

har megiddōn

POST-APOCALYPSE

Scene 89

[Setting:] The broken church, mid morning. Within, and a man stands before a small gathering of disenfranchised individuals. Most are dressed in little more than rags, with plastic bags strung about their faces and necks, heads bent under the weight of calamity and despair. Sighs and groans punctuate the stale atmosphere. And the man before them resembles a weatherworn, war-torn, battered waif, and yet his bulbous yellow eyes speak of a keen and restless energy, perhaps lunacy, perhaps hope.

‘Ah, children of darkness... Children of death, *har megiddōn*,’ he says, spreading his fingers solemnly around the edges of the lectern and leaning forward, casting a sad eye over the assembled rabble. Here the madman pauses for several seconds and simply gazes about his derelict church. He makes no eye contact, for all heads hang forward. Wind is broken in the aisles; coughing, spluttering, and groaning too. ‘Welcome,’ he adds. ‘Welcome and good morning. It’s such a fine day in hell.’

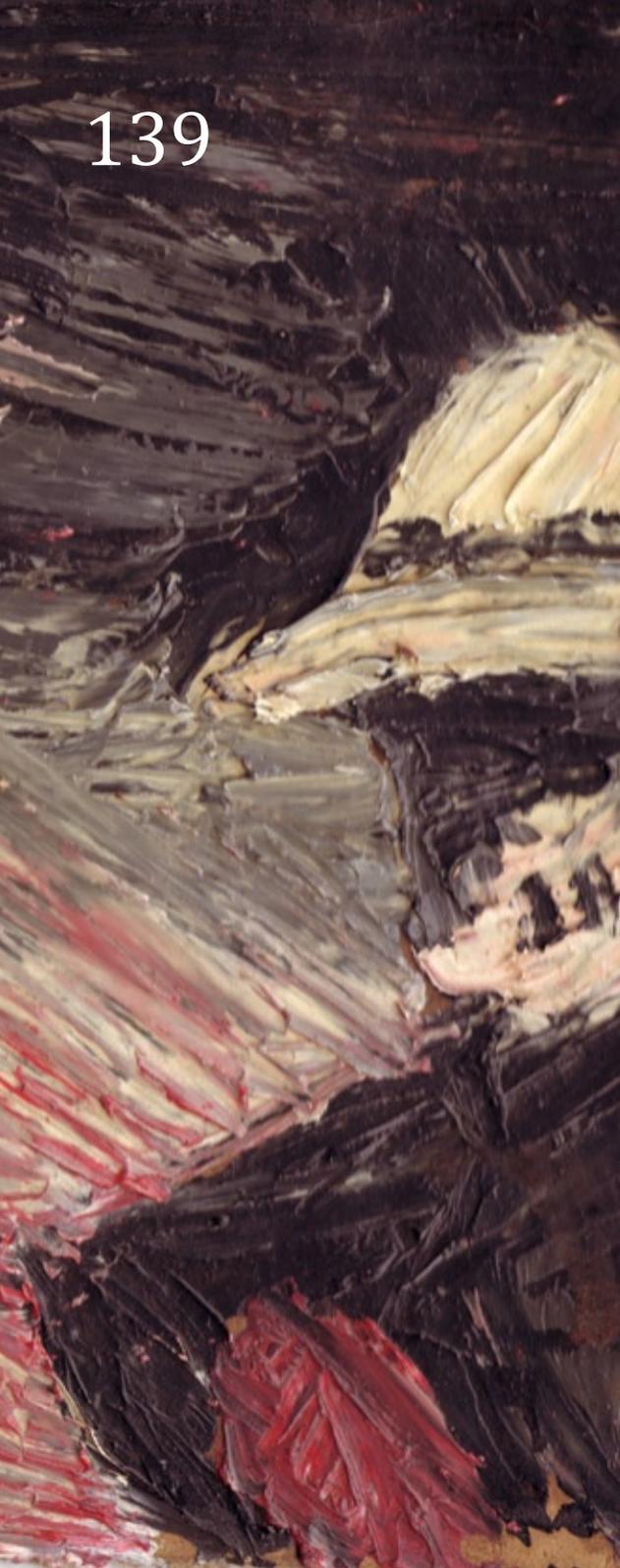
Silence follows. Not a face lifts from its rags to welcome him in return. Not a hand emerges from its side to wave or posture. Cold air whistles in through broken windows. A damp and mouldy smell lingers nonetheless. Not one rat shows its head.

