MESSIAH, *MUSELMANN* AND THE RETURN OF PAUL'S REAL

EVIDENCE FOR A TRAUMA OF SECULARISM

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ABSTRACT

This project addresses the anomaly evident in the use of religious terms for secular projects. If secularism was a system that intended to free the state from religion and the subject from religious superstition, then why would religious terminology be used in twentieth-century intellectual and cultural secular projects? For example, why would noted Marxist philosopher Walter Benjamin draw on the messianic figure in his "Theses on the Philosophy of History"? Moreover, what could be meant by the identification of the most abject inmate in Auschwitz, a Nazi death camp predominantly populated by European Jews, as the *Muselmann*? This project argues that the return of the religious terms, messiah and the *Muselmann* in twentieth-century secular texts is symptomatic of what psychoanalysts define as a trauma.

Freud identifies trauma as evident only in its symptom of compulsive repetition, which motivates a working-through of what was missed. Lacan identifies trauma as the subject's encounter with the real, where the real is inexplicable and missed, and what returns of the trauma is a remainder of the encounter: Lacan calls this remainder the *objet a*. The messiah and the *Muselmann* in secular texts are *objets a* and therefore, stand as a return of a trauma. Since these two religious terms seem to have no relation to each other apart from being of the religious within secularism, which is a system that has excluded religious presence in the operations of the state, then the *objets a* would suggest that the trauma is located within secularism itself. What is this trauma and where does it come from?

Taking into account the limitations of psychoanalytic hermeneutics, which stresses that the original trauma is forever lost to us, this project traces a connection between contemporary secular messianism and the largest group of earliest-extant texts citing the messiah, St. Paul's letters. On establishing the connection between Pauline messianism and the twentieth-century terms, messiah and *Muselmann*, I provide an analysis of four 'case studies' of the trauma of secularism expressed in twentieth-century philosophical texts and contemporary cultural works.

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INTRODUCTION

In "The Theses of the Concept of History" (1940), Walter Benjamin provokes
the dwarf from out of hiding its theological hand by naming the instigator of the
revolution, 'messiah'. Notable about Benjamin's messiah is its ambiguous
relation to the Christian messiah (against the anti-Christ in Thesis VI) and the
Jewish figure, (B) as a vague entity associated with "now-time shot through with
splinters of messianic time" (397). The messiah figure prevails in post WWII
Marxist thinking, evidenced in Étienne Balibar's suggestion that the
universalistic in nationalism is possible through the secularized "messianic
notion of brotherhood",[1] and by Jacques Derrida's inhuman abstract promise of
future justice in the noun, 'messianicity' (1994).[2] Responding to this
deconstruction of the savior, Slavoj Žižek puts the messiah back into play as a
Christian figure in *Puppet and the Dwarf*, (2003, 3); as if taking issue with the
turn to this figure in secular philosophy, Catherine Malabou deconstructs
Christianity's transcendent notion of transformation by arguing against
messianic interference entirely (*Plasticity at the Dusk of Writing*, 2010, 18 and

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[1] Balibar, E: "Racism as Universalism", *Masses, Classes, Ideas: Studies in Politics and Philosophy Before and After Marx*, translated by James Swenson. New York; NY: Routledge, 1994. PP 191-204. P 193.
[2] Derrida. *Spectres of Marx: The State of the Debt, the Work of Mourning and the New International*. Trans. Peggy Kamuf. New York and London, Routledge, 1994; "On Faith and Knowledge: The Two Sources of "Religion" at the Limits of Reason Alone", (40-101) *Acts of Religion*. Trans. Samuel Weber. New York and London: Routledge, 2010.

44). Parallel to the messiah phenomenon infiltrating intellectual work[3] is a messianic idea in science fiction film represented in figures such as the alien in *The Day the Earth Stood Still*, or the time-travelling human in *The Terminator*.[4] My interest is not merely in the apparently conscious use of this figure, but rather in the unconscious motivation that compels the iterations, ironically associated by Benjamin with the dwarf in hiding.

The figure of the *Muselmann*, another example of the anomalous use of religious terminology in a putatively secular environment, offers up a more striking example of unconscious expression. Coined in Auschwitz by no one knows who, to define the most abject of its inmates, the term is striking for several reasons; it is a religious term used to name Jews, both secular and religious; more dramatically, the term is resurrected by Agamben in his *Remnants of Auschwitz*, as the exception of the state who demands justice of the witness. The more recent iterations in contemporary thinking include Malabou's association of the *Muselmann* with the schizophrenic and Alzheimer victim in the *New Wounded* and Žižek's proposition that the *Muselmann* has come to stand for any version of the exception, from the rape victim to the autist (*Living in the End Times*).[5] What does Auschwitz have to do with Islam? For that matter, what does Islam have to do with the exception and why does it return in different guises? The fact that these questions can be posed rationally about an irrational cluster of associations indicates the unconscious source of this term, which explains why its semantic value goes mainly unaddressed. More ambivalently, the fact that Agamben associates the exception of the *Muselmann*

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[3] Bradley, Arthur and Paul Fletcher. "Introduction: On a Newly Arisen Messianic Tone in Philosophy". *Journal of Cultural Research* Vol. 13, Issues 3-4 (2009): 183-189.

[4] Hugh Ruppersberg, "Alien Messiah in Recent Science Fiction Films", *Journal of Popular Film and Television*, 14:4 (1987): 158-166,

[5] Žižek draws a connection between the *Muselmann* and autistic 'indifference' in the face of suffering which then indicates other conditions of suffering: "The *Muselmann* is multiplying in the guise of refugees, terror victims, survivors of natural disasters or of family violence" (*Living in End times* 294).

with the messianic,[6] an idea not addressed by Malabou's or Žižek's recent iterations, raises the first question of this project: What unconscious associations would link the *Muselmann* with the messiah? This question frames the psychoanalytic approach I take to my thesis that the return of these figures in secularism reflects a symptom of trauma.

TRAUMA

In this project, I use Jacques Lacan's linguistic interpretation of Sigmund Freud's science of pschoanalysis. Where Freud identified a stable subject, the ego, navigating the vicissitudes of the libido of the id and the prohibitions of the super-ego, Lacan saw instability within the configuration of subjectivity itself. The splitting (*Spaltung*) of the subject is caused by the law imposed by the Name of the Father (NOF) of the Oedipal event which demands that the subject gives up his/her desire (of the mother); the subject's consent leads to the repression of desire which causes the formation of the unconscious. Lacan questioned Freud's idea that the unconscious was simply the product of repression and, rather, emphasized that the unconscious reflected the subject's life-long ambivalent relationship to the Other. The unconscious, structured like a language (*Seminar XI* 20), is "the discourse of the Other" (131) that reflects the symbolic history of signifiers. Moreover, Lacan argued, the fact that the unconscious "presents you with its enigma and speaks" (*Seminar XI* 26) explains its relation to ethics: "The status of the unconscious, which, as I have shown, is so fragile on the ontic plane, is ethical. In his thirst for truth, Freud says, *Whatever it is, I must go there*, because, somewhere, this unconscious reveals itself" (33).[7] It is the relationship between ethics and the unconscious use of the

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[6] The problematic implications with this association is discussed by Robert Eaglestone in "The Holocaust and the Messianic", in *The Politics to Come*.

[7] The phrase "Whatever it is, I must go there" is Alan Sheridan's translation of Freud's "*Wo es war, soll Ich warden*" in Lacan's Seminar XI. It has been brought to my attention that the first

messiah and *Muselmann* in secularism that will be an important component of my focus on trauma in secularism.

Linguistic structuralism not only inspired Lacan to rethink the subject, but also led to his unique perspective of the three orders that determine psychic life. The symbolic order is in the jurisdiction of the law of the NOF, enabling the linguistic strategy of signification expressed in metaphor, allowing the subject to deal with loss (of the object of desire which is mother) by instating a symbolic replacement and also giving the subject the tools he/she needs to socialize, such as language and other modes of communication. The Imaginary, associated with the narcissism of the mirror stage, is the order determined by the image and reflects the metonymic strategies of displacement in the 'ego'. Lacan disables the centrality of Freud's ego by identifying it with the imaginary order, indicating the ego's function as a misrecognition of the symbolic-centered 'self'. The relative clarity with which Lacan defined the Symbolic and Imaginary orders in his science is contrasted by the vagueness of the third order, the 'real', and explains why it has been received as an enigmatic element of his theory of the mind.

The real, variously described as "what resists symbolization absolutely" (*Seminar I* 66), and is what is 'inassimilable' of experience (*Seminar XI* 55), has inspired various glossarial approaches. Dylan Evans references various definitions over time, such as "the real is in itself undifferentiated; 'the real is absolutely without fissure' (*Seminar II* 97)" and "The real is "the impossible" (*Seminar XI* 167) because it is impossible to imagine, impossible to integrate into the symbolic order, and impossible to attain in any way".[8] Tom Eyers'

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verb "is" should technically be past tense, "was", which means the phrase should read: Whatever it was, I must go there". This translation better articulates the way the subject's relation to the unconscious is squeezed between the past and the future. In future references to this quote, I shall use the corrected version.

[8] Evans, *Dictionary of Lacanian Psychoanalysis* 159.

highlights the "singular contribution" to psychoanalysis[9] of Lacan's 'real' by remaining open to its semantic indeterminacy: "This is not to deny the possibility of *any* definition of the Real, but to signal that singular or stable definitions must be held in suspicion in favour of an appreciation of the multiplicity of ways in which the Real is figured throughout Lacan's work" (2). The reason for its multiple meanings, Eyers argues, is that it gains definition through its association with the other registers. Žižek 'locates' the real through its paradoxical effect on the formalizing principles of the symbolic: "the real… is the rock upon which every formalization fumbles. But it is necessarily through this failure that we can in a way encircle, locate the empty place of the real" (195).[10] What is empty of the real is the 'missed' quality of its effect on the subject as trauma.

Lacan's idea of trauma is adapted from Freud's seminal research in "Beyond the Pleasure Principle". The compulsive repetition of bad experiences, Freud argued, "is attributed to the unconscious repressed within him [the subject]" (58). The return of the repressed makes people "the passive victim of something which they are powerless to influence, and yet which they suffer again and again in an endless repetition of the same fate" (60). This sense of fate, Freud argued, is indicated by the woman who married three times to men who subsequently fell ill and died; it is also poetically articulated in Tasso's story of Tancred, who murders his fiancé by accident, and then accidentally murders her again as a voice in a tree (60-61). How trauma can happen unexpectedly and why, when it returns, it is not immediately recognizable, is explained by Freud through his theory of the process of consciousness. Freud understood that the mind actively seeks stimulation which means that what happens against the subject's will, what is forced on the subject as unwanted

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[9] Eyers, *Lacan and the Concept of the Real* 8.
[10] Žižek, *The Sublime Object of Ideology* 195.

stimuli, causes a wound in the psyche: "We may use the term traumatic to describe those excitations from outside that are strong enough to break through the protective barrier [of consciousness]… An event such as external trauma will doubtless provoke a massive disturbance in the organism's energy system… the pleasure principle is put in abeyance. It is no longer possible to prevent the psychic apparatus from being flooded by large quanta of stimulation" (68-69). In Freud's terms, the unwanted stimuli are repressed in the unconscious which explains its delayed return, what Freud calls *Nachträglichkeit*. In this respect, the WWI Veterans' nightmares "retrospectively generate the fear" (71) which they could not apprehend consciously; that is, the 'missed' event is repressed in the unconscious and returns as a nightmare and in waking life, as compulsive behaviour.

Lacan refined Freud's idea of the missed 'cause' of the trauma with the concept of the real: "The function of the *tuché*, of the real as encounter—the encounter in so far as it may be missed, in so far as it is essentially the missed encounter—first presented itself in the history of psychoanalysis in the form that which was in itself already enough to arouse our attention, that of the trauma" (*Seminar XI* 55). The *tuché*, or the first cause, signifies the mystery of the encounter with the real which explains how the traumatic event returns unexpectedly: "what is repeated, in fact, is always something that occurs—the experience tells us quite a lot about its relation to the *tuché —as if by chance*" (54). The problem is that what returns is often not recognized except in its repetitive effect: "we see preserved the insistence of the trauma in making us aware of its existence. The trauma reappears, in effect, frequently unveiled" (55). In effect, trauma is a paradox: its insistence explains the compulsive nature of the 'event''s return and so being 'obvious', while its unveiled quality points

to the predicament of its origin as being invisible at the time of the subject's exposure to it since it is without symbolic value.[11]

One of the first traumas a subject experiences is the Oedipal event, which, if successful, gives the subject the tools of the symbolic order to organize retroactively the initiating event through the signifying process of fantasy formation. Fantasy, or the symbolic retroactive work of the trauma, is Lacan's term for the revision implied by Freud's *Nächtraglichkeit* (afterwardsness or in the French as *après coup)*. Fantasy is created from the subject's relation to the Imaginary (*$<>a*) wherein the "remainder" or that 'inassimilable" element created by the subject's encounter with the real is the *objet (petit) a*: "This **a** is presented precisely, in the field of the mirage of the narcissistic function of desire, as the object that cannot be swallowed, as it were, which remains stuck in the gullet of the signifier" (*Seminar XI* 270). This stuck quality of the *objet a* is what Lacan called the 'cause of desire'; it inspires the subject to seal over the hole made by the trauma and from it, create a fantasy which gestures to the coming into being of the remainder, by integrating the crisis into the subject's symbolic universe.

The analysand's work in therapy in "working-through" or narrativizing her condition, explains that the root of therapeutic work is the trauma: "trauma, fixation, reproduction, transference. What in analytic experience is called the intrusion of the past into the present pertains to this order " (*Seminar II* 85). In psychoanalytic terms, while trauma is the cause of the analysand's predicament, trauma remains secondary to the only thing knowable: the subject's fantasy.

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[11] Žižek articulates the same paradoxical relation this way: "As Jacques-Alain Miller has already pointed out (in his unpublished seminar), the status of the Real is at the same time that of corporeal contingency and that of logical consistence. In a first approach, the Real is a shock of a contingent encounter which disrupts the automatic circulation of the symbolic mechanism; a grain of sand preventing its smooth functioning; a traumatic encounter which ruins the balance of the symbolic universe of the subject. But, as we have seen with regard to trauma… only afterwards can it be *logically constructed* as a point which escapes symbolization" (*The Sublime Object of Ideology* 192).

Moreover, what is implied in Freud's "Beyond Pleasure" which Lacan's theoretical framework accounts for but never theorizes, is the fact that many different kinds of experiences are considered traumas: the Oedipal event is considered a trauma, as is the figurative return of Tancred's accidental murder of Clorinda, as well as the '*fort-da*' game,[12] the married widow's marriages, and the impulse of 'talking-through' in the analytic session. While Lacan's enigmatic 'real' has given concrete value to fantasy as the primary evidence of a 'cause', it has consequently had an effect of broadening the scope of what might be considered trauma leading to the probability that trauma is actually a prevalent condition of living. The question about what experiences can be considered trauma is addressed by my consideration of how the use of messiah and *Muselmann* are indicative of a trauma of secularism.

SECULARISM

On first pass, these religious terms have very little in common, except for a loose unconscious association to the Holocaust. Of course, Agamben's idea of the *Muselmann* as a messiah does not necessarily reflect on any other of the messianic phenomena; so whether this association says more about the Holocaust, the Jewish community in Europe, or post-Holocaust politics, remains a part of the conundrum of their appearance in secularism, which I shall consider in this project. As concepts, they reflect very different strategies in secularism. The messiah is associated with religion to the point that it is being used to redefine secularism; the *Muselmann*, on the other hand, has become so dissociated from its religious source, its significance points to the riddle I have already posed: What does Auschwitz have to do with Islam? In other words, one seems to stand out as a repressed religious association, while the other

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[12] The fact that this game is associated with the first stage of the Oedipal event suggests that there are several traumatic experiences associated with the Oedipal Complex.

stands out as a religious provocation in secularism. One thing that can clearly be said about both terms is that they are religious. Since secularism was meant to free the citizen from religious prejudice, and or, the scientist from superstition, and the state from God, both terms stand out as anomalies in secularism.

