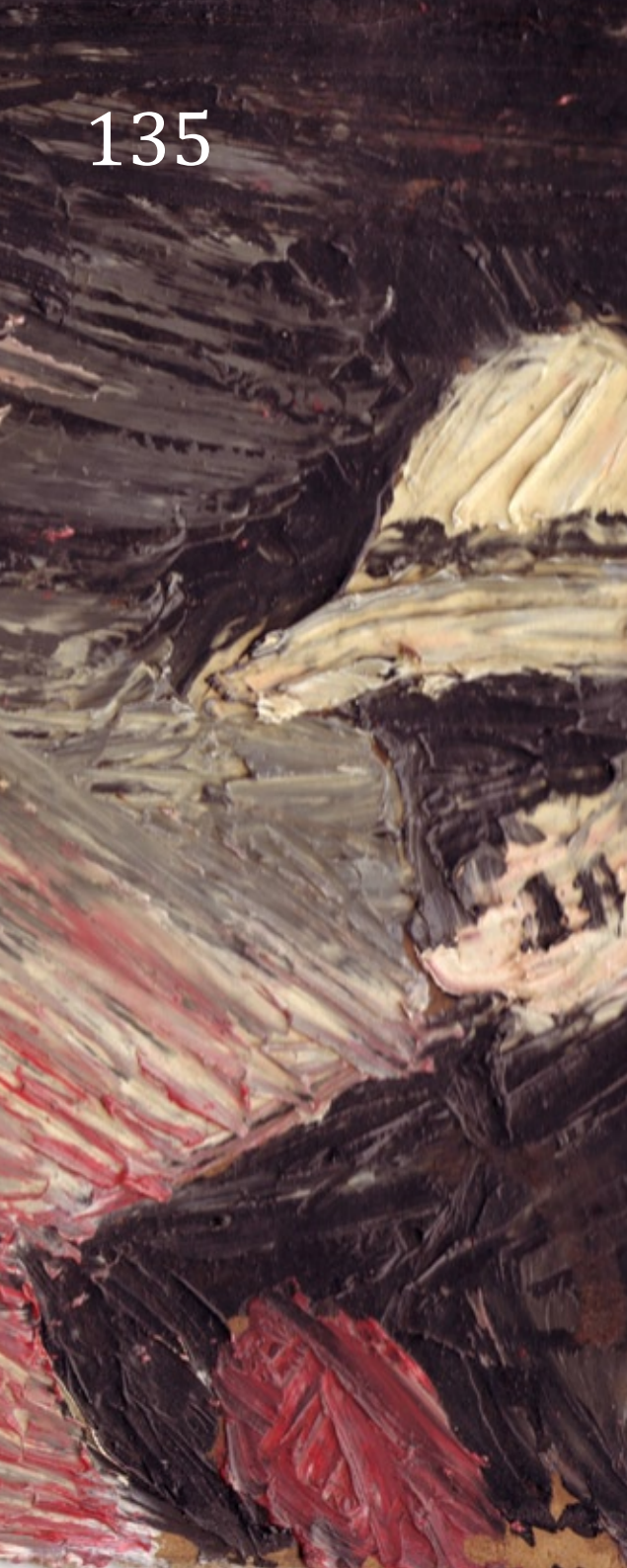
A universe that **mattered**.

134



A universe that *cared*.

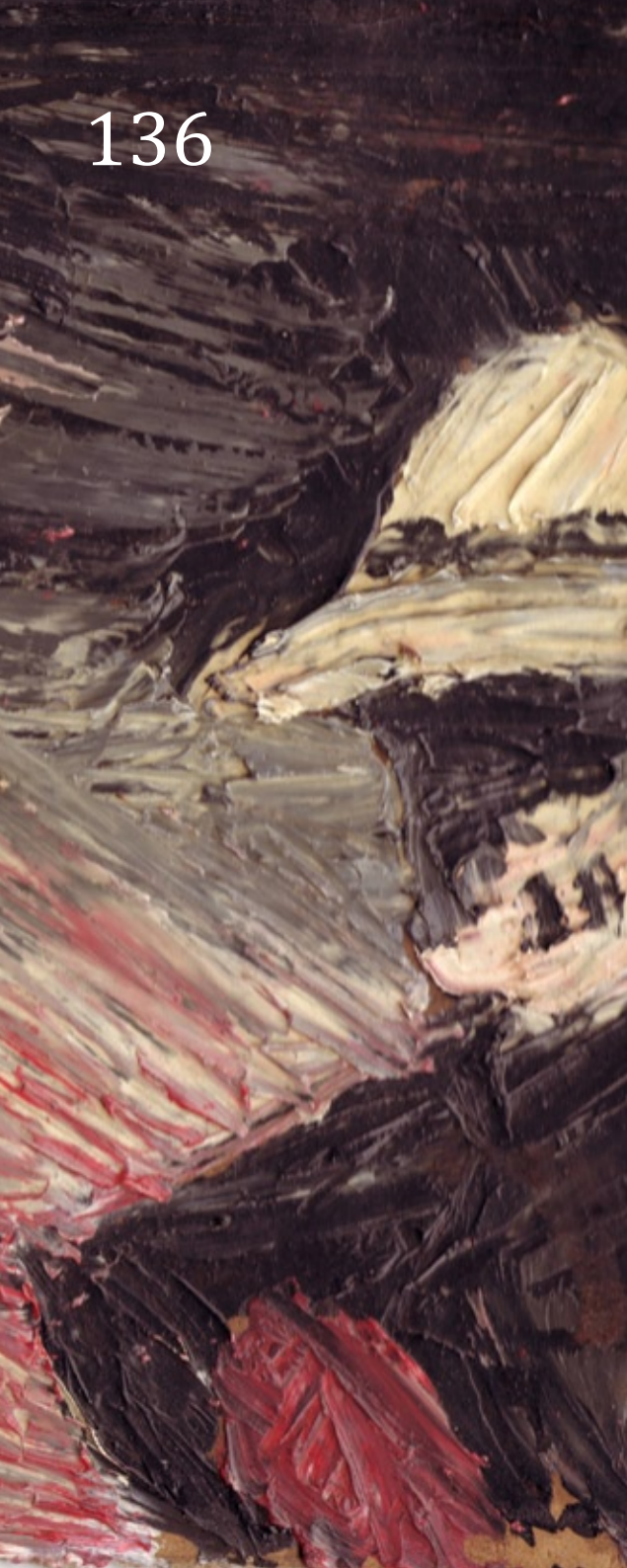
Care and affection are currencies we use to secure sex.