A *tableau* of time and place in the slums of the Disputed Territories, in the outer reaches of the Wasteland, where Armageddon has been and gone, at least for now, and no birds sing. Here where hopes and dreams are never born, for survival demands economy. Here where the madman stands, tired and deflated, trying to invent his next action. His next word. But what to say at such a moment of emptiness, at such a meaningless point in history, when everything has already been said? What gesture would suffice to beat back the impending doom? Could any one thing change history as it is unfolding? He seri-

Armageddon / Har megiddōn: In Christian belief, Armageddon [armageddōn] also spelled Har-Magedon in some modern English translations; also known as Mount of Megiddo, is the site of the final battle (or campaign) between God and the forces of righteousness, and Satan (whose name means ‘adversary’), also known as the Devil. Satan will operate through the person known as the ‘Beast’ or the Antichrist, written about in the Book of Revelation in the Christian New Testament. More generally, it can also refer to an apocalyptic catastrophe.

*Wikipedia
(Accessed 24 July 2008)*

Tableau: ‘a silent motionless group of people arranged to represent a scene from history, legend, or literature’ (Collins Australian Dictionary, 2005, p. 843).



Enemies of Reason

There are two ways of looking at the world – through faith and superstition or through the rigours of logic, observation and evidence – in other words, through reason. Reason and a respect for evidence are precious commodities, the source of human progress and our safeguard against fundamentalists and those who profit from obscuring the truth.

Yet, today, society appears to be retreating from reason.

Apparently harmless but utterly irrational belief systems from astrology to New Age mysticism, clairvoyance to alternative health remedies are booming.

Richard Dawkins, television documentary 2007 <http://www.channel4.com/culture/microsites/E/enemies_of_reason/> (accessed 25 July 2008)

ously doubts it.

But stands nonetheless at the time allotted him, and stares at the gathering of ghouls before him. ‘Fellow wretches,’ he says. ‘We are the punished who survived the ending of civilisation, left to suffer the ending of the world as awfully as we may. No grimace is good enough for the horrors that plague us, no cry or shriek too loud, no sob too wet. We are fortunate, however, in this,’ – casts a languid eye over the assembled – ‘that we know our fate. The long, agonising wait for death! Sufferers of the insufferable—’ And stops mid-thought.

And that’s just it. For a moment no thought follows the previous thought, and he stops perfectly still, perfectly at a loss at how to proceed, in a state of being that could be described as serene. He surrenders to the moment. To infinity. To the end of history. To death.

He concedes there and then, through feeling and not through thought, that he has absolutely no idea how to continue. He cannot take another miserable step, and knows it. He is powerless and beaten and content to be so.

Beaten. By the invisible hand of the market and the invisible hand of self. On all fronts, on all sides, beaten. (Govern/mentality.)

Where does one turn when all turns have been taken? When self-will collapses and **markets fail**? When economies, not people, rule the world? He knows the answer, for the answer has followed him all along, like a shadow, ever present, ever vigilant, without judgement. It has been at his heel, at his toe, only he hasn’t bent down to greet or accept it. To stare back at it, at himself.

IT WILL BE ALL RIGHT IF HE JUST DOESN’T FIGHT. If he stops resisting the moment. If he stops fighting the world.

And so he raises his head and begins again, and the blood returns to the extremities of his being, and his mouth opens and the words just come, one after the other, like bolts from **beyond**:

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.....
.....

Market failure:

Leigh Sales, presenter: ‘The former chairman of the US Federal Reserve has been accused of contributing to the global financial crisis.’ ...