If there was a time that secularism was believed to neutralize religious differences in the public sphere, and so was heralded as a solution to political conflict as well as religious violence, those hopes have faltered in the face of criticism that has exposed secularism's religious foundation. In *Political Theology*, Carl Schmitt argued that secularism did not free the state from religion, but had simply sublimated religious authority into itself; the sovereign ruled, not because of democracy, but because of a power bequeathed by the same divine source that authorized the monarch's power. Subsequent to this revelation, Schmitt, Karl Löwith and Rudölf Bultmann brought forward the argument that the ideological foundation of secular history was determined by a Christo-centric eschatology. This scholarship has led Gil Anidjar to argue that secularism is a system of western imperialism that is prejudiced for Christian values, especially evident in light of the religious violence of the attack of the World Trade Centre. This event, otherwise known as 9/11, has exacerbated an existing political confrontation between the Christian secular west and the Muslim religious east, polarizing scholars about how to make secularism relevant in the multi-religious, multi-cultural world. On the one hand, Gayatri Spivak takes a post-colonial lead established by Edward Said, granting that secularism may be driven by a Kantian "Judeo-Christian" prejudice, but continues to be the system to withstand religious violence, and so needs to be worked on; on the other hand, Saba Mahmood, confronted by the atheist secularist neutral stance, makes the case that secularism is as ideologically

driven as any religious faith, which raises questions about what in secularism can be 'worked out' and in whose interest.

Within the context of the larger debate of religious politics and secularism, a politically centered strain coined as post-secularism has arisen. Hent de Vries argues that it is a term that defines the 'problem' of secularism (2). On the one hand, de Vries notes post-secularism may point to secularism's recognition that religion is not its enemy, and therefore, is trying to define a non-antagonistic relation to religion; or it may point to Habermas's argument that secularism, fundamentally dependent on religion as a paradigm against which it works, is realizing its fragile future considering religion is diminishing in world politics; with the rise of atheism and the decline of religion proper, secularism no longer has a counter-point for development. The key is less a new relation to religion than a new understanding of itself, de Vries suggests, which means it must focus on self-identity that is, by nature, problematic to define. The messiah and the *Muselmann* may be seen as examples of this post-secular trouble. The religious signifiers may point to the rise of the religious turn or they may reflect the latest strategy of secular reinvention; both possibilities point to a tension within secularism the meaning of which is not yet clear. Is the messiah being stripped of its religious significance as in Benjamin's dwarf, or is it a reactionary trope, as in Žižek's *Puppet*? In naming the secular Jewish inmate of Auschwitz a *Muselmann*, what is the target, the inmate's secularism or his Jewish culture, where we would interpret the former as indicative of religious reactionary, while the latter would be secular reactionary? The fact that the messiah is understood as a force or figure that resolves political oppression, and that the *Muselmann* is a figure of abuse that demands the ethical injunction of witnessing, leads me to suppose that these terms share one thing in being religious terms: they reflect an ethical dimension in their return which has bearing on an unconscious desire particular to secular subjects. Moreover, as

figures that encapsulate the 'cause of desire' in secular fantasies, the religious terms can be understood as *objets a*.

My thesis for seeing a trauma of secularism has a precedent in the work of two scholars who have considered trauma in our modern conditions from two very different perspectives. In the sixties, historian of philosophy Hans Blumenberg adapted Freud's application of trauma in *Moses and Monotheism* to history by considering the legacy of modernism in his *Legitimacy of the Modern Age*, arguing that modernism is riddled with a trauma that dates to a second-century gnostic dilemma in Christianity on the matter of good and evil. More recently, and independently of Blumenberg's thesis, philosopher, Alain Badiou takes a distinctly Lacanian approach to his review of the radical quality of twentieth-century crises in *The Century*, arguing they were examples of a 'passion for the real', a fusion of the 'encounter with the real' with the passion expressed in confronting nineteenth-century promises. My project makes advances on these theses, with slight but significant variations. For one, I part ways with Blumemberg's focus on modernism and Badiou's vision of twentieth-century events, to identify the trauma as specific to secularism. This semantic difference reflects my focus on the selected *objet a* as witnesses to secular life. Apart from this distinction, I follow Badiou's lead by drawing several disciplines into the project, and thereby define a field of research that not only troubles disciplinary divisions, but also re-thinks the psychoanalytic understanding of trauma as a method for analysis. I follow Blumenberg's long vision of history, borrowed from Freud's *Moses and Monotheism*, to date the origin of secular trauma to the period of ancient Roman rule; I am also inspired by his retreat to early Christianity, and will make a case against his gnostic thesis by following the messianic trope to Paul of Tarsus' contribution to Christianity.

The messiah stands out for having a relatively short history, originating sometime between the 1ˢᵗ century BCE and 1ˢᵗ century CE, the period during

which Paul was making a contribution to Christianity; as it happens, Paul's body of letters give us nearly direct access to the early use of 'messiah' in his naming of Jesus the "Christ". I have chosen to focus on Paul as the source of an anterior 'cause' in this project for these reasons in combination with being drawn to the phenomenon I would describe as a compulsive return to Paul's writing in twentieth-century intellectual works. For example, Freud references Paul's part in addressing the Jewish trauma of guilt in his *Moses and Monotheism*; post-WWII historians revisit and problematize Paul's theological and cultural contribution in the wave of scholarship dubbed, New Perspectives on Paul; and the works by Agamben, Badiou, Taubes, and Žižek, which aim to contemporize Paul's message for political and social contemporary issues in secular society, are only the most famous of the ongoing work by philosophers on Paul.[13] This return to Paul is as symptomatic as the compulsive return of the messiah and *Muselmann*, and for that reason, leads me to see an association between Paul's 'encounter with the real' of Jesus and our contemporary secular trauma.

PSYCHOANALYSIS AS METHOD

In my objective to prove a trauma of secularism by drawing associations between the historical works of St. Paul and the unconscious use of the messiah and *Muselmann* in secular projects, a number of concerns about my use of the psychoanalytic method are raised. For one, being able to locate the 'cause' of trauma is, as Lacan has stressed, problematic because the source of that cause, the 'real', is inaccessible in its original moment, and its return is often in disguise. These problems with analysis call into question the value of analyzing Paul's letters in this project as an anterior 'cause' of the secular trauma. Added

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[13] Ward Blanton and Hent de Vries are editors of the forthcoming, *Paul and the Philosophers*. Fordham Press, fall 2013.

to these aporias is the dilemma raised by my primary focus: seeking the trauma of secularism. How can one apply a psychoanalytic method of the mind of the individual to a social phenomenon? That question is especially significant since the mid-century American Freudian revisionists had tried this very thing and faltered.[14] Each of these concerns shall be addressed in turn.

My research is motivated by the same concerns that motivated the American social scientists such as Erich Fromm[15] and Karen Horney,[16] the leading Neo-Freudians: the contradictory forces of love and hate in human politics as introduced by Freud in *Civilization and Discontents*. My aim in this project is not to solve social ills, as was the case for these Neo-Freudianists. Their psychocultural approach which adapted Freudian psychoanalysis to sociology, aimed to resolve mankind's discontent by promoting the normative force of the super-ego for its equalizing effect on the subject's instinctual drives: the effect was that the volatile factors of the subject, the instincts, drives, and the unconscious, were ignored. The Neo-Freudians' focus on the social environment was driven by the logic that individuals were not victims of biological determinism, but could be transformed to reach their potential as outlined by social ideals.[17] As far as Herbert Marcuse was concerned, the Neo-Freudiansts failed to address the suffering of Freud's neurotic. In *Eros and Civilization*, Marcuse devotes a chapter to explain why these Neo-Freudians, far from solving social ills, perpetuated them: "The Neo-Freudian schools promote

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[14] The Neo-Freudians, as they were called, were criticized for popularizing psychoanalytic ideas that turned the individual into types, for promoting behaviourist approaches to resolve mental health concerns, and generally for being unscientific. The popularity of David Reisman's *The Lonely Crowd* that was on the best-seller list until the early 1970s, is a case in point.

[15] Fromm, *Escape From Freedom*. New York: Henry Holt, 1994.

[16] Horney, *New Ways in Psychoanalysis*. New York, NY: W.W. Norton & Company, Inc., 1966.

[17] The application of elements of Freud's science to behaviorial psychology made the Neo-Freudians a valuable asset for the U.S. government's war efforts in WWII, leading one historian to conclude: "The spread of psychoculturalism in the U.S. is inseparable from the rise of fascism in Europe" Edward J. K. Gitre. "The Great Escape: World War II, Neo-Freudianism, and the Origins of U. S. Pyschocultural Analysis". *Journal of the History of Behavioural Sciences*, Vol 47 (1) (Winter), 2001: 19.

the very same values as cure against unfreedom and suffering—as the triumph over repression. The intellectual feat is accomplished by expurgating the instinctual dynamic and reducing its part in the mental life" (240). In more emphatic terms, he concludes: "The revisionist mutilation of the instinct theory leads to the traditional devaluation of the sphere of material needs in favor of the spiritual needs" (265). The Marxist in Marcuse critiqued the Neo-Freudianists for carrying out a strategy that perpetuated the oppression of the worker by state ideology. Reading Freud's proposition that neurosis was an illness, Marcuse promoted the Marxist cure of the neurotic subject as emancipation from repression through memory work; by remembering the original moment of repression, the chains of repression would be broken and, in turn, the repressive influence of civilization would be undone (18). Marcuse's vision for mankind's emancipation through psychoanalysis relied on the premise that psychoanalysis was a science devoted to curing individuals of their neuroses, an approach which Lacanians have come to consider simplistic.

In *The Sublime Object of Ideology,* Žižek's soft critique of Marcuse's research as "psychoanalytic fundamentalism" aims to contextualize a "post-Marxist" approach to cultural critique through Lacan's anti-essentialist logic. In his preface, Žižek outlines his debt to Lacan's interpretation of the antagonistic drives which Freud introduced in *Civilization*: "All 'culture' is in a way reaction-formation, an attempt to limit, canalize — to cultivate this imbalance, this traumatic kernel, this radical antagonism through which man cuts his umbilical cord with nature, with animal homeostasis. It is not only that the aim is no longer to abolish this drive antagonism, but the aspiration to abolish it is precisely the totalitarian temptation" (xxviii). In short, Marcuse's focus on repression as an illness that needs to be cured followed the Neo-Freudian logic as opposed to Freud's logic; where Freud was convinced that conflict is at the centre of human life, the Neo-Freudians operated on the conviction that

harmony was the norm which was undermined by individual disorders. Following Freud's thesis of the drives through Lacan's anti-essentialism, Žižek focused on the dynamic relation between the subject and ideology, an idea introduced by Althusser in his application of Marx's concept of ideology to psychoanalysis, "On Ideology"; the task of psychoanalysis is not to cure the subject of ideology's effect, Žižek contends, but to uncover the antagonistic infrastructure managing ideology's power over of the individual's choices so that the subject may 'work through' it.

Žižek identifies ideology as the illusion of the symbolic, which the subject misrecognizes as actually there (30).[18] What is really there, Žižek argues, is the 'real, impossible kernel' hiding within ideology, apparent as the symptom of an inconsistency that sustains, rather than undermines, the ideological fantasy. Ideology is not a constant reliable force, Žižek argues, but a function of the symbolic order, prone to structural weaknesses, but engineered to survive that weakness: "An ideology really succeeds when even the facts which at first contradict it start to function as arguments in its favour" (50). Ideological critique involves "going through the fantasy" (132), or, moving through the interpellating structures contained by the paradoxical nature of the social fantasy so as to isolate the 'real' cause hiding inside the symptom. The Jew, for example, is the symptom of fascist ideology (143); by inverting "the linking of causality", the Jew is no longer visible as the cause of "social antagonism" but a projection of ideology's failure. "What is excluded from the Symbolic… returns in the Real as a paranoid construction of the Jew", Žižek asserts. That is, fascism's fantasy of unity causes the return of the Jew as the exception, which is used to reinforce the fascistic promise of unity.

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[18] "in its basic dimension [ideology] is a fantasy-construction which serves as a support for our 'reality' itself: an 'illusion' which structures our effective, real social relations and thereby masks some insupportable, real, impossible kernel…" (45).

Having outlined the way in which ideology sustains itself as paradoxical, Žižek then reviews the subject's relation to ideology through the subject's relation to the Other. The Imaginary and the Symbolic determine how "the subject is integrated into a given socio-symbolic field" (123) through interpellation of the Other. The awkwardness of this interpellation is defined by Žižek as the "circle of a square" which creates a leftover that the leaves the subject asking, "*che vuoi*?". This question articulates the subject's desire, which is not to fulfill her own need but to fulfill what the Other lacks. The infant reasons that the mother keeps leaving because she lacks (desires) something; thus, the infant desires to be for the mother what she lacks so that she will not leave; thus, the subject desires what the Other wants. The way to understanding what the Other wants is through fantasy. Yet, as Žižek highlights, "The desire with regard to which we must no 'give way' is not the desire supported by fantasy, but the desire of the Other beyond fantasy" (132). In effect, ideology helps to understand what is desired of us, but desire itself originates beyond ideology in the ethical demand. In some cases, what the Other desires contradicts ideological fantasy. If the uses of the messiah and *Muselmann* can be seen as the returns of the 'real' in the social fantasy of secularism, or a contradiction within secularism, then what ethical demand is referenced in their use? That question drives my investigation in this project.

In drawing a connection between the use of messiah and *Muselmann* and Paul's historical 'trauma', questions about the viability of using psychoanalysis in the humanities-centered discipline of history are raised. I will start by noting that, as with historians, Freud relied on artifacts, written texts, for analysis, and his diagnosis of Paul Daniel Schreber as a paranoid-schizophrenic based on the psychotic's memoir is a case in point. While, in *Moses and Monotheism*, Freud felt he had grounds for the "psychological probability" that "religious phenomena are to be understood only on the model of the

individual… and therefore derive their effect on mankind from the historical truth they contain" (71), which is to follow his argument in *Totem and Taboo* that the murder of the primordial father explains the initiation of the incest taboo with which we live today, he recognized a fundamentally weak link in his theory: the origin of monotheism being the murder of the first Moses relied on a tenuous historical element: "Sellin's suggestion concerning Moses' end". The fact is, Sellin had only a 'theory' that Moses was murdered by the Israelites, which was based on interpreting a few artifacts. This is why Freud's thesis that the persecution against the Jews for murdering Jesus as being symptomatic of the undocumented murder of the first Moses could not be proved in historical terms; moreover, psychoanalytically, since this murder was the 'missed' event of a trauma, it could only be posited in hypothetical terms. Freud's aim to explain a contemporary psychological phenomenon with a historical past exposed the inherent incompatibility of two methods: the historical interest in fact and the psychoanalytic interest in the narratives, or fictions, caused by trauma. The difference between the historian and the analyst reflects a tension between their hermeneutic practices. The historian relies on facts to represent the past for the present and reaches the limits of what she can say about the past when certain facts prove to be unreliable. In contrast, the analyst is less interested in the facts the analysand presents about the past event than in how she articulates the past; the analysand's access to the missed "encounter with the real" is a retrospective rendering of it in the symbolic which makes it a kind of fiction.