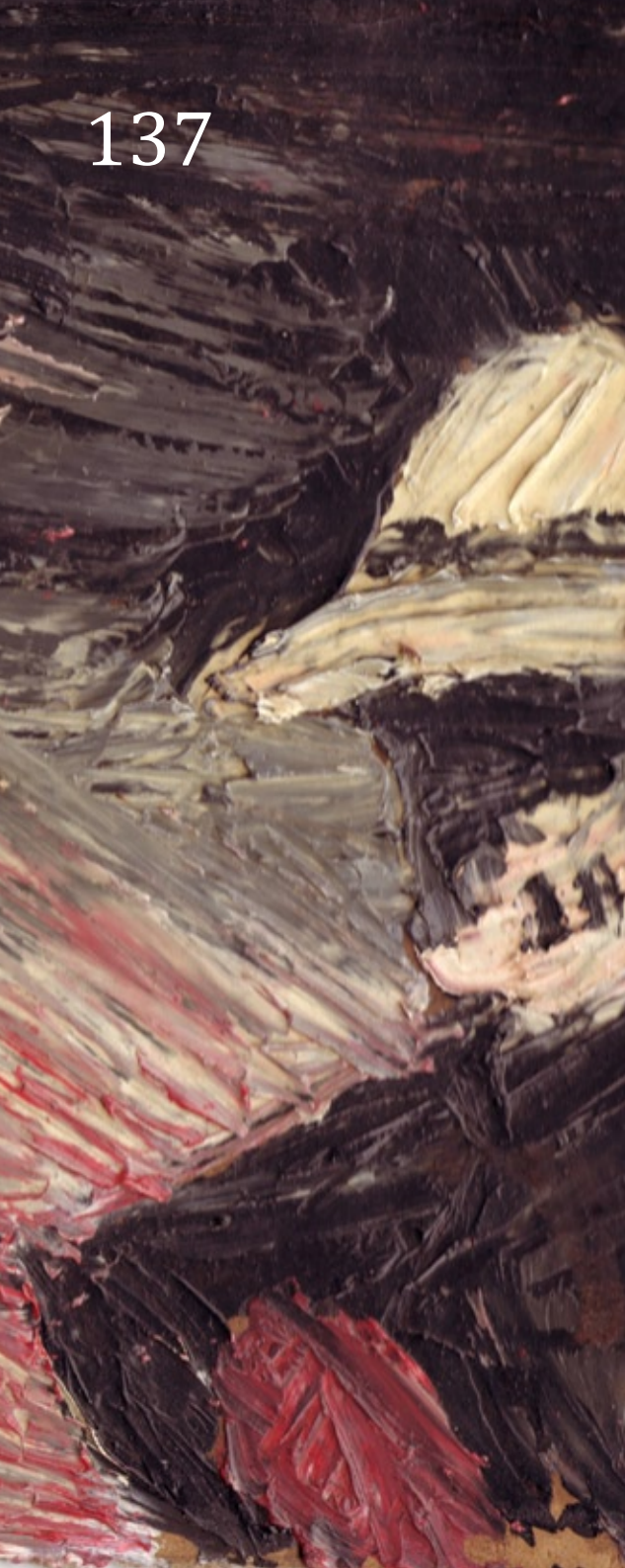
Refugee camps boast a new quality: a ‘frozen transience’, an ongoing, lasting state of temporariness, a duration patched together of moments of which none is lived through as an element of, let alone a contribution to, perpetuity. For the inmates of refugee camps, the prospect of long-term sequels and their consequences is not part of the experience. The inmates of refugee camps live, literally, from day to day – and the contents of daily life are unaffected by the knowledge that days combine into months and years. As in the prisons and ‘hyperghettoes’ ... refugees ‘learn to live, or rather survive from day to day in the immediacy of the moment, bathing in ... the despair brewing inside the walls’.

Zygmunt Bauman, *Liquid Times*, 2007, p. 46

136



137



In the Beginning