Alan Greenspan: ‘Those of us who have looked to the self-interest of lending institutions to protect shareholders’ equity – myself especially – are in a state of shocked disbelief.’ ...

Henry Waxman: ‘In other words, you found your view of the world, your ideology was not right, it was not working?’

Alan Greenspan: ‘Precisely. No, that’s precisely the reason I was shocked because I have been going for 40 years or more with very considerable evidence that it was working exceptionally well.’ ...

(‘Greenspan grilled over credit crisis,’ Lateline, 24.10.08)

Fundamentalism:

Fundamentalism is a radical remedy against the bane of postmodern/market-led/consumer society – risk-contaminated freedom. ... If the market-type rationality is subordinated to the promotion of freedom of choice and thrives on the uncertainty of choice-making situations, the fundamentalist rationality puts security and certainty first and condemns everything that undermines that certainty...

(Zygmunt Bauman, *Postmodernity & its Discontents*, 1997, pp. 184-185)

Science & Fallibility:

[S]cience has changed from an activity *in the service* of truth to an activity *without* truth... Certainly, the loss has an attractive side. Truth was a supernatural effort, an elevation to the near-divine.

It was a close relative of dogma. ... Science is becoming human. It is packed with errors and mistakes.

(Ulrich Beck, *Risk Society*, 1986/2007, pp. 166-167)

I am here only to be truly helpful.

I am here to represent Him Who sent me.

I do not have to worry about what to say or what to do, because He Who sent me will direct me.

I am content to be wherever He wishes, knowing He goes there with me.

I will be healed as I let Him teach me to heal!

(*A Course in Miracles*, 2004, p. 28)

He **prays**. Humbly, respectfully, and thankfully, he prays to a God he doesn't understand, but he does it anyway, for he has nothing left to lose. And the strangest thing of all happens: heads rise up from their rags, eyes glisten within furrowed heads, hands emerge and mouths open, and right before him shadows come to life. And they pray too, at first in voices thin with fatigue, but soon gathering momentum and growing, until a chorus of voices is praying to a God they don't understand ...

[Voice over:] *Because in the absence of meaning—meaning is made. Through words, images, deeds, and hatchets. Because in the absence of choice and the absence of representation the deregulated self makes meaning from nothing. Through meta-narratives, magic bullets, hatred, and blood. Local solutions to global problems. Because when governments retreat and economies prevail—wastelands await.*

A wholesale change had taken place at this otherwise insignificant moment in time, right then, right now, for them all. And so the end of the world was the birth of the world. For these few waifs the end of the world was the beginning of the world, their worlds, together, which mattered to them ...

The great wound had begun to close. The madman had uttered his first sane words on planet earth. And his shadow bid him farewell, for it was no longer distinct from him, but of him, of them.

For days and years the horizon had distracted, tantalised, and

Prayer of St. Francis:

Lord, make me a channel of thy peace, that where there is hatred, I may bring love; that where there is wrong, I may bring the spirit of forgiveness; that where there is discord, I may bring harmony; that where there is error, I may bring truth; that where there is doubt, I may bring faith; that where there is despair, I may bring hope; that where there are shadows, I may bring light; that where there is sadness, I may bring joy. Lord, grant that I may seek rather to comfort than to be comforted; to understand, than to be understood; to love, than to be loved. For it is by self-forgetting that one finds. It is by forgiving that one is forgiven. It is by dying that one awakens to Eternal Life.

The Present Moment:

The pain that you create now is always some form of nonacceptance, some form of unconscious resistance to what *is*. On the level of thought, the resistance is some form of judgement. On the emotional level, it is some form of negativity.

The intensity of the pain depends on the degree of resistance to the present moment, and this in turn depends on how strongly you are identified with your mind. The mind always seeks to deny the Now and to escape from it. In other words, the more you are identified with your mind, the more you suffer. Or you may put it like this: the more you are able to honour and accept the Now, the more you are free of pain, of suffering—and free of the egoic mind.