Freud's research indicates where my project intends to avoid shaky ground and where it aims for firm footing. Paul's letters are the earliest extant witnesses to the formative years of Christianity, contextualized by other works we have access to, such as those by the Judean historian, Flavius Josephus, the Judean philosopher, Philo of Alexandria, and the scribes of the recently

accessed library of Qumran. While historians have developed a reliable library of scholarship about this period, the interpretations associated with the material of this time is hotly debated and attests to the fact that our accumulated knowledge of the 'facts' of the first century is incomplete and arguably will remain that way as long as we continue to do history as we have done. Thus, with respect to the historical method, my research is only less weak than Freud's historical material in *Moses and Monotheism*. What my research can offer, however, is the same hermeneutic approach that Freud used in relying on testimonies as witnesses to the unconscious, my effort being analyzing Paul's first-century letters for the trauma that inspired them.

If Freud's research could have isolated a problem with the use of history in psychoanalysis, the use of psychoanalytic theory in the humanities has had its own share of problems. The field of research known as Trauma Studies has incurred criticism both from outside and inside the field; medical professionals have highlighted where humanities scholars have used symptoms of trauma improperly and historian, Dominic LaCapra has warned against the use of trauma theory in Holocaust Studies for fostering a culture of victimhood. I shall address both criticisms in detail in Chapter 2, but for now, would like to make this point about LaCapra's warning; while his is a valid concern since one hopes that research does not promote pathology, it is valid on the assumption that trauma is bad. In this project, I would like to dispel the assumptions that trauma is only a bad experience, and by extension, promote the idea that not all traumas are the same. This would mean that trauma is more prevalent than some applications, such as Holocaust Studies, would suggest.

The prevalence of trauma is implied by Caruth's idea of history in her approach to contemporary texts in *Unclaimed Experience*. In this work, her analysis of Freud's *Moses and Monotheism* leads her to see a correlation between the long history of the Jewish people of the Exodus and Freud's

departure from Vienna on the eve of WWII, as the iteration of the 'fort-da' game. In these traumatic returns, survival registers as a constant, what I would identify as the 'unveiled' real, which leads Caruth to hypothesize: "If history is to be understood as history of trauma, it is history that is experienced as the endless attempt to assume one's survival as one's own" (64). Caruth qualifies her assertion about history as conditional, yet what I identify as valuable in her suggestion is that, in human history, survival is a trauma which is repeatedly taken up by each individual, in every generation (71). The implication here is that trauma is not just a horrifying crisis, as would be understood by the use of this method for Holocaust Studies, for example, but is a persistent condition experienced by the individual in the diachronic vision of history. Moreover, in Lacanian terms, each individual experiences many traumas in his/her life beginning with the socializing trauma of the Oedipal event. To what extent trauma may be re-defined as different kinds of trauma, is a question I pursue in the chapters ahead in considering the relation between the messiah and the *Muselmann* and Paul's trauma.

Since trauma is of the real, proving that our trauma categorically originates in Paul's encounter with the real of Jesus is impossible and so is not the goal of this project. I also do not intend to prove that the trauma of secularism is a product only of Paul's 'real' and what I mean by this shall be discussed in the chapters ahead. This does not disqualify the value of understanding the unconscious return to Paul's thinking alongside the use of messiah and *Muselmann* in secular projects, and I am impeded, as is any psychoanalyst in having no access to trauma except through the symbolic. Exploring to what extent there is a relationship between the use of messiah and *Muselmann* in works determined by secular ideology and Paul's letters of the first century is the question that drives this project and points to the limit of my research which is this: the probability that Paul's trauma is the return of a

trauma that originated with someone else, of his colleagues or in ancient history, is something that my research can only point to as the irresolvable raw edge for other scholars to pick up and explore.

One last qualifying point needs to be made about my objectives. Since trauma is only apparent in its effect on the symbolic structure of fantasy as return and in Žižek's terms, interference, this project is limited to evidence of the trauma which are the fantasies inspired by the *objets a* of the messiah and *Muselmann*. This limitation is qualified by the fact that, since secularism's strategy of secularization involves transposing Christian paradigms into seemingly neutral forms, a form of sublimation, the *objets a* of the messiah and the *Muselmann* are symptoms of some kernel of the real in secularism; that is, since the 'compulsive return' of obviously religious concepts counters the rule that the real is consistently invisible and never returns the same way, then the messiah and the *Muselmann* must be understood as the disguise of a trauma's return. The question is: can we determine a factor that is common to these disguises? Discovering what that factor is drives my reading of Paul's messiah with the secular messiah and *Muselmann*, not as an inversion of the causal links diachronically, from now to an original first 'cause', but as an inversion of the causal links synchronically within each *tuché* (cause) of the *objets a,* by bringing these 'causes' together in a comparative sense, to see what may be consistent in the 'kernel' of the trauma between then and now.

DISCIPLINARY SELF-DISCLOSURE
Though I am guided by historical research on Paul in approaching the contemporary *objet a* under review, I concede to historians who have repeatedly raised confusion about what I am doing to stress that this not a historical project in the sense that it does not restrict its field of hermeneutics to

the analysis of historical artifacts, nor is its *modus operandi* aimed to fulfill a comprehensive understanding of historical debates of the period. The nature of this project, however, does not mean that it is not of value to Pauline scholars because, as I hope those historians who read this would recognize that this project contributes original research to certain irresolvable debates in Pauline studies. The caveat I make about the discipline of history in this project applies also to philosophy. This is a project that may not be strictly philosophical, but remains relevant to the discipline of philosophy because it addresses the prejudices and assumptions determining philosophers' return to Paul's idea of the universal, the law of love, and the messiah. What informs my perspective with these disciplines is yet another discipline which, because of my background, is the dominant discipline, and that is literature.

I had the great fortune of doing my first Master's degree just after the apex of the canon wars in English departments in North America. French feminist scholars such as Hélène Cixous, Catherine Clément, Luce Irigaray, and American figures, Teresa de Lauretis and Judith Butler, had already infiltrated the field of Literary studies, as had Derrida's deconstructionism with post-colonialist, Gayatri Spivak. The politics driving scholarship, that the personal is political, was our inspiration for breaking the scholarly mold dominated by white male hegemony. With the infusion of female-authored texts and feminine-centered readings of texts, canonic reading lists broke apart and so did generic prejudices, invigorating a critical interest in memoir, epistles, life-writing and hybrid genres. This a literary project inspired by these approaches with a vested interest in a hermeneutic of the text. The fantasies under review in the pages ahead have been chosen for their *objet a*, messiah and *Muselmann*, which means that generic differences become secondary to reading texts as fantasies of trauma. The critical aspect of the symbolic that determines the lion's share of my research is its point of failure: the text reflects the real which is

accessible only through the symbolic; that is, it is limited by a subject's relation to the unconscious through desire, determined by her/his cultural access to the symbolic (ethnic background, language) and her/his particular life experiences, (family crises, national crises, disabilities, etc.). That is, the subject's resolution of the real encounter through a fantasy remains bound to semantic inheritance. Since, semantically, the *objets a* are religious, they point to the 'real' of God in biblical literature, which has brought me to consider that the work I am doing in drawing out a connection between secular projects and Paul's epistles is similar to research by Northrop Frye.

Through his work with the Romantics, and especially William Blake, Frye developed a literary criticism based on the premise that literature had its typological and metaphorical roots in Biblical literature. In the *Great Code*, Frye contends that religious material belonged to the arts over other forms of expression, such as philosophy (37). In his last project, Frye continued to distinguish his interest and promotion of literature against the critical work done by "rather aimless paradoxes that take us from 'everything is text' to 'nothing is text' and back again" (*Words With Power* 13). What I have to say is neither as relative as Frye suggests, nor as radical as may be supposed. If, in psychoanalysis, the real is badly represented in fantasy, the symbolic handle for 'trauma', then the Bible is the failed representation of the encounter with the real of God, where God is merely the *objet a*–-the remainder that would not let go, or which people would not give up. Since the Bible stands as a tradition of the 'real' integrated into society as conscious and unconscious (Other) culture, then contemporary fantasies can be seen to rely on the tradition of the real for fantasy formation, and so, taking my qualification about semantic inheritance above into consideration, fantasies repeat biblical or mythic narratives. Frye suggests as much when he acknowledges the biblical debt in Marxist thinking; and to that I add the example of Freud's adaptation of Sophocles' *Oedipus Rex.*

For the reason that literary metaphors and typologies are integral to intellectual works, then on the metaphorical level, philosophy is on par with literature. Therefore, while Frye is correct to see that myth belongs to the arts, the exchange between poetry and other disciplines like philosophy, suggests that, at a certain level, philosophy and poetry are equal.

With full debt to Frye's contribution to the field of Biblical criticism, I have one more qualifying point to make, which is key to my research. Much like scholars who contend that, for good or bad, secularism is Christian, Frye's thesis stands on the conviction that western literature is indebted to the Christian Bible. What Frye means by the influence of the Christian Bible is described in his *Code* as a 'U' narrative from the high point of Genesis descending through crises, and rising up through to the fulfillment implied in the redemption offered by Jesus Christ. As one of several examples of this narrative, Frye references Lot's wife's transformation into salt as the only equivalent to Ovid's metamorphosis in the Bible (*Code* 97), acknowledging some paragraphs later that Jesus's resurrection is a version of this kind of Greek transformation, but is not an example of Biblical metamorphosis. Jesus Christ is distinguished because he is the sacred, as opposed to profane (i.e. Greek) form of transformation; he embodies the intervention of the transcendent God in fulfilling promises of the Jewish faith.

The Christo-centric dominance of western culture and the ubiquity of Christian paradigms describe the ground on which Frye's thesis is built, and I agree with this ground not as *de facto*, but as symptom. That is, I do not question Frye's analysis, his method or his acceptance of Christianity as the universal faith since Christianity sustains its dominance on that fact. Rather, I question Christianity's ideological mystification in representing itself as fulfilling Judaism and being the author of the end of days. What we modernists receive as Christianity's narrative coherence is the retrospective work of scholars over

centuries erasing or resolving critical tensions and contradictions born of political and personal experiences by key players of the movement in its incipience. By looking at texts not as products that sustain the coherence we see now, but as documents attesting to authorial fantasies, products of traumas of their time, the inheritance Frye has identified changes focus. By using history to dismantle the illusions ideology perpetuates, a more nuanced interpretation of the effect of the real on secular ideology may be visible.

The project has been divided into three movements; the first centers on the debates within secular scholarship and clarifies my debt to Freud and Lacan on the psychoanalytic method and trauma studies. In the second movement I engage in a dialectical reading of the philosophers' and the historians' scholarship on Paul's letters, through three of his terms: "messiah", the "Law", and "conversion". In chapter 3, I review the significance of the messiah in Paul's texts beginning with the premise of Agamben's disclosure in *The Time that Remains*, that Benjamin's "weak messianic power" is "a quote without quotation marks" of a Pauline passage. In chapter 4, I focus entirely on the concept of Paul's Law by reading the philosopher with the historian; I review and take issue with Badiou's and Žižek's focus on Paul's law of love at the expense of ignoring the other laws; then I review the historians' quandary about the variety of and inconsistencies apparent in Paul's laws, and offer an interpretation of the Law of Christ by returning to the philosophers. In the fifth chapter, I focus entirely on Paul's concept of conversion in relation to his 'encounter with the Christ'; in aid of understanding his personal trauma, I conduct a comparative analysis of his letters with the contemporary Greek novel, *Joseph and Aseneth*.

In the third and final movement, I apply the revelations of Paul's trauma to four case studies, two of each of the *objet a* under review. One chapter focuses on philosophical projects and the other on cultural projects. By

identifying these analyses as 'case studies' I mean to allude to Freud's work, in the simplest sense: texts under review represent fantasies which I consider exemplary of the trauma indicated by the use of religious *objet a* within limits of the research accomplished to date. In Chapter 6, I consider philosophical expressions of the messiah and *Muselmann*; specifically, I compare messianic representation in Franz Rosenzweig's theologically driven, *The Star of Redemption* with Derrida's political treatise, *Specters of Marx*, and follow this with a consideration of the paradox of the absent *Muselmann* in Sarah Kofman's memoir of Auschwitz, *Smothered Words* (*Paroles suffoquées*). In Chapter 7, I consider how the *objets a* which I have traced in philosophical works, is expressed in cultural texts; namely, I focus on the messiah in Žižek's analysis of the attack of 9/11 in *Welcome to the Desert of the Real* through Kubrick's 1968 science fiction film, *2001: A Space Odyssey* and then I consider the protagonist in Anne Carson's novella, *Autobiography of Red*, as a contemporary iteration of the exception. In focusing on these *objets a* as they have manifested in fantasies of different disciplines and genres, from theology, philosophy, film, memoir and fiction, I am driven by the ambiguous search: what has returned of Paul's real?

CHAPTER ONE: THE TRAUMA OF SECULARISM

INTRODUCTION

If secularism began as a doctrine devised by enlightenment scholars to counter religious violence, and to free scientific and intellectual inquiry from the superstitions of religion,[19] and then became interpreted as the manifestation or sublimation of Absolute Spirit in the self-conscious subject,[20] its contribution to leveling inequalities of class (Marx), race (Said) and gender (Spivak et al,) exemplified its universal aspirations.[21] Secularism's promise to be applicable to all, to be a 'universal' paradigm in the political sphere, has been the mantra used to maintain its value for European states for centuries. As a rational system, however, secularism seems to have maintained an irrational resistance to sectarian presence in the public sphere. How does a secular state justify interfering in how a citizen practices her faith by imposing a prohibition on what she can wear? In Quebec and Paris, the justification is framed as liberating Moslem women from patriarchal oppression. Wendy Brown's article troubles this argument, by drawing attention to the assumptions that have sustained secularism's putative promise of freedom feigning neutrality for other religions.[22] The result, she argues, is that secularism's profession of tolerance belies manipulation: "Tolerance does not resolve but rather manages these inequalities

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[19] Immanuel Kant, "What is Enlightenment?" (1784).
[20] G. W. F. Hegel. *The Phenomenology of Spirit.*
[21] By way of introducing the notion of the plurality of secularisms in a global world, Janet Jakobsen and Ann Pellegrini note: "The main points of the traditional secularization narrative—that secularization is central to modernity, that it enables progress toward universalism, and that it represent development or emancipation—remained strong in Western social theory during much of the twentieth century" *(Secularisms* 9.)
[22] "Secularism generates tolerance as mutual respect among religions". Wendy Brown, "Civilizational Delusions: Secularism, Tolerance, Equality", paragraph 19.

and exclusions" (Paragraph 20). As exemplified in the issue of the hijab in French public schools, and most recently in the niqab issue in courtrooms in Canada,[23] secularism's promise to rectify conditions of oppression, persecution, discrimination and non-representation, is based on all citizens agreeing that private religion is subordinate to public secularism. The only equality expressed in this dynamic is that all religions are equally inferior to secularism and those who do not agree, that is, those who do not comply with secular authority, are perceived as threats. The threat as secularism understands it, is the irrational power of religion.

While it goes without saying that the attack of the World Trade Centre on September 11, 2001, otherwise known as 9/11, was a threat to American security, President Bush's response to 'wage a war on terror', manifesting in targeting Muslims at border crossings, signaled that the threat was not simply violence but Islamic violence. In academic circles, the conviction that secularism was necessary to combat events of religious violence such as 9/11, inspired counter-arguments pointing to secularism's reactionary prejudice against religion. It is by way of the debates circulating about secularism as a result of 9/11 that I lead into the focus of this chapter, which is to review two theories of a trauma of secularism: one by historian of philosophy, Hans Blumenberg, and the other by Lacanian philosopher, Alain Badiou.

POST-SECULARISM AND ANTI-SECULARISM
In the face of religious violence exemplified in the event of 9/11, Aamir Mufti highlights in his introduction to the *boundary 2* (2004) issue dedicated to Edward Said, that scholars need to reclaim secularism: "The recognition of the

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[23] In 2011, the French government passed a law banning the niqab, the full head cover, in public.

need to declare oneself for secularism appears now, in light of the escalating forms of religious politics and violence that have come to dominate political life in multiple locations and across the globe, to have been anachronistic in a double sense, both behind and ahead of its time" (2). The threat inspired by 9/11 evident in Mufti's call is echoed in Spivak's contribution to the same issue, "On Terror". In this article, she calls on readers not to see 9/11 as "just about religion,"[24] highlighting the first response by western thinkers to dismiss the event as a terrorist act committed by religious fundamentalists. In this move, Spivak positions herself as 'for' secularism, and initiates her deconstructive practice of exposing and pulling at the binary of religion vs secularism. Secularism is "a mechanism to avoid violence,"[25] Spivak claims; at the least, it promotes the 'soft option of 'teaching tolerance' (106), even though it is riddled by Kant's Christo-centrism[26] which needs to be worked through. Fully conscious of secularism's weaknesses, Spivak stands by it as the procedure in humanities discourse that can deal with religious violence.

What I want to highlight about the secularistic response to 9/11, by Mufti and Spivak and others, is not its reaction to the terroristic violence of 9/11, but its branding of religious fundamentalism as something secularism is obligated and equipped to fight against. If Spivak may be said to have already articulated her ambivalent favouring of secularism against the violence of religious rite by both condemning and condoning the White imperialist move to prohibit *Sati* as violence against women in, "Can the Subaltern Speak?" (1988), she hides her

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[24] "I would agree with Vijay Prasha that 9-11, as it is being called now, is not just about religion" (Spivak 88).

[25] "… secularism is a set of abstract reasonable laws that must be observed to avoid religious violence" (Spivak 107).

[26] "… the Judeo-Christian is *the* secular religion, is the prejudice that still rides us…" (Spivak 105.) While I acknowledge Spivak's recognition of the Kantian religion at the root of the founding principles of secularism, I am troubled by her conflation of Judaism with Christianity because it indicates another 'blind-spot' encouraged by the Christo-centric ideology of secularism.

ambivalence behind a passivist dismissal of violence as chauvinist. The fact is, Spivak's deconstructive project is activated by male dominated discourse; as a woman, and a Marxist, she can point to the eastern subaltern she claims is being silenced by western imperialism, herself exemplifying the emancipation of that subject to speak by using Imperialist culture (as a Marxist feminist), but ultimately colludes with the culture that creates the subaltern's silence. Spivak knows her collusion. Perhaps it is the paradox of her privilege that leads Spivak to resist reading 9/11 for its political message against American imperialism, using the same excuse in 2001 as she used when speaking about *Sati* in the 80s: that being a personal abhorrence of the violence of suicide. Spivak's anti-Imperialist politics would align her with the anti-Imperialistic ideals that fomented 9/11, and she knows that; this is why she tries for an 'ethical encounter' with the politics of the suicide bomber, but the closest she can get is to parallel them with liberation theologists. In this parallel, we "Americans" have an essentially partial but ultimately ineffectual view of the politics behind the alleged twin towers attack. Through the sieve of this Christian movement, something of 9/11 is erased and it is not its leftist-like politics but its religion. That is, by the end of the article, Spivak's request that we not see the event as 'just religion' does not let us see the religion at all.[27] Spivak's strategy suggests that 9/11 stands out as a threat to secularism not because of its violence, but because of its religion. It is not Christian.

Is Spivak at all aware that, in attempting to look at the Muslim alleged hijackers from the perspective of a Christian religious fundamentalism, she has simulated and even updated Kant's pietistic influences at the core of secularism, even after having admitted that the Christianness of secularism needs to be addressed (105)? What is fascinating about 9/11 in the post-event environment

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[27] For a more detailed analysis of this argument see Principe, "Spivak's Fantasy of Silence: A Secular look at Suicide." *Journal of Cultural Research* Vol 17, Issue 3 *(*2012.) Web.

is how, being a spectre of the religious turn, it has drawn out prejudices and anxieties by secularists, as Spivak's response exemplifies. In contrast to anxious scholars like Spivak, there are scholars like Žižek who embrace religious terms for secular purposes: "the theological dimension is given a new lease on life in the guise of 'postsecular' Messianic turn of deconstruction" (*Puppet* 3.) What has been called post-secularism ostensibly coincides with the religious turn that has infiltrated the strictly secular domains of politics, philosophy, and culture. That turn, anecdotally represented by Jeffrey Robbins as the 'death of God' movement in the sixties in the United States, echoed by the liberation theology movement in South America, was coincidental with the rise of post-structural thought known as deconstruction. As deconstructionism gained importance with the rise of postmodernism, a shift occurred, and scholars, theorists and philosophers with deep ties to secularism recognized a need to reconsider the religious. In effect, Robbins points out, by the 90s, Derrida, Vattimo and Caputo, were proclaiming the death of the death of God (*After the Death of God*, 13).

According to Hent De Vries, post-secularism is not articulated to the 'historical amnesia' of postmodernism but to the paradox of the self-conscious ceding to the place of religion in the public sphere, reflected in the move by Derrida et al: "… if one understands the term post-secular not as an attempt at historical periodization (following upon equally unfortunate designations such as 'the post-modern', 'the post-historical', or 'the post-human') but merely as a topical indicator for—well, a problem. In the words of Hans Joas: 'post-secular doesn't express a sudden increase in religiosity, after its epochal decrease, but rather a change in mindset of those who felt justified in considering religious to be moribund" (De Vries 3).[28] This would clearly explain how atheists such as

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[28] The 'trouble' de Vries identifies can be seen as performed in the recent issue of *Boundary 2* 40:1 (2013) in which five scholars address the statement, "Why I am not a Post-Secularist". In

Derrida and Žižek could produce secular projects with explicit religious content, and thereby problematize the inclusion of what was once *verboten* in the public sphere; yet, is religion so atypical of secular discourse? The event of 9/11 would suggest it cannot be if it ever was. The fact is, this event has put the squeeze on secularism, and secularism's response is to buckle under pressure; what is visible is that, as Brown argued, secularism is not as neutral as it has professed to be.

Secularism was a means for encouraging Kant's 'cosmopolitanism' of modern society, translating the Christian paradigms for universal ends of freedom and equality. These same idealistic principles dominate the post-secular discourse: "'religion and secularity' are simply twin faces of the same European (and now American) discourse" ("Disturbing Politics", 12), claims Blanton, a (Christian) religious scholar. Blanton's universalism is equal to Habermas' atheistic idea of 'tolerance': "The principle of tolerance is first freed of the suspicion of expressing mere condescension, when the conflicting parties

reading all works together, what becomes apparent is that their arguments are tied to the problem of defining postsecularism. While it is associated with the religious turn, that direct relation is troubled by the different politics driving postsecular scholars and so complicating the 'horizon'. Lambropoulos was the most poetic in his response, in defining all the things he is not from religious affiliation to being 'postpolitical' (80), and thereby amplifying what is problematic with the post-secular. Gourgouris takes an equally enigmatic position to the statement, performing that enigma in the paradox of atheism and the trouble with the prefix 'post'. Post-secularism cannot mean leaving behind secularism, but describing something new is equally untenable (42), which is why he concludes with the new horizon promised by the vanishing of atheism as equal to the new horizon that is implied but yet unnamed in the idea of the post-secular (54). Cooper troubles postsecularism from the Marxist position signaling that the religious turn is a reactionary move by capitalism to reinvent its attachment to tradition. Mufti concentrates on scholarship that sees secularism's relationship to the Muslim Other, and thus problematizes who gains from the work done in the name of postsecularism. With the same distrust, Robbins raises issues with those postsecularists, like Mahmood and Asad, who critique secularism for unconsciously enforcing a Christian prejudice against non-Christian cultures, which he troubles further as a critique that plays the dangerous game of exploiting religion for its modern cause, as for example, when Ghandi claimed that the earthquake in North India in 1934 was God's judgment "for tolerating touchability" (75) in order to consolidate his campaign to erase the tradition. The cases made by scholars for not being postsecularists does not mean their work is not postsecular, especially if the postsecular is, like the postmodern, reflective of a larger debate whose 'horizon' as Gourgouris thoughtfully put it, is not yet defined.

meet as equals in the process of reaching an agreement with one another" (Habermas, "Crisis of Faith", 23.)[29] While these scholars reflect what from a distance seems to be an open dialogue of secularism today, where both religious and atheist scholars can agree on fundamental principles of universal equality, another scene is played out in the *Public Forum* 20:3 (2008) debate between Saba Mahmood and Stathis Gourgouris. They are both intellectuals; they seem to have read the same books, for the most part; their equality, in western terms, is a given, but the impasse which their exchange arrives at exemplifies that, if Habermas and Blanton believe in secularism to be the source of equality between believers and non-believers, there is no agreement between Gourgouris and Mahmood on what belief means.

The conflict described by their exchange can be summed up by their positions: Gourgouris sees that belief blinds a subject to universal values, while Mahmood sees belief as a cultural infrastructure determining subjectivity, much like Althusser's ideology. Gourgouris responds to Mahmood's aim to question some of universalism's suppositions by labeling her an anti-secularist: "I agree that a critique of secularism begins with de-Christianizing or perhaps even de-Westernizing its content, but to assume an anti-secular position in the process of this critique would ultimately uphold this content as the demon opposite" (439). In Gourgouris terms, the post-colonial scholar who confronts secularism from a religious perspective is anti-secularist (440) because, while she brings to bear religious and private values to a secular public forum which breaks with the convention that the two domains are unequal and incomparable, she dominates secular discussion with religious discourse: "This is why I argue, bluntly, that the ultimate point is not merely to disrupt the antinomic complicity between the religious and the secular but to take away from the religious

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[29] Clearly, Brown would disagree with Habermas and Blanton for ignoring how liberal authority manages and subjects minorities; and as will become clear, she seems to be in agreement, to an extent, with Mahmood.

agency of determining what is secular" (444). While Gourgouris' project to dismantle the hold religion exerts over secularism sounds proactive, his stranglehold on the 'anti-secular', reflects more an unconscious antagonistic grip of Blanton's "twin faces of the same European discourse".

Mahmood highlights that, for Gourgouris, secularism is the proper and neutralizing discourse for public debate, which forecloses debate along the for-and-against dichotomy: "his rhetorical defense of secularism devolves upon a kind of liberal romantic imaginary through which we are routinely asked to recognize our more profound commitment (to autonomy, creativity, imagination, and freedom)" (451). She concludes by making the point that only this affective relation to secularism, this partisan position, could make him see a correlation where none exists between 'normative impetus to secularism' and 'proreligion' and 'antisecular' (451). In response, he accuses her of bad method, unselfconscious of his own methodological weakness: "you cannot conduct an anti-secularist argument simply by attacking liberalism without falling into the habit of argumentation that advances the anti-liberal agendas of the U. S. Christian republicans" (455). The fact that he finds fault with her anti-secularist method, entirely misses the point that she is not arguing like an anti-secularist, and any association there is between her and anti-secularism is one he has imposed or constructed.

Gourgouris' 'us or them' binary limits him to 'us'; it is lobbeyed to an already converted audience of secularists, very much like that addressed by Mufti in his call to scholars to support secularism against the religious violence of 9/11. Moreover, like Spivak and Habermas, Gourgouris supposes that secularism is the neutral ground for a dialogue with the religious, which means that when his 'neutral ground' is questioned, he assumes antagonism. Though Spivak failed miserably to meet the 'alleged hi-jackers' in performing her deconstruction of the religious/secular bind, she did so self-critically, conscious

of those assumptions she was aware of, which was all Mahmood wanted to highlight about Gourgouris' misidentification of her research as 'anti-secular'. Mahmood's troubling of secularism as the common denominator for dialogue reflects what Gourgouris fails to recognize as a devout atheist secularist: that secularism is a choice that frees the subject from religion, and all people want that freedom. Secularism is a universal project of emancipation, after all.

Mahmood argues in her article, "Religious Reason and Secular Affect" (*Critical Inquiry*, Summer 2009): "What I want to problematize here is the presumption that religion is ultimately a matter of choice; such a judgment is predicated on a prior notion, one I mentioned earlier, that religion is ultimately about belief in a set of propositions to which one gives one's assent…. One can change one's religion, but not one's skin colour" (852). The fact that a Muslim's religious difference would be reduced to a mere set of protocols and precepts reflects secularism's inability to see Islam as culture; it is *only* a religion. In short, for an atheist and a western believer, the freedom to believe in one faith or another, or to believe in no religion at all, is a social right made possible because of secularism. What this right does not account for is that the cultural logic of religious thought is so ingrained in the subject as culture that, as Althusser has famously noted, there is no outside to it (ideology). Gourgouris's blind promotion of secularism reflects his inability to see secularism as ideology, which leads to his misidentification with secularism/atheism as a belief he has freely chosen. Even as he professes to recognize its Christian infrastructure as extant, he believes this infrastructure is something that secularism can be emancipated from. This very delusion is exactly the thrust of Talal Asad's critique: "In the discourse of modernity 'the secular' presents itself as the ground from which theological discourse was generated (as a form of false consciousness) and from which it gradually emancipated itself in its march to freedom" (*Secularism*, 192).

The movement in secular critique represented by scholars such as Mahmood and Asad, highlights a line of critique that has centered on uncovering secularism's hidden secrets. Carl Schmitt, the first critic of secularism, noted that the contemporary democratically elected sovereign maintained authority not through the power vested in her or him by the people, but the power which had authorized the monarch's stewardship: the divine power. A second wave of secular critics advanced on two ends; the historical political avenue lead by Karl Löwith, highlighted that the secular idea of progress is driven by a Christian eschatological vision of the future; and a postcolonial approach headed by Said, identified Western imperialists move to identify the Oriental as the conquered other. Anidjar can be said to reflect the confluence of the critique of secularism as fundamentally Christian, and the Imperialist relation to the conquered other. The western rewriting of the eastern other as Orientalism was possible because secularism made religion as the other that must be secularized: "Christianity (that is, to clarify this one last time, Western Christendom) judged and named itself, reincarnated itself, as 'secular'".[30] In short, Anidjar argues, "Orientalism is secularism, and secularism is Christianity" (62), and every other non-Christian religion is an incomplete or malformed 'byproduct' of secularism.

Asad and Anidjar argue that secularism is blind to its Christo-centric infrastructure. In that light, we can suppose that at the heart of Mahmood and Gourgouris dialogical impasse is secularism's ideological core that Spivak glosses over in the 9/11 threat: its Christianism. Spivak's project for a freedom from religion in 9/11 is also explained, somewhat, by what Anidjar observes in Said's refusal to address religion in his Orientalism; there is the expectation that a critical secularism would eventually bring an end to religion. The feminist politics in Spivak's "Can the Sublatern Speak?" expresses this expectation; the

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[30] Gil Anidjar, "Secularism", *Critical Inquiry* 33 (2006): 60.

law passed by British rule against the rite of *Sati* was less dangerous than the pagan practice of violence against women and eventually, the secular promise for freedom and equality would overcome even its own infrastructure. Spivak's distrust of religion, translated through Mahmood's assertion that Imperial secularism imposes a Christo-centric discourse on the right of the individual to choose not to be subjected to *Sati* (the pagan practice), can be seen to be promoting secularism's Christo-centric discourse. The same dynamic is described by Brown's assessment of how the prohibition of the hijab in Paris, which promises to liberate the female Muslim citizen, simply enforces a non-Muslim uniformity on her private rights.