(Eckhart Tolle,
The Power of Now,
2004, p. 27)

provoked him without ever giving up its promises or treasures. But today it did. It crumbled and fell away. Revealing itself as an illusion. Today he realised he didn't have to cast his eye ahead, behind, above, or below to discover the great eternity beyond, but simply had to close his eyes, clear his thoughts, and enter the stillness from within. It had been inside him all along, only he'd never thought to look. For he had secretly hated himself and all things of himself, as his masters intended. His own radiance now shimmered as he entered the eternity of the moment—the eternity of **God, ogd, dgo, or dog**.

And so now he simply is ... in a **new language** ... in a new discourse ... in a new dream ... And that is enough.

The eternity of the **moment** beckons.

For now is forever. And forever is lacking nothing.

He is that he is. That is you. That is us.

For we are the history of the wor(l)d in our terror and love.

And so the plague of the vagabonds had turned the abandoned city to dust and mud. The tourists had emptied their Shopping Malls of vagabonds and pushed them beyond their borders, economies, and cities, into black markets and dereliction camps, to rot, suffer, and die. One third of society expelled—failed consumers—disenfranchised, un-made, erased. The ghosts and waifs of a nether world. A lesson to the tourist classes of the invisible hand of government neglect. Fail the market and the market fails you. Expelled to the junkyards and stripped of your dreams. To the fringes and beyond. To die.

The modern crusade for order and certainty had collapsed into disorder and uncertainty. The neo-liberal crusade for individual liberty and material abundance had collapsed into a war of all against all. Together, the ideologies of an age condemned the world to wastelands and dreamscapes. To **contact zones** of terror.

To wasted lives and wasted dreams. To horror.

And for the mad cunts expelled to the margins and sewers of liquid modernity, they were flushed away, out of sight, out of mind,

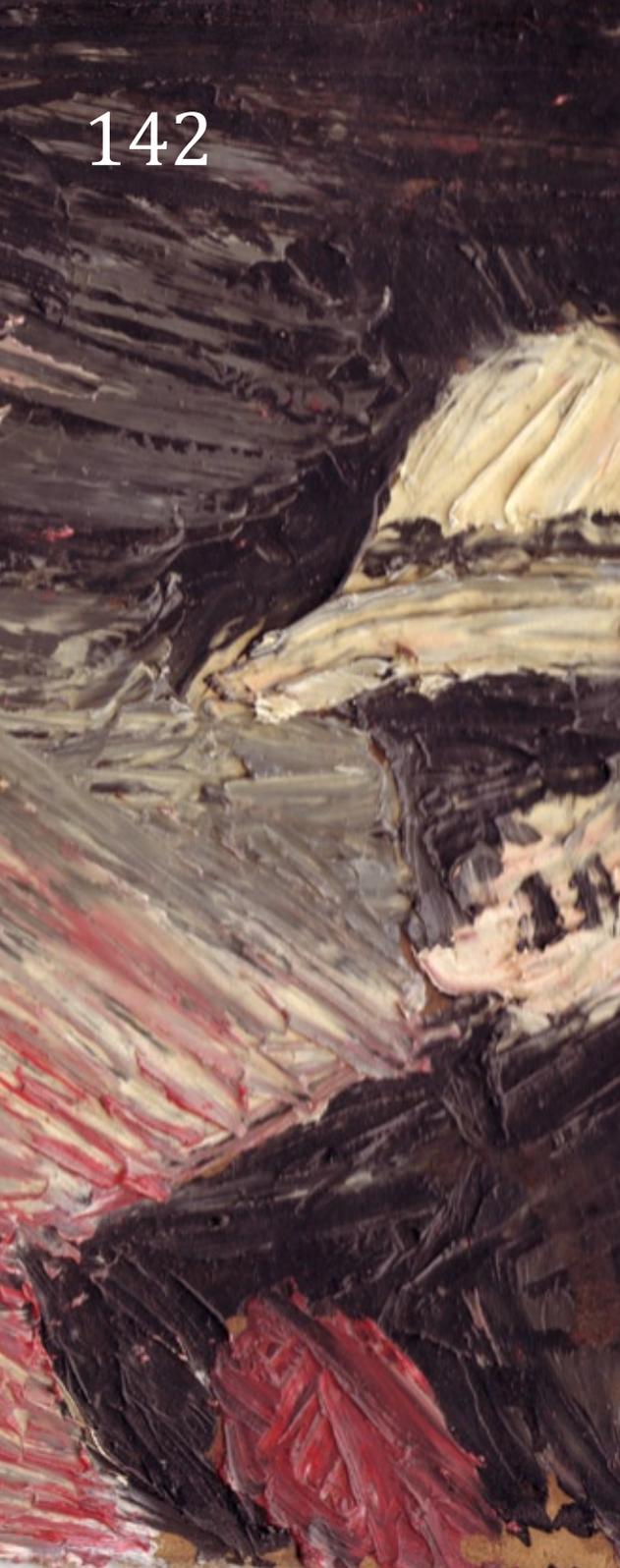
Ironist:

A term coined by Richard Rorty in *Contingency, Irony, and Solidarity* (1989) to describe a person who recognises the contingent nature of language and uses it to re-create themselves.

An ironist: (1) 'has radical and continuing doubts about the final vocabulary she currently uses,' (2) 'realises that argument phrased in her present vocabulary can neither underwrite nor dissolve these doubts,' and (3) 'does not think that her vocabulary is closer to reality than others.'

Wikipedia
(accessed 25 July 2008)

Contact Zone: '... the space in which peoples geographically and historically separated come into contact with each other and establish ongoing relations, usually involving conditions of coercion, radical inequality, and intractable conflict. ... A "contact" perspective emphasises how subjects are constituted in and by their relations to each other. It treats the relations among colonisers and colonised, or travellers and "travellers,"



I was here

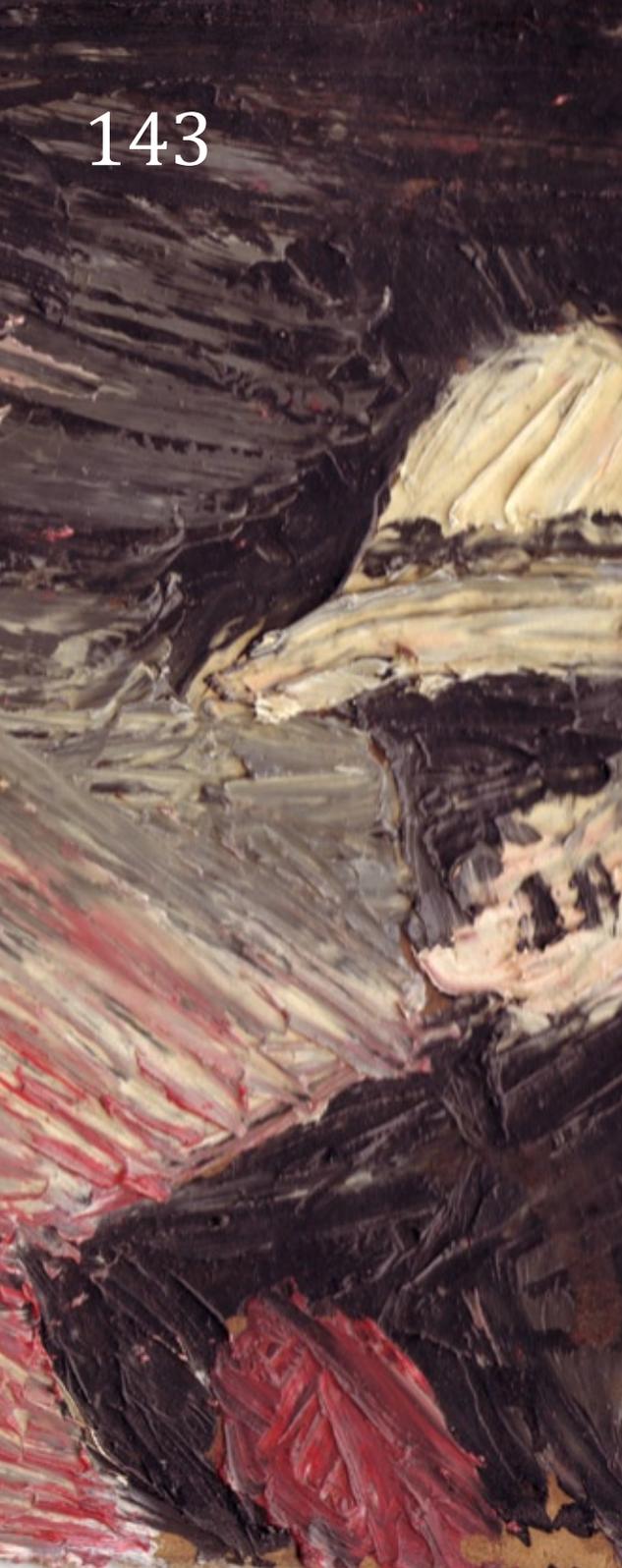
through the justice of rationality. For they were human shit. And human shit must not exist.