It could be argued that, for the reason secularism originated from Christianity, and because secularism identifies religion as a threat, critics are prone to seeing a religious exclusiveness indicative of secularism's Christian infrastructure; that is, Anidjar's claim that "Christianity is secularism" seems to be supported by examples of the continuity between Christian ideology and secularism against non-Christian subjects. What then can be made of examples of discontinuity? In other words, if Anidjar's thesis stands, how does secularism justify promoting political movements counter to Christian principles, such as gay rights, women's right to abortion, the right to practice witchcraft, or the right to reject the idea of God? These many real political movements in secularism trouble Anidjar's definition of secularism. Blumenberg's thesis that the trauma of secularism originates in a second-century Gnostic teacher may offer the burden of proof to support Anidjar's thesis.

GNOSTIC TRAUMAS

Blumenberg's *The Legitimacy of the Modern Age* was published in 1966, six years after the Eichmann Trial, which inspired Hannah Arendt to coin the phrase, 'the banality of evil'. The fact this term can return in the mouth of

President Bush after 9/11, to identify the nations comprising the 'axis of evil' (coined by the Canadian political writer, David Frum) is not a coincidence. The return of 'evil' in secular practices not only highlights the linguistic pattern around which this project is focused--the return of religious terms in secular projects—it also recurs in Blumenberg's thesis; he argues that a trauma being worked through in secular society originates with the Gnostic concern with good and evil. To what extent this reflects an unconscious response to the reference to evil in the last page of Löwith's *Meaning in History* is not something I can address in this project, but is something I would note here for future consideration.

Published twenty years before Blumenberg's *Legitimacy*, in the recent aftermath of WWII, Löwith's *Meaning and History* (1949) argued that history is determined by the future and secular history is "determined by an eschatological motivation" which is Christian: "It is also only with this teleological, or rather eschatological scheme of historical process that history becomes 'universal'" (18). Löwith proves this thesis by retreating, incrementally, through philosophical thinkers in history, like Marx, whose representation of the class struggle as finding resolution in a messianism (44) involved adapting Hegelian principles of the *Aufhebung* of the principle Christian concept of the crucifixion and resurrection; this Christian theme of the messiah's return repeats, Löwith argues, back through the enlightenment philosophers, the medieval philosophers, to Augustine. Löwith concludes his thesis with the ominous statement: "There are in history not only 'flowers of evil' but also evils which are the fruit of too much good will and of a mistaken Christianity that confounds the fundamental distinction between redemptive events and profane happenings, between *Heilsgeschehen* and *Weltgeschichte*" (203). It is hard to know which evils Löwith is reflecting on here; it does not seem to suggest the Nazis were driven by 'too much good will', though the irony of seeing the

Nazis this way at all is possible though complicated by the fact that irony is always a hard tone to detect, but the expression may simply reflect on the global willful denial of the extent of the Nazi crimes in the expectation of divine acts of salvation.

Blumenberg's project highlights that the legitimacy of the modern age is centered on recognizing that modernity owes everything to its Christian origins: "The chief thesis then, roughly put, would be that the modern age is unthinkable without Christianity" (30). Since legitimacy is based on this origin, the modern age runs into trouble, both of legitimacy and fulfillment, when forgetting or repressing this religious foundation (116). In the process of outlining the trajectories of influence by the medievalists, Blumenberg aims to discredit the secularist critics, namely, Löwith, the Biblical scholar, Bultmann, and political theologist, Schmitt. While Blumenberg does not disagree with these secularists' fundamental precept of the religious content in secularism, he claims that Schmitt's thesis is less bound to the semantic trouble that riddles Löwith's and Bultmann's use of the terms, eschatology and secularism. Of Löwith's thesis, Blumenberg takes the historians' position in arguing that it lacks 'the burden of proof' (28.) This is Blumenberg's greatest criticism, which, for its generality, is essentially weak since the terms of proof are determined by the scholar's discipline, chosen method, and period of study.[31] Blumenberg's other criticisms, which never really refute the secularists' essential point that secularism is founded on Christian paradigms, are in the end a means for

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[31] Stephen McKnight offers a portion of the burden of proof to support Löwith's thesis. He explores the history of the transfer of ancient wisdom including early magic and Gnostic teachings, as well as other mystical practices, into western culture, noting how these co-existed with the more standard disciplines of philosophy and literature. He references the renaissance figure, Pico, on the god-power of man (190) and other magic literature, to explain "how the eschatological language of religion becomes immanentized into doctrines of progress" ("The Legitimacy of the Modern Age: The Löwith -Blumenberg Debate in Light of Recent Scholarship" 193*).*

leading in to his thesis that contemporary society is working through a trauma established by Marcion's Gnosticism.

Blumenberg proves the failure of the eschatological thesis proposed by Löwith in semantic terms; if eschatology claims that the future redemption reflects an event that interrupts human history, then what use is mankind's actions or plans, towards the envisioned progress? Everything about eschatology flies in the face of enlightenment principles of rational thought leading to 'infinite progress'; in short, eschatology references a transcendent event while modernism contends change is 'immanent in history" (30), and the result of human action. Blumenberg emphatically resists the eschatological vision of history represented by Scholem: "No, it is not to be believed that 'secularized as the belief in progress, Messianism still displayed unbroken and unique vigor' " (34). Moreover, he contends, there is no anxiety or acceleration of time into the future worth noting (50). Thus, Blumenberg concludes, Löwith's concept of secularism not only implies the absence of human agency, which leaves society at the mercy of a false determinism, it reinstates a divine principle which is counter to modernism's homocentricity.

His non-eschatological vision of progress denies the facts of horrifying events of the twentieth century, including that referenced in Löwith's concluding statement of the "flowers of evil". Vincent Pecora notes the trouble Blumemberg's neo-Kantian model of the future puts him in; it reflects a vision that was ridiculed by Benjamin in his "Theses of the Philosophy of History" (Pecora 62) and it is a model that seems to deny the reality that Löwith's thesis accounts for (64).[32] That is, while the expected return of the messiah has yet to materialize, historical events remain bound to this expectation. Take, for example, nineteenth-century French society that was riddled with self-

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[32] In *Secularization and Cultural Criticism*, Pecora does a short treatment of the argument between Löwith and Blumenberg, focusing primarily on the ideas of the latter scholar (57-66).

proclaimed messiahs, charismatic figures such as Saint Simon and Fournier,[33] amongst others, all of whom inspired Marx's vision of a future emancipation in his *Communist Manifesto*. Every year, every decade, and at every millennial turn, there is talk of apocalypse and global disaster but Blumenberg is not interested in this history; he promotes the idea of 'infinite progress' because the unfulfilled nature of this progress regulates the way society deals with crises, so that no one is used as a means to an end (*Legitimacy* 35) and man is the maker of his own destiny. Having said that, Blumenberg acknowledges the significance of eschatology in human consciousness as signaling a trauma.

Blumenberg argues that the secularists' focus on the eschatology of secularism as a relation to the future, must be inverted; instead of seeing history as determining, or creating the terms for, an eschatological future, history must be seen as motivated by the historical introduction of eschatology. In that way, the significance of 'secular' is not an eschatological hope, but a historical moment. The 'unworldly' of the *saeculum* expressed the conditions in which Christianity came to flourish: through St. Paul and St. John, the concept of the eschatological 'unworldly' future of the end of time loomed as imminent, arriving 'like a thief in the night" (Thessalonians): "There was no worldliness before there was the opposite 'unworldliness'" (47). Over the years, the imminent event of Christ's return was delayed, and eventually was postponed into a distant future by a caring loving God: "Early Christianity found itself in what was, in view of its foundational documents, the difficult position of having to demonstrate the trustworthiness of its God to an unbelieving surrounding world not by the fulfillment of His promises, but by the postponement of this fulfillment.... In order to demonstrate its usefulness to the surrounding world, which, while it is a source of affliction, is also itself afflicted, the ancient Church 'secularizes' itself into (takes on the worldly role of) a stabilizing force" (44).

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[33] Talmon. *Political Messianism: The Romantic Phase*. 1960.

Eschatology, therefore, changes from the imminent destruction of the world in salvation, to the work by God to stop the coming apocalypse. In effect, we do not see the secularism of eschatology, but secularism made visible *by* eschatology, Blumenberg argues. Anidjar's contention that "Christianity reincarnated itself… as secular" (Anidjar 45) is affirmed by Bluemberg's historical semantic review. What is also evident is that Blumenberg's attempt to erase Löwith's eschatology from secularism only affirms Löwith's contention that secularism is overridden by Christian eschatology. As Pecora notes, evident in Blumenberg and Habermas both, there is no vision of how secularism may either exist with other cultural (read religious) input, or with no religious input at all (66).

At the crux of Blumenberg's paradigmatic shift of the eschatological question as historical, the incommensurability of Christianity's double vision of the world is made visible; the world that was made for man, by the original God, did not seem related to the one that would be destroyed by God with Jesus' salvation. "Only the great Marcion could resolve this dilemma—dualistically, and thus mythically. The dualism between the sphere of salvation and the created world was so unavoidable that it had to appear even in the orthodox systems, though mitigated by the allegorization of the counter power as a political entry, as in Augustine's twofold *civitas* [city of man, city of God] just as there are genuine and false secularizations" (47). It is this dualism and what he suggests are its recurrences that point to weaknesses in secularism which are only visible through other 'lines of inquiry" (113). Blumenberg wants to highlight that the recurring eschatological pattern represented by Bultmann's secularism actually expresses an 'undelt-with-past': "The terms 'Forgetfulness of Being" [*Seinsvergessenheit*] and 'repression' [*Verdrängung*] deriving from very different sources in the thought of our century, represent a common underlying circumstance, namely, that what is past and forgotten can have its own sort of

harmful presence. The idea of secularization belongs in this context too, within which its function becomes intelligible" (116). In short, secularization reflects the operation within modernism that is a working through of a trauma.

Trauma, Blumenberg argues, is evident in the modern age as the continued trouble modernity has in addressing the 'origin of what is bad in the world' (127), a trouble which Marcion's Gnostic teachings tried to resolve eighteen hundred years ago: "The fundamental thought that underlies Marcion's Gnostic dogmatics is, I think, this: A theology that declares its God to be the omnipotent creator of the world and bases its trust in this God on the omnipotence thus exhibited cannot at the same time make the destruction of this world and the salvation of men from the world into the central activity of this God…. Marcion decided to make a radical incision. He found in Gnostic dualism the schema for the unequivocal character that he thought he could give to the Christian doctrine" (129). I highlight Blumenberg's use of 'incision' here; it signifies the 'psychic wound' of Freud's trauma in a particularly interesting way, and it is an idea repeated by Agamben and Santner, as the Apelles' cut, or by Žižek as the cutting of the Gordian knot.

Blumenberg argues that the repressed 'trauma' stems from the fact that Christianity found intolerable the idea that an evil god lived imprisoned in the world and that the good God refused to deliver mankind from this demon's prison (131); Marcion (85-160 CE) aimed to resolve the problem with his Gnostic dualism. Several centuries later, Augustine (354-430 CE) would make the effort to bury the dualism posed by Marcion's Gnosticism with the idea that man is responsible for his own sin: "In the very text that had convinced Marcion of the wickedness of the Old Testament lawgivers, in Paul's epistle of the Romans, Augustine found the theological means by which to formulate the dogma of man's universal guilt and to conceive of man's justification [in the theological sense of the term] as an absolution that is granted by way of an act

of grace and that does not remove from the world the consequences of that guilt" (135). Augustine's project, according to Blumenberg, covered over Marcion's incision so that, though the dualism was erased in a metaphysical sense, "it lived in the bosom of mankind and its history as the absolute separation of the elect from the rejected" (135). That is, what has been repressed by Augustine's sealing out of Marcion's Gnosticism returns as 'the absolute separation of the elect from the saved". To understand Blumenberg's thesis that the trauma of the modern age originates with Marcion, we need to translate what is meant by a separation of the 'elect and saved'. While Blumenberg never explicitly identifies what is signaled as the return of the cut, various associations that I will now trace, point to that return being anti-Semitism.

It is notable that Blumenberg's thesis of a rupture originating in the Christian faith is repeated independently by Žižek, but in much more abstract terms: "what is effectively 'repressed' with the established Christian doxa is not so much its Jewish roots, its indebtedness to Judaism, but, rather, the break itself, the true location of Christianity's rupture with Judaism" (*Puppet* 10). Later in *Puppet*, Žižek will discuss the effect of the rupture rising as anti-Semitism. Where Žižek places the responsibility of that rupture is hard to know, though his attention to Jesus as the catalyst for change leads to my question: Why does Blumenberg identify the cut as originating before Augustine but not as far back as Jesus? Or, if Gnosticism is that significant, why Marcion and not some other Christian Gnostic like Augustine's teacher, Mani (216-276 CE)? Or Marcion's contemporary, the Egyptian Valentinus (100-160 CE)? Gnosticism is an unstable concept that proliferated in Christianity, and predated Christianity, as exemplified by some of the sectarian texts of the Dead Sea Scrolls, the Persian

and Babylonian myths, and the ancient Zoroastrian double deity religion.[34] This variety may account for the reason Blumenberg qualifies his proposed traumatic source: "This outline, which I have given here only in order to show what is really 'Gnostic', need not concern itself with the broad range of speculative variants" (129). Blumenberg's choice of Marcion is specific to Christianity but for that reason remains ambiguous and in certain respects, incomprehensible; for one, Marcion was a heretic who was probably executed for that crime, and our only knowledge of his heretical teachings come to us from Tertullian's works against him. That is, we do not know exactly what Marcion taught. Moreover, even Blumenberg's historical source, Harnack, admits Marcion was technically not a Gnostic, as his focus was more soteriological (*History of Dogma* 223). That is, while there were for Marcion two Gods, the one that retained propriety of the Jewish people, and the better one that looked after the Christians, Marcion's theology was based on Paul's teachings: "He believed that his own teaching was neither more nor less than a retrieval of the true Pauline gospel" (Wilson, *Related Strangers*, 212.)

Scholars have not managed to agree if Macion's particular brand of theology is more Gnostic than Pauline; that is, in the effort to resolve existing contradictions within Paul's letters, Marcion took up the Gnostic lens and saw that the universe was divided by two gods, one good and one bad. Even so, by seeing Paul's claim that the 'the law engenders sin' (*Rom* 5:20; 7-7), which signaled the division of the old God who founded sin, and the new God of Christ who would release people from sin, Marcion seems entirely Pauline, according to Räisänen (Räisänen, *Blackwell Companion to Paul*, 308). Wilson notes that Harnack contended Marcion's views came from "an intense religious experience and exaggerated Paulinism" (Wilson 213). The most significant

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[34] A brief overview of the scholarship on Gnostic thought, and arguments for Zoroastrianism, is found in the Introduction to Elaine Pagel's *The Gnostic Gospels* (xxx).

aspect of Marcion is his legacy; he was not anti-Semitic (221), but his argument that the Jewish God was inferior to the Christian was taken up by later Christian philosophers to condemn not the God but the Jews as "inferior" (220). Today, Marcion's teachings represent the incipient origin of anti-Semitism which probably explains Blumenberg's choice to locate the root of "elect and saved" in Gnostic thinking.

Blumenberg's use of Freud's work on trauma to create an approach to uncovering the trauma of secularism affirms the anti-Semitic theme of Gnostic trouble. Blumenberg does not reference texts that focus on Freud's foundational research on trauma, such as *Beyond the Pleasure Principle* (1926), nor does he mention critical concepts like *Nachträglichkeit* (delayed response), or the *fort da* game. Rather, using terms like 'repression' and 'return', Blumenberg focuses on Freud's theory of trauma as the recurring pattern of the 'repressed', evident in the paternal murder in the primal horde, *Totem and Taboo* (1913), and central to his project defining once and for all the reason for anti-Semitic hate through the narrative of 'Moses' murder, and then Jesus' murder in *Moses and Monotheism* (1938). The anti-Semitic theme explains why Blumenberg also briefly evokes *Civilizations and its Discontents* in his statement, "Discontent is given retrospective self-evidence," (118) a project that foregrounded the anti-Semitic focus in *Moses*. Integral to his theme of racial hatred in Freud's work, Blumenberg highlights, is the place of guilt in the repressed past: "Freud traced the Christian idea of original sin, as an expression of a historically undealt with and growing consciousness of guilt and as a precursor of the return of the repressed content" (118). As I will show, Blumenberg's focus on Marcion's Gnosticism as the origin of anti-Semitism takes its cues from Freud's own interest in guilt as derivative of the repressive function of religious doctrine.

Guilt is a key concept in Freud's analysis of the Exodus story in *Moses*. The Exodus was for Freud the pivotal event of the Jewish faith. In Freud's re-

reading of this event, the crisis of the Jewish people came to a head when the Egyptian prince named Moses, took them into the desert to follow his monotheistic religion. In the desert, they rebelled and killed him, after which they continued roaming in the desert until they met a second Moses who they took to replace their first murdered leader. For Freud, the trauma of the Jewish people is revealed in the arrival of the second Moses, indicating the delayed return of the murdered Moses. The guilt of murder returns metaphorically buried in the narrative of the Exodus and later, it returns in the murder of Jesus.

The history Freud wanted to tell of the Jewish people was a secular atheist's revision of the delusion that was put in place to compensate for having murdered Moses; Judaism's distinction of election was based on being chosen by a heretical Egyptian pharaoh, a putative fact which was buried in Moses' murder and which returned in disguise as God's election. In identifying a hypothetical first cause, adapting the principles of new science of archaeology to the new science of the mind, Freud actually offered a very persuasive explanation for the ongoing persecution of the Jewish people since the death of Jesus Christ, which explained in a perverse way, the reason for Jesus' crucifixion, in non-*deus* terms. If the jealousy caused by the Jewish distinction of being chosen (116), is clearly defined in Freud's revision of Judaism as a delusion of the Israelites being chosen by the man, Moses, and not God, then anti-Semitism is, for Freud, a tragic delusion by Christians about the significance of Jesus Christ's sacrifice, as Freud paraphrases from St. Paul's teachings: "We have been delivered from all guilt since one of us laid down his life to expiate our guilt" (174). The glad tidings (gospel) were meant for the Judeans, Freud argued; the guilt that had been the foundation of the faith was paid for by Jesus' self-sacrifice. The trouble, Freud claimed, was that only those Judeans who accepted Jesus' debt by becoming Christian were absolved, and the rest remained guilty: "In its full form, the reproach would run: 'They will not admit

that they killed God, whereas we do and are cleansed from the guilt of it.'…
Through this they have, so to speak, shouldered a tragic guilt. They have been
made to suffer severely for it" (176).

Considering Freud makes such a sound case for the fact that guilt is the
product of a series of related delusions carried out by the Jewish faith and the
Christian faith, wondering whether or not Freud actually felt the guilt he
describes seems somewhat disrespectful. How could Freud be seduced by such
blatantly bad logic as the religious causes of debt? Yet, in light of Lacan's
refocusing of guilt from the institution to the subject's relation to his own desire,
where guilt is caused not by the subject's failure to meet the expectations of the
religious system, but by giving ground to his desire, understanding Freud's
relation to this guilt he describes I think is valuable. Al the issues surrounding
Freud and what I would define as an over-determinate of guilt will be delt with
in the next chapter on methodology.

Freud's psychoanalytic material serves Blumenberg's choice of Marcion
as the one who cut and then through delayed effect, initiated effects Freud
identified as anti-Semitism; it would seem, then, that Blumenberg is attempting
to lift the responsibility of anti-Semitism from Jewish shoulders onto Christian
shoulders; it was not the Jewish putative murder of Moses that started it all, but
the failure of the early Church fathers to recognize Marcion's heresy for a
wound that required theological attention. In that respect, Blumenberg's thesis
of a trauma in secularism substantiates secularism as a Christian system, though
the issue I raised about discontinuity has yet to be addressed, and will not be
addressed until I have completed the Pauline chapters. The relation between
trauma and guilt, adopted by Blumenberg in whole from Freud, is somewhat
problematic in light of Lacan's approach to guilt and will be addressed in
Chapter 2. In the immediate terms, I would like to focus on seeing Marcion's
metaphysical cut in relation to the return of the religious terms, messiah and

Muselmann in secular projects. The secular context explains why I would agree with Blumenberg's focus on secularism as originating in Christian culture, but I would trouble his focus on Marcion, especially in light of Žižek's interest in Jesus being the origin of a break, an idea which recurs in secular interest in the 'death of God". From the point-of-view of the crucifixion/resurrection narrative of Jesus, it would seem that Marcion's position in the continuum moves from first cause into the position of a *Nachträglichkeit*.

GOD IS DEAD

In *Seminar XI*, Lacan contends that trauma is an "encounter with the real" (55). What is problematic about the real is its very indeterminacy, provoking anxiety in the subject who responds by representing it in the symbolic order as fantasy. Any representation, any discourse, is fundamentally of the real but is not the real: "The Real, or what is perceived as such,--is what resists symbolization absolutely" (*Seminar 1* 66).[35] Žižek interprets Lacan's enigmatic idea thus: "The impossibility of the Real refers to the failure of its symbolization: the Real is the virtual hard core around which symbolizations fluctuate; these symbolizations are always and by definition provisory and unstable, the only 'certainty' is that of the void of the Real which they (presup)pose" (*Living in the End Times* 107).[36]

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[35] With respect to the psychotic, Lacan associates the real with the compulsive return of hallucination: "whatever is refused in the symbolic order, in the sense of *Verwerfung*, reappears in the real" (*Seminar III* 13).

[36] What Žižek identifies as a distinction between the real and the symbolic is problematized by Tom Eyers who, identifying a correspondence between Lacan's real and Freud's navel of the dream, that point in the dream narrative where signification is so tangled it is incomprehensible, identifies the real as the origin of the symbolic. As Eyers understands Lacan, there is reason to see that the symbolic takes its material nature from the real: "The binding that Lacan refers to here is the beginnings of a binding of 'writing'—proto-signification—to relational language, and the source of this 'writing' is to be found in the Real, as a foundation or ground to later "effects of meaning". It is the signifier in its material aspect (its being 'in-isolation') that provides this written, material ground to meaning. It is worth underlining here Lacan's unequivocal association of such signifiers with the Real, an association that gives the lie to Nobus' and others wish to definitively separate the instance of the Symbolic from that of the Real. ("The 'Signifier-

While the real is, as Žižek emphasizes, the disaster aroused by the 'void' of non-symbolic energy, it is also a force actualized in the system of moral law, Lacan argues (20). That is, there is order to this indeterminate force, an order adapted from Freud's concept of the missed 'cause' of the compulsive return of the trauma; trauma always returns, and when it does, does so 'as if by chance' (*Seminar* XI 54). The accident of Badiou's event, Alenka Zupancic argues, is the ethical demand found in Lacan's real: "These terms [real and event] concern something which appears only in the guise of the encounter, as something that 'happens to us', surprises us, throws us 'out of joint', because it always inscribes itself in a given continuity as a rupture, a break or an interruption" (*Ethics of the Real*, 235). For Lacan, the 'real' remains a place-holder for the necessary or ethical interference in the symbolically structured order of reality.

Badiou's attention to the ethical nature of the event is the premise for his diagnosis that the twentieth century is crippled by a 'passion for the real'. In his long essay, *The Century*, Badiou claims that this 'passion' reflects a suspicion with representations and discourses as pure simulacrum (52); that is, the subject ruled by 'passion' indiscriminately launches attacks on all symbolic systems as if to release or expose the real, to account for it or make it accountable. The modern subject has come to recognize that, as Althusser has articulated, ideology or discourse responding to the traumatic real may only ever 'denote or conceal' the real (49) even as the subject misrecognizes it as reality: "As Althusser observed, we are in the presence of a symptomal set-up; representation is a symptom (to be read or deciphered) of a real that it subjectively localizes in the guise of misrecognition" (49). As the events of the century have proven, from revolutions to wars to experimental projects in the

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arts, science and war technologies, these 'passions' have led to traumas we are grappling with still.

Badiou argues that this 'passion' or suspicion of representation targets nineteenth-century promises: "the nineteenth century announced, dreamed, and promised; the twentieth century declared it would make man, here, now" (32). The compulsion behind modernism's 'now'--"the passion for the real is always the passion for the new" (56)—in confronting nineteenth-century promises takes two courses of action, purifying and destructive, or negating and subtractive (54), leading to radical and unplanned for outcomes. This compulsion for action, unburdened by a moral order, led to such devastating 'events' as the Holocaust, Stalinism, Hiroshima and Nagasaki: "This is why our century, aroused by the passion for the real, has in all sorts of ways—and not just in politics—been the century of destruction" (54).

Another key 'passion for the real' of the century is found, Badiou claims, in the promises of humanism in philosophy such as Nietzsche's 'overman' which encouraged the disappearance of God so that 'man' could take over 'his' own destiny. In the twentieth-century passion, we are confronted with 'man's' disappearance; alongside the two-hundred-year-old God is dead narrative, "the man of humanism has not survived" (166). The disappeared 'man' of secular humanism has, according to Badiou, led philosophy to focus on the future through anthropological or inhuman terms: "at the border between the fifties and sixties, and under the single slogan of the death of God", there is Sartre's anthropological emancipation, and Foucault's thinking "which lets an inhuman beginning arrive" (173). What Badiou identifies as a "slogan", God is Dead, points to a passion for the real relevant to my focus on a trauma of secularism.

Lacan's declaration that God is dead only temporarily (*Seminar XX*) is rooted in the principle of resurrection. Against the insistence and persistence of this cycle of death and rebirth of the divine, Badiou takes on the task of

unbinding the subject from the demands of the statement God is Dead by literalizing the expression in his article, "God is Dead" (*Briefings and Existence*). If God is immortal and cannot die, Badiou points out ironically (22), religion convinces us that God dies because he is a 'living God', rendered through Jesus's dying, and resurrection (Badiou, 23).[37] But what is dead, has died, therefore, Badiou claims, "It has happened. Or, as Rimbaud said, it has passed. God is finished" (23). Only a dead God can be used by metaphysics against the living God of religion; that is, the abstract power of the infinite One rationalizes the dead God as illogical (25). Or, the literalization of God's death only emphasizes the pathological insistence of God's return: "It is also given in the exasperation of the public make-believe rituals and body markings, which have only ever been meager performances for the precariousness of the living God" (27). Badiou's plan to promote 'contemporary atheism' involves 'finishing up with promises' (29) so to speak, finishing these incessant and insistent cycles of the metaphysical and religious Gods' immortality which, no matter how precarious Badiou claims they are, resist destruction. By cutting what sutures the infinite to the One of metaphysical God, as in Nietzsche's rendering, the dead God stronghold evaporates, Badiou claims; by declaring the death of the living God of religion, once and for all, the religious God collapses, Badiou asserts; and by allowing the poetry-God to signal the fact that we have lost nothing, and nothing will return, we can arise to the responsibility of acting in the world, "in a mediation, in the clearing of God's death… 'here'" (32), and so traverse the fantasy of the dead God. Badiou performs how much easier it is to say God is dead than to make God lie there, dead.

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[37] Badiou highlights that the living God is of a tradition that goes back to Isaac and Jacob; I would like to qualify that the expression of their relation to the living God is defined by Pascal, and not in the Judean bible. Granted, the emphasis here for Badiou is not who said what, but the fact that the expression was only possible because someone said it.

At the most, Badiou can only obscure the power of the resurrection narrative, which is sustained by the dead God promoted by scholars such as American radical theologist, John Caputo. A postmodern scholar who participated in the movement of the Death of God in the sixties, Caputo exemplifies the anti-thesis of Badiou's strategy. Caputo asserts that incarnation, visible and remembered as God's suffering on the cross (67) was the supreme example of God's devotion to man. If Nietzsche humanized God as Jesus, the Death of God movement took advantage of the deifying of man in Jesus, by bringing God closer to mankind which, in turn, made possible the elevation of mankind to God. The movement followed Nietzsche's critique of idol worship and priesthood in dealing specifically with the incommensurability of religious teachings and contemporary issues of women's and gay liberation movements, while at the same time arguing against Nietzsche's sense of the dissolution of God. Caputo notes that even the postmodern practice of the movement represented by Mark Taylor as "deconstruction as 'a hermeneutic of the death of God" (67), never strays far from referencing the presence of the suffering, that is, living, God. Caputo's radical theology, enacted as a dynamic dialogue between transcendence and immanence, is God-centered and, I cannot help but point out, a fantasy sustained by the desire of resurrection, which withstands every effort of Badiou's fantasy of human finitude to take down.

What Caputo's article relies on, which Badiou's two works, *The Century*, and "God is Dead", do not, is the God-is-Dead narrative promoted in the Biblical record. Caputo's narrative is supported by centuries of religious practice, and two hundred years of philosophy; it is exactly the narrative Hegel references in his *Phenomenology of Spirit* as the "hard saying God is dead" (455) and is the one which Nietzsche's attack on metaphysics embodied in the historical Jesus. If Badiou's works referencing God is dead do not engage the biblical narrative directly, his *Saint Paul: The Foundation of Universalism* does,

and also serves to see how the Death of God narrative reflects the twentieth-century condition of a 'passion for the real'. In *St. Paul*, Badiou's ostensible project is to reconfigure Paul's message of universalism as valuable for our contemporary national and racial factions, intolerances, and divisions; confronting the promises in Nietzsche's representation of a real death, Badiou addresses the real of death as Paul's resurrection: "Resurrection is not, in Paul's own eyes, of the order of fact, falsifiable or demonstrable. It is pure event, opening of an epoch, transformation of the relations between the possible and the impossible… [it] testifies to the possible victory over death" (45). Badiou highlights the fabulous quality of that 'event': "the event that he takes to identify the real *is not* real (because the Resurrection is fable)…" (58). Paul's fidelity to the event is his retroactive work to signify the death of Jesus through the truth-Event of the resurrection. In Badiou's revision, the resurrection establishes equality in the universalist message through the truth procedure of love (92).

For Badiou, 'event' is a very specific concept of social/political change developed in his seminal opus, *Being and Event* (1988). Adapting Lacan's concept of trauma, Event is the fantasy, or the product of a radical new beginning, as a result of the subject's encounter with the real, which is the evental site. The event is distinguished from the crisis as the symbolic dimension of the real: it is the naming of the crisis. Caputo's 'event' is based on a collage of influences; for example, God is the event, "harboured in his name" (50),[38] while the 'event' is provocation as the "unforseeable 'to come'", in Derridean terms. It is also the promise evident in Žižek's "fragile absolute" (48)—which, I suppose Caputo to mean reflects those moments of love that 'unplug' the subject from the dominant discourse of war and difference (*Fragile Absolute* 119). If God is the event, then the death of God is the event of the

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[38] Chesterton, and through him, Žižek, argues that the mortification of God on the cross is in the cry, "Father, why have you forsaken me?" God has forsaken himself. Žižek's spin on this event is that it signals the moment atheism enters Christianity, admitting a non-existent God.

cross, of the father's sacrifice for the son (63), or, "the seperability in principle of the event from the name, like a spirit leaving a lifeless body behind" (70). What strongly distinguishes Badiou's event from Caputo's event is the subject's position to the 'real'; for Badiou, the real of the event is only visible in the fantasy of the resurrection that leads to the truth-procedure of love; for Caputo, the real of the event is the literal crucifixion which makes God's love visible. The asymmetry in their views of 'event' highlights a fundamental difference between the theologian and the atheist; yet for all their difference, they share a similar response to Nietzsche's narrative.