Not here, not ever.

Not when the world is ruled by logic.

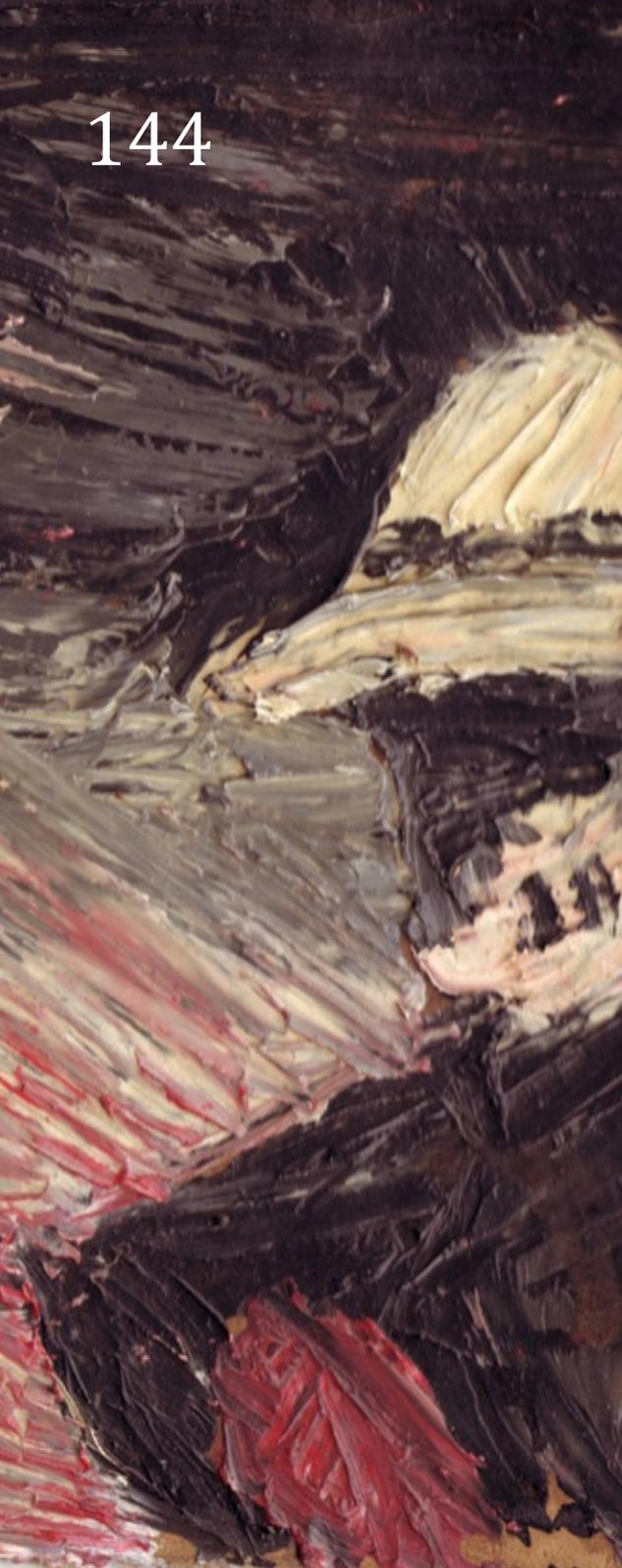
And that logic is God.