Since the one with the new message is always seen as a fanatic (*Anti-Christ*, 87),[39] then Nietzsche's madman in the *Gay Science* has a radically new message: "God is dead. God remains dead. And we have killed him. How shall we, murderers of all murderers, console ourselves? That which was the holiest and mightiest of all that the world has yet possessed has bled to death under our knives. Who will wipe this blood off us? With what water could we purify ourselves?" (95) Note that Nietzsche is complicit in the murder, problematizing the preconceived notions of who Jesus's murders are, and so also radically unmaking the object of murder. Who is God in Nietzsche's representation but the material man who has become an illusion or fable, of Hegel's Absolute, an abstraction inherited from the priests, especially St. Paul. Nietzsche's literal rendering of Hegel's dying God is intended to erase divine status from a historical man whose message has been perverted: "This 'messenger of glad tidings' dies as he lived and as he taught—not in order to 'save mankind', but in order to show how one ought to live" (50). Nietzsche aimed to secularize and so reclaim Jesus as a political activist for modern mankind, whose 'free spirit' distinguished him as an example, in a true way that was ruined by his deification by St. Paul.

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[39] St. Simon, the self-proclaimed messiah, is one of the fantatics (Nietzsche 87).

If Nietzsche sees Jesus as the master whose true message of a 'free spirit' is lost in the lies presented by the priests like St. Paul, Badiou re-signifies Jesus as merely the name by which St. Paul can announce the new law: "[Paul] 'shifted the centre of gravity of that [Christ's] entire existence beyond this existence" (61), as a promise of new life "for all". Paul's militant politics of inclusivity, Badiou argues, is entirely missed by Nietzsche (61) whose prejudice against St. Paul reflected the real object of his loathing, which was universalism (62). While Badiou may be indebted to Nietzsche's atheist secular project to unravel metaphysics, he explicitly erases the visceral quality of Nietzsche's murder: "Hence, the desperate and bloody affirmation of an artificial and mortified religion, whose subjectively burrowed real principle is, from end to end, that God is dead. The dramatization of this hidden evidence is given simultaneously in the ceaseless reproduction of his death, under the type of death of those presumably guilty of His death" (27). I want to highlight Badiou's interrelated but incommensurable dramas; there is the drama of the Easter event and the drama of the continued persecution of the Jewish people; one is imaginary, the other is actual. The narrative of the death of God, Badiou argues, reflects the power of ideology to sustain its 'life' through the continual cycle of resurrection that perpetually affirms the guilt of the Jews. Badiou attempts to undermine the cultural ritual by personifying religion as a victim of death so that Nietzsche's dead Jesus has burrowed into a dead inhuman. That strategy raises the question, what is killed? Badiou wants to kill religion, you might say, but can only do so by giving 'religion' life, which means that the Nietzschean representation of the death of the imaginary Jesus and the very real persecution of Jews goes underground. Of course, the aporia I have highlighted in Badiou's abstraction is offset somewhat by the fact that all of these 'deaths' he reviews are fundamentally symbolic; they are just fantasies of the real that was missed. Even so, sustaining the hegemonic narrative in this way obscures the motivating

factors of the narrative and so misses the opportunities for countering hegemonic influence.

Caputo is less coy about the constellation of 'guilt' in the narrative: "the death of God is a *grand recit* all its own that is complicitous with Hegel's story about the Jews. That is a supersessionist story of the transition from the alienated Old Law of the Pharisees to the benign New Law of love and the gift, from the dead letter of literalism to the living Spirit, from the legalism of slaves to the religion of the children and friends of God, from an eye-for-an-eye economy to the gift, etc.. The hint of Marcion is never far from this story, however much it is resisted and revised" (80). Caputo sweeps through the history of centuries of empire and Christo-centric supremacy to point out that supersucessionism,[40] integral to the use of the term, 'Judeo-Christian' and emanating from Marcion's Gnostic philosophy on the superiority of the Christian God, is a narrative which, through 'a certain close reading of Saint Paul on the Jews" (80),[41] is alive and kicking in the God is Dead slogan as anti-Semitism. Caputo's reference to Marcion seems to support Blumenberg's thesis that the trauma of modernism originates in Marcion's cut, except that the historical event that serves the Death of God, for both Caputo and Badiou, precedes Marcion.

Caputo's analysis makes visible what Badiou reflects only elusively: at the heart of the *grand récit* of the Death of God, there is an anti-Semitism originating in the Christian competition with the Judean faith, leading to the

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[40] Caputo argues supercessionism is ubiquitous: "supercessionism … even shows up in completely secular, atheistic neo-Marxists like Žižek and Badiou when they start singing the praises of love and grace in Saint Paul over the law, which is dead" (81). What I want to emphasize in Caputo's observation is that the Christian field engaged by Badiou in his strategy to sustain a secular vision of the God is Dead narrative in the face of ongoing political activity, is perpetually pulled back by the resurrection promise.

[41] The 'certain' quality of the reading means assuming anti-Judean sentiments were intended by St. Paul; the fact is, what St. Paul has to say is directed against the contingent of Jewish followers with whom he had been in conflict over the matter of his proselytizing the gentiles to Jesus' message.

Christian accusation that the Judeans killed Jesus. In comparison to Nietzsche's creative literal rendering of the death of God by his own murderous actions in company with others (did Neitzsche identify his anti-Christian position as equivalent to the anti-Semitic subject?), Caputo's and Badiou's literalizations stage a paradox of elision. Caputo's theology eliminates the humanness of the crucifixion, the historical Jesus, by embodying the death and resurrection in divine suffering and compassion. While this might bring God close to the human, it obscures the anti-Semitic refrain that is at the core of the 'slogan'. Badiou, for his part, in one text, entirely ignores the historical event of Jesus's crucifixion by focusing on Paul's role in shifting the centre from Jesus to the resurrection of Christ; and in another text, makes religion the living thing to be killed; as with Caputo, the anti-Semitic core, the complex network of accusation and guilt integral to Nietzsche's project, as something he wanted to expose as bad faith, is maintained in hiding by Badiou.

While Badiou identifies God as dying, dead, or even 'embalmed', and points to the fact the 'truth statement of which God is the application is only active insofar as to be barred, burrowed or unconscious' (27), both he and Caputo reject Nietzsche's God is Dead murder fantasy. Their adoption of "God is Dead", rather, is taken whole, as a 'slogan' of the event whose syntax eliminates both agent and victim: there is a proper name, God, whose predicate is another noun, 'death', which has no cause. Who or what is God? What caused God's death? Was God murdered or did God commit suicide, or did he die of a heart attack? The fact anyone in the West might smile knowingly at this last question, exemplifies the assumptions promoted by both the theologian and atheist in their unqualified use of the slogan. That is, "God is Dead" is a Christo-centric narrative operating in such a Christian field, and by field I mean the intersection of many discourses in secularism, that Nietzsche's murder can be euphemistically interpreted as supersuccessionism and presumably, any

undefined crimes. Anti-Semitism returns in the passion for the real of "God-is-Dead" currency; its unconscious repression is exactly what Freud attempted to uncover as trauma in *Moses and Monotheism*. It is a Christo-centric concept that underpins secularism.

CONCLUSION

Marcion's Gnosticism complements Freud's research which is why I would not argue against Blumenberg's choice of Marcion as standing for the principle that has led to centuries of Christian persecution against the Jewish people, executed in extremely traumatic terms in the twentieth century. On the other hand, while anti-Semitism may be the effect of the trauma, it need not be considered the only effect, an issue raised by the fact that anti-Semitism substantiates Asad's and Anidjar's theory of secularism's Christo-centrism, but does not address the apparently non-Christian aspects of secular politics, such as laws promoting women's rights, gay rights, animal rights, and intellectual freedom, to name a few. In light of Badiou's and Caputo's work on the Death of God narrative, I do, however, contest seeing Marcion's Gnosticism as the original cut of our contemporary trauma; rather, the death of God points to a cut that inspired the delayed return (*Nachträglichkeit*) of Marcion's metaphysical, metaphorical, cut. That is, if anti-Semitism can be understood as a symptom of a historical trauma, then what was the original cut? Caputo claims the cut was the death of Jesus, while Badiou asserts it was the resurrection of Christ. Now, since the crucifixion is a physical event, something tangible and of death itself, as opposed to the purely conceptual resurrection, and since the *Nachträglichkeit* of Marcion's cut indicated that the anti-Semitic narrative was rooted in the killing of Jesus, then the crucifixion would seem to be the originating trauma. What troubles that conclusion are two factors; the crucifixion would not exist as it does today within the Death of God narratives, without the resurrection; moreover,

according to Badiou, with whom I agree, the resurrection is a fantasy. In short, this search for the 'original' crisis in contemporary iterations of secularism has arrived at the impasse of a fantasy.

This dead end is not the end, though; in considering what has been reviewed, a course for further work is highlighted by what is common to all elements reviewed. Marcion saw himself as fulfilling what he thought was St. Paul's message through a dualism that resolved the place of the Judeans in the future of God's eschatological plan; Nietzsche rejected Paul as a liar obscuring the truth of Jesus' message of true spirit. The death of God *grand recit,* has no currency without the fact of Jesus' resurrection that recreated the terms of death; as Badiou notes in *St. Paul*, the earliest witness with the most reliable provenance of the resurrection, is St. Paul's testimony. Since St. Paul is the common factor throughout, I propose that the trauma of secularism, which I have traced through this chapter, is legible in his letters. What evidence of trauma can be found in those letters shall be the focus of the chapters ahead, but not before I establish the methods and their limits by which I shall read trauma.

CHAPTER 2: METHOD: THE LIMITS OF INTERPRETATION

INTRODUCTION

The impasse with which the last chapter ended reflects a failure that this project accepts in advance; the original trauma that is being worked through in secularism can never be found and it cannot be found because it is of the 'real,' that which is inexplicable. All that we can hold of the real is that which Lacan identifies as the 'unassimilable' element of the encounter with the real that marks the trauma within the fantasy (*Seminar XI.* 55), what Žižek redefines as Schelling's 'indivisible remainder' evident in the *objet a* (*Remainder* 56). It "is not a kind of external kernel which idealization/symbolization is unable to 'swallow', to internalize, but the 'irrationality', the unaccountable 'madness', of the very founding gesture of idealization/symbolization" (52).[42] What is at issue in my project is the diffuse abstract unknown territory of the real only as it has taken shape through the indivisible remainder in our symbolic order in the item of the *objet a*. That trace, in Derridean terms, and the dialogic nature of that indivisible remainder in culture across the centuries, is what determines my hermeneutic.

In preparation for analyzing St. Paul's letters, several methodological concerns need to be addressed. For one, our access to an ancient time is riddled by centuries of interference, in philological and material terms; for another, the language of an ancient text is void of modernisms, leaving the first-century text opaque in some notable respects. These are historical categories of trouble that

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[42] This quote, according to Žižek, defines the 'real', yet four pages later, he qualifies the 'remainder' of the 'real' as the *objet petit a*: "… the subordination of the real under the ideal pole (of darkness under light, of female under male…) never comes out without a remainder which, of course, is the Lacanian *objet petit a*" (56).

contribute to distancing us from understanding and reflect a problem of interpretation exacerbated by the already stated impasse: the fact that the original trauma that is being worked through in secularism can never be found. The task of this chapter is to define the limitations of the methods I will use, psychoanalytic, historical, and philosophical, in order to identify what of the mystery of trauma we can touch.

The chapter is divided into three parts. The first starts with a review of Lacanian psychoanalysis and its limitations as a science of the linguistic sign, leading into addressing why Freud's narrative of Moses is so over-determined by crime and guilt, and concludes with a consideration of Moses' 'call' through Althusser's interpellation. The second section focuses on Badiou's philosophical engagement with Paul's letters, and especially his attention to Paul's language. Badiou's claim that Paul was a poet is the detail that signals the third section focusing on the historical scholarship on Paul and the historical methods used to understand Paul's text, *Sitz im Leben*. I conclude the chapter with a thought experiment that circumscribes how psychoanalysis may be used to treat Paul's letters as a case study that introduces us to the terms central to the trauma we are working through today.

AT THE LIMIT OF ANALYSIS: CRIMES AND THE REAL

The work Žižek does, in company with Badiou and Joan Copjec (*Read My Desire*,) in analyzing culture and politics through Lacanian paradigms runs parallel to, and for the most part independent of, work by contemporary humanities and sociology scholars who tend to rely on Freud for a more memory based approach to cultural analysis. A revitalization of Freud's theory of trauma in addressing Post Traumatic Stress Disorder (PTSD) experienced by

Viet Nam veterans, and an increase in reported cases of sexual abuse,[43]
coincided with a rise in scholarship in Holocaust literature and testimony
responding to a flurry of publications of memoirs, theoretical works, testimony
projects, and films on the Holocaust from the 1960s to the 1980s. These
projects share in problematizing witnesses' testimonies by exploring the limits
of memory, truth and justice. The most emblematic of the fraught witness is
found in Agamben's *Remnants of Auschwitz* (1999); Agamben's
metaphorization of the *Muselmann* as figuring the ethical demand to bear
witness despite the impossibility of witnessing will be considered in detail in
Chapter 6. In cultural terms, Claude Lanzmann's nine-hour epic documentary
Shoah (1985) is exemplary in reflecting the new 'limited' witness; edited in long
sequences, the film performs in imaginary real-time, the effort and failure to
access the full truth of the crimes of the Holocaust through interviews and
location filming, drawing a perverse parallel between the abandoned
overgrown sites of the death camps, and the perpetrators resistance to
remembering the past.[44]

Holocaust Studies has attracted scholarship from across a variety of
disciplines, inspiring competing ideas on methods, and even a kind of
competition between disciplinary approaches to the trauma;[45] no matter their
methodological differences, however, the majority of scholars in trauma studies
share the same motivation that led Lanzmann to create his documentary:

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[43] Tali Kal, *Worlds of Hurt*, 1996.

[44] The issue of failed or incomplete memory coming out of the Yale University project
documenting survivor's testimonies by Langer and Laub (*Holocaust Testimony: The Ruins of
Memory*, 1991), or the dilemma of expressing the inexplicable as explored in Sara Horowitz'
Voicing the Void (1997). On Memory, see Caruth's *Trauma: Explorations in Memory* (1995).
Scholarship dealing with limitations of first person testimony and second generation witnessing
are collected in *Testimony: Crisis of Witnessing in Literature, Psychoanalysis, and History* (1991)
edited by Shoshanna Felman and Dori Laub.

[45] Where the psychoanalyst, Laub, distinguishes himself for listening in a way the historian does
not ("Bearing Witness" 1992, 224), the historian, LaCapra, suggests 'historiography' is one "way
to come to terms with the wounds and scars of the past" (*Writing history, Writing Trauma* 42).

seeking justice on behalf of the victims to identify and condemn the perpetrator. Dori Laub claims: "The perpetrators, in their attempt to rationalize the unprecedented scope of the destructiveness, brutally imposed upon their victims a delusional ideology whose grandiose coercive pressure totally excluded and eliminated the possibility of an inviolate, unencumbered, and thus sane, point of reference in the witness" ("Truth and Testimony" 66). Based on the understanding that the perpetrator has an unambiguous role in trauma studies as the cause of trauma, La Capra uses the figure to emphasize a serious concern with trauma as a method in historical research: "As a consequence one encounters the dubious ideas that everyone (including perpetrators or collaborators) is a victim, that all history is trauma, or that we all share a pathological public sphere or 'wound culture'" (64). As I will explain shortly, what is dubious is not the idea that everyone suffers trauma, but that trauma is the privilege of the victim of a crime, and explains why LaCapra footnotes this statement with a reference to Ruth Leys *Trauma: A Genealogy* (2000) amongst a few other texts, as a source for more discussion on the "uses and abuses" of the concept of trauma. The inclusion of Leys' text in LaCapra's reference is an indirect reference to her critique of Cathy Caruth's *Unclaimed Experience: Trauma, Narrative and History* (1996). As I explore Caruth's work in the following pages, I will make a case for the fact that the problem LaCapra identifies with the method of trauma, does not reflect a problem with the method at all, but rather, reflects a misunderstanding of what trauma is.