not in terms of separateness or apartheid, but in terms of co-presence, interaction, interlocking understandings and practices, often within radically asymmetrical relations of power' (Mary Louise Pratt, Imperial Eyes, 1992/2003, pp. 6-7).



Offer your brother the gift of lilies,
not the crown of thorns; the gift of
love and not the 'gift' of fear. You
stand beside your brother, thorns in
one hand and lilies the other, uncer-
tain which to give. Join now with me
and throw away the thorns, offering
the lilies to replace them.

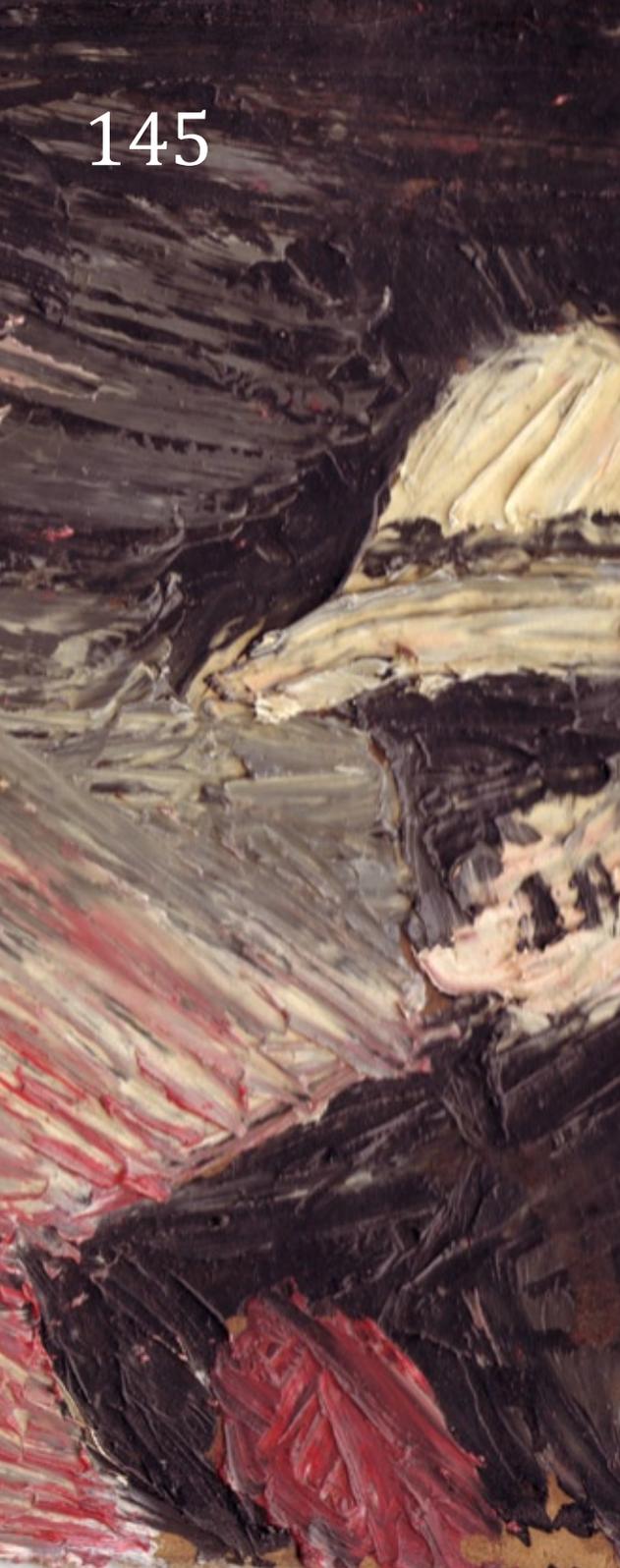
A Course in Miracles, 2004, p. 425



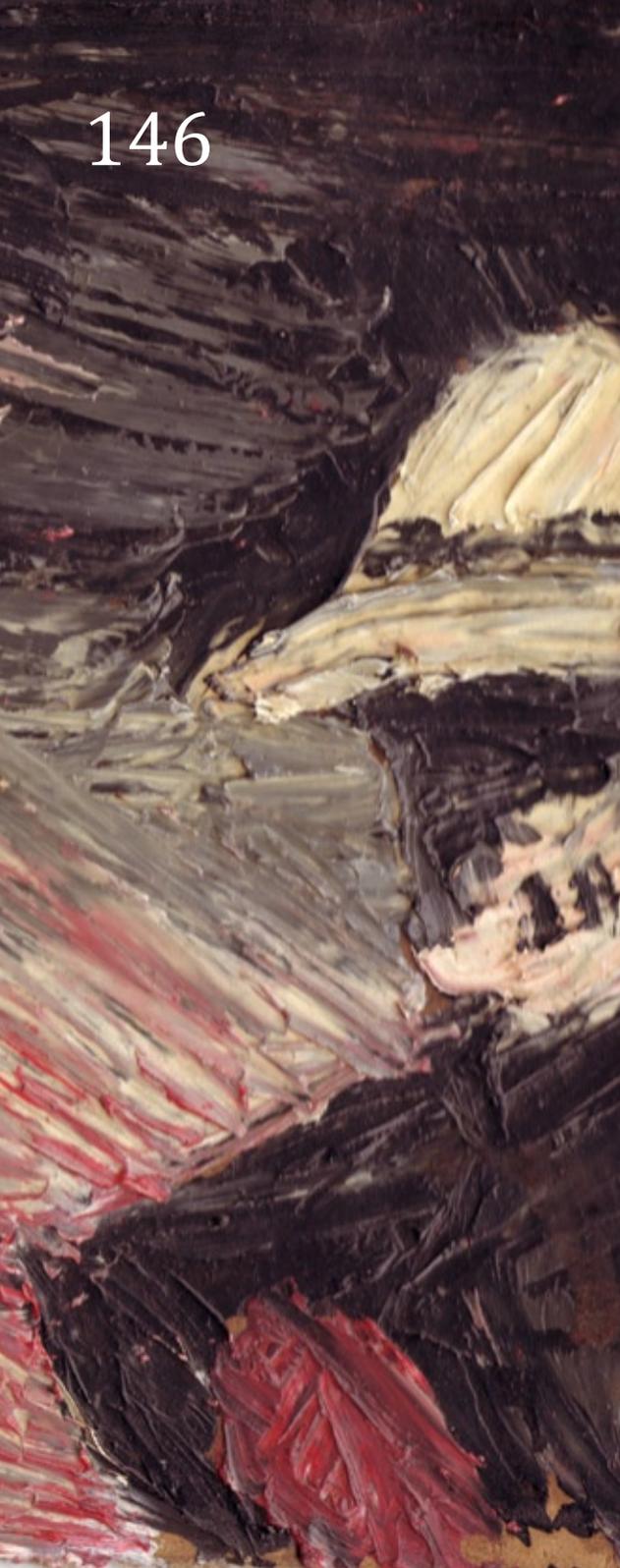
The other side of the bystander's plight is the horrifying sense of a world that is neither managed nor, as far as one can see, manageable: no divine providence, no cunning of reason, no invisible hand to insert logic in the apparent absurdity and to assure a happy end to the seemingly endless succession of disasters... Under the circumstances, the recent eruption of tribal sentiments in all their forms – of ethnicism, communitarianism or fundamentalism – is an expectable, if misguided reaction to the collapse of the nation-state...

Zygmunt Bauman, *Postmodernity and its Discontents*, 1997, pp. 18
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Love, Stability, & Cohesion