LaCapra's reference to and anxiety about 'wound culture' seems specific to Caruth's *Unclaimed Experience*, especially since her project aims to envision wound as voice in literature through a psychoanalytic hermeneutic of trauma: "… trauma seems to be much more than a pathology, or the simple illness of a wounded psyche: it is always the story of a wound that cries out, that addresses us in the attempt to tell us of a reality or truth that is not otherwise available"

(4). In company with the Humanities scholars' return to Freud's trauma in their research on Holocaust testimonies, Caruth's project engages in the ethical dimension of trauma research, politically motivated to address contemporary literary criticism's concerns with the 'poststructuralist criticism [which] … lead to political and ethical paralysis" (10). Much like the scholarship that problematizes prejudices against survivor witnessing, Caruth seems to be committed to positioning witness in the ethical role of testifying to the impossible trauma of the other. Leys targets Caruth's humanities project for misusing Freud's psychoanalysis to the extent that it can implicate a scholar for sympathizing with the Nazis.

Leys is a historian of psychoanalysis, and Freud's contribution in particular. In *Trauma,* she discusses the historical trajectory of medical research on trauma from Freud up to the present, highlighting a division in contemporary trauma research: there are those who argue it is a psychic condition and so oppose the research done by those who study it as a neurological phenomenon. Her prejudice against the science of the latter is epitomized by her critique of Bessel van der Kolk and his work on PTSD which Caruth's humanities project adapts, in part: this is Leys' only substantial critique of Caruth's work, and seems over-stated considering that Caruth is not alone in confusing the condition of trauma originating from Freud's already confused approach to these two aspects of trauma, a confusion which Lacan avoided by limiting his psychoanalytic science to the linguistically determined symbolic. Leys' prejudice against Caruth's project is signaled by the fact that she misses contributions Caruth makes to trauma studies in the humanities, and in the process, exposes her own disciplinary limitations.

As far as Leys' is concerned, Caruth's project shamefully misapplies and misinterprets Freud's theory of 'traumatic neurosis' in her chapter, "The Wound and the Voice", in which Caruth uses Freud's study of Tasso's *Gerusalemme*

Liberata in "Beyond The Pleasure Principle" to introduce the voice as trauma. Leys' critique of Caruth's analysis is so textually centered that I shall quote fully from Caruth's quote of Freud's story before reviewing points raised by Leys against Caruth:

> Its hero, Tancred, unwittingly kills his beloved Clorinda in a duel while she is disguised in the armour of an enemy knight. After her burial he makes his way into a strange magic forest, which strikes the Crusader's army with terror. He slashes with his sword at a tall tree; but blood streams from the cut and the voice of Clorinda, whose soul is imprisoned in the tree, is heard complaining that he has wounded his beloved again. (2)

Caruth proceeds to explore how the trauma of the event is missed by Tancred, and recognized only in its return as a haunting voice (4) which, Caruth claims, is the wound inviting an 'encounter with another' (8). Leys begins: "Freud does not cite the story of Tancred as an example of traumatic neurosis but as an example of the general tendency in even normal people to repeat unpleasurable experiences, and hence as an example of the repetition compulsion, or death drive" (293). While Leys is correct to highlight that Freud introduced the Tancred story as indicating 'compulsive repetition' with no relation to 'traumatic neurosis'--"We are much more strongly affected by cases where people appear to be passive victims of something which they are powerless to influence, and yet which they suffer again and again in an endless repetition of the same fate" ("Pleasure Principle" 60)—she overlooks Freud's assertion that the same "compulsive repetition" is evident in the WWI veterans' nightmares

(61) whose inexplicable repetition indicated the condition of "war neurosis", or trauma ("Pleasure Principle" 51).[46]

Freud's reflection on the 'compulsive repetition' of the child's 'fort-da' case in "Pleasure" (53) is rewritten by Lacan as the child's trauma of separation, or the first stage of oedipalization, and so one of several kinds of trauma experienced in a subject's life. When Lacan claims that trauma returns, 'as if by chance', he is reiterating that the primary symptom of trauma as "compulsive repetition" is never initially obvious (*Sem XI* 54). While I acknowledge Leys' scholarship on the history of Freud's research gives her a certain authority, her criticism of Caruth's work reveals a police-like attention to the 'letter of [Freud's] law' that does not account for the preliminary quality of Freud's research, and the fact that Lacan reformulated many of Freud's ideas, in the 'spirit of Freud': "Lacan takes Freud very seriously, but nevertheless contradicts him at times after careful consideration" (Fink, *The Subject*, 149). Caruth's reading of the Tancred story as trauma adapts Lacanian innovations to Freud's formative theories on trauma even as it signals her debt to Freud. Leys pays no heed, and so entirely misses Caruth's contribution to humanities study at a formative time in the discipline of literature[47]. In analyzing a variety of genres in her project, from fable, to film to a psychoanalytic text (*Moses*), Caruth draws attention to the indeterminacy of the idea of trauma writing as a genre, not to mention seeing trauma as ubiquitous, both in the individual's life and in social structures. Caruth's approach is in company with the Lacanian-centered scholarship by Badiou, Žižek, Zupancic, Copjec, etc., which does not

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[46] Sandor Ferenczi completed and published the research he and Freud did together on the WWI Veterans in *Psycho-analysis and the war neuroses*. With introduction by Sigmund Freud. London, England: The International Psycho-Analytical Press, 1921.
[47] This formative time refers to the Canon Wars in English departments in the 80s early 90s as referenced in the Introduction to this project.

differentiate between individuals represented in cultural artifacts and political phenomena for objects of analysis.

Leys' limited hermeneutic agility, hampering her agenda to discredit one non-medical doctor's use of medical research in her work, is indicated in her list of Caruth's fallacies: "It is not true that Tancred's killing of Clorinda is 'unavailable to consciousness', until it imposes itself again in the form of a murderous repetition. Neither Tasso nor Freud makes the claim that Tancred is unconscious or unaware of having killed his beloved the first time. He 'unwittingly' murders Clorinda (Freud uses the term 'unknowingly') in the sense that he does not intend to kill Clorinda, even if he does intend to kill the enemy she pretends to be" (Leys 294). Every time I read this sentence, the absurdity of it strikes me like Lacan's anamorphosis: the statement initially seems to be coherent except for some strange interference which, on closer look, implicates Leys', not Caruth, in imprecise diction. The distortion is visible in the verb tense 'having killed." No one, and especially not Caruth, would claim that Tancred did not know he had killed Clorinda once he had taken the mask from her dead/dying body. That was the point when he was 'conscious' of his crime. Before that point, the body he dueled with and killed was his enemy.

Leys entirely misses the nature of trauma; trauma has nothing necessarily to do with the physical wound, as Freud emphasized in his early research notes on trauma with the WWI veterans[48]; moreover, Freud notes that the prevalent condition of trauma was 'shock' or 'fright' (51) or in Lacan's terms, 'missed'. The trauma in Tasso's story was not the act of killing Clorinda; the trauma was

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[48] Regarding "traumatic neuroses", Freud claims: "The terrible war that has only just ended gave rise to a great many such disorders, and did at least put an end to the temptation to attribute them to organize impairment of the nervous system brought about by mechanical force" ("Beyond the Pleasure Principle" 51). By mechanical force, Freud means physical wounds from war; that is, trauma is a psychic, not physical, wound (50). The implication is that there is no reason to see psychic trauma being shared with a physical wound, yet there is also no reason to see that one cannot exist without the other.

the accident of it; the shock of a reality that did not register because it was not intended, expected, experienced as such; that is the trauma Freud was talking about. It is possible that the reason Freud resisted analyzing Tasso's story as reflecting a psychic condition was because it was a fiction, and not a case history; however, the precedent for analyzing a literary text as a case study of trauma, was set by Freud himself in *Moses*. Putting that aside for now, the fictional Tancred buries Clorinda, "overwhelmed with grief, self-reproach, and guilt…" clearly cognizant of his crime; the killing of her metaphorically a second time retroactively signifies the trauma as a shock that could not be undone; the shock of being a 'passive victim' in Freud's terms, of that which returns differently in the exact same way: in disguise[49]. I would propose that Clorinda's "disguise" as a tree points to what is 'inassimilable", the indivisible remainder, of Tancred's trauma; the trauma is not the question, "Why did Tancred kill her?" but "Why was she in disguise?" That question is unanswerable for Tancred because Clorinda cannot answer, being dead. Thus we see clearly what is meant by the symptom of repetition that signals trauma; even when it recurs, and no matter how many times it returns, the original trauma remains inaccessible.

Leys executes a kind of inverted 'anamorphosis' in her analysis of Caruth's text; she has added the term 'victim' where it does not exist. Leys asserts that Clorinda, the victim of a crime, 'is not capable of witnessing or representing anything of what she has experienced" (295). According to Leys, this is a dilemma which Caruth resolves with literary tricks: "Caruth's highly ingenious answer is to suggest that Clorinda's voice is not exactly her own voice but that of Tancred in the sense that hers is the voice of the traumatized Tancred's desecrated second-self" (295). The fact is, there is no trick in reading

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[49] In *Seminar XI*, Lacan references Kierkegaard's article, "Repetition," with respect to the return of trauma, noting that "repetition demands the new" (61).

literature as literature. The leap Leys has made to give the dead Clorinda a voice, however, is based on a significant misunderstanding of literature. By giving Clorinda subjectivity attributed to a living person, Leys mistakes fiction for reality and so entirely misses Caruth's hermeneutic of the wound as witnessing through the 'voice'. Keep in mind that, any fantasy presented to us is always limited by the source; the characters in a story are always in relation to the protagonist and the protagonist is the focus of the author's work. That is, the act of identifying against the hermeneutic of fantasy authority, to identify with Clorinda as Leys has done, is to impose a fantasy on the fantasy. Leys' interpretation speaks only of her own need to find justice, and does not follow the strict method Caruth is following. As Caruth emphasizes, the wounded speaking tree is not the dead Clorinda; it is the vocal return of Tancred's trauma. This story is not about Clorinda, it is about Tancred; therefore, if Leys wants to bring restitution to a 'literary' crime, she has identified in Tancred the wrong perpetrator of the crime.

This story was written by Tasso, and so, if any crime could be said to have happened, it could only be in relation to Tasso. Even then, reading the fantasy of Tasso's trauma as something real mistakes Tasso's fantasy as confessing to a crime. This of course does not exclude the possibility that Tasso's trauma did not in some way reflect a crime he committed, or one he witnessed, but getting at that is beyond my knowledge and I think Leys' also. The fact is, this historical fact is not relevant to contemporary analysis. Rather, what is important in psychoanalytic terms is that we have a story in which an unanswerable question persists as unknowable, represented simply in the disguised return of the accusation in the voice which is Tancred's 'psychic wound' made by the 'rupture' of reality in Tasso's fantasy (Lacan *Seminar XI* 56). What was the trauma that inspired Tasso's poignant, misogynistic tale? I do not know.

All the trouble Leys has in understanding trauma as a psychic wound and confusing fiction for the 'encounter with the real', is exemplified in her project to expose Caruth's crimes: "[Caruth] converts Tancred into the victim of a trauma as well" (294). Leys wants to emphasize that Caruth has exonerated the perpetrator by distinguishing him as the victim, a move that only signals greater crimes ahead: "But her discussion of Tasso's epic has even more chilling implications. For if, according to her analysis, the murderer Tancred can become the victim of the trauma and the voice of Clorinda's testimony to his wound, then Caruth's logic would turn other perpetrators into victims too—for example, it would turn the executioners of the Jews into victims and the 'cries' of the Jews into testimony to the trauma suffered by the Nazis" (297).[50] Equating Tancred with the Nazis reiterates Leys's failure to keep perspective on the difference between literature and reality. Leys believes she has found the crime in Caruth's research, but to prove it, she needs to invent the Tancred 'victim' as a Nazi, at the expense of missing the symbolic significance of the tragedy of Tancred's trauma and trivializing the actual crimes of the Nazis. All that happens is that she exposes her misunderstanding of trauma and its fantastic manifestations.

There is no fair correlation between Leys' obvious relish in levying her distasteful and misapplied accusation against Caruth's work and La Capra's respectful anxiety about 'wound culture', but their repeated prejudice against the perpetrator in Holocaust trauma narrative overlooks what is visible in Caruth's reflection on Freud's interpretation of Tancred; in trauma, there is no perpetrator. This does not mean the one who suffers trauma is also not a

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[50] The root of Leys' criticism of Caruth's work is hard to isolate; it may rest entirely with Caruth's notably strange elisions of Freud's reference to Nazi racial policies, but if that can mean anything, Leys leaves things vague and full of innuendo; Caruth's relation to Paul de Man may be added to this list of elusive political issues Leys' alludes to, except this reference to Tancred complicates matters.

perpetrator of a crime. Analogously, there is no question that the Holocaust involved countless crimes; this does not mean that a trauma was not suffered by each and every individual 'associated'[51] with the Holocaust, but it is to say that trauma has no perpetrator; the question of the crime and its difference from the trauma of the Holocaust is a matter I will deal with in detail in Chapter 6. The fact is, because trauma has no perpetrator, there is also no guilt.

An essential incommensurability between trauma and guilt goes unrecognized by scholars who adopt Freud's research, like LaCapra and Leys, and even Blumenberg, uncritically. With respect to Freud's work on *Moses* in which guilt is so distinctly associated with the murder of Jesus as the return of the murder of Moses, Blumenberg can be forgiven his interpretation of Freud's murder as the trauma that was repressed and returned as guilt in anti-Semitism because it was Freud's thesis. While Blumenberg's explanation of the source of guilt being Christian and not Jewish may seem to address Freud's guilt, it is a move based on the assumption that there is a perpetrator of trauma and overlooks Freud's primary objective which was to untangle guilt feelings in the neurotic from the repressive strategies of religious institutions. The problem with this literal reading of Freud's case study of Moses, is twofold; for one, the murder is only a representation of the actual trauma and therefore, is not to be read literally; for another, the Exodus as a case study is on par with Tasso's story of Tancred, both being representations of some historically real but inaccessible past trauma. To what extent Tasso's fantasy is a first or second or umpteenth draft of the trauma as compared with the Exodus, this being an issue of degrees, is beyond our ability to define. In Lacanian terms, the only cause of trauma is the inexplicable of the real, which is invisible and returns in a different guise.

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[51] I use the term to reference anyone who has encountered the Holocaust, from the dead, survivors, perpetrators, those who colluded, those who resisted, those who study it, or know about it only in vague terms.

For that reason, any representation we have, any text, film, or article, as a product of the encounter with the real, can only articulate the trauma in part.

By way of explaining the impossibility of apprehending the actual traumatic event, Lacan represented trauma as 'the encounter with the real', where the real is the chaotic force of the unknown void—the ineffable. That which exists beyond the symbolic efforts to represent it, the real will forever thwart the subject's organizing impulse; what remains constant is that, though the crisis or trauma eludes the subject, the indivisible remainder that recurs in the fantasy points to something having happened. What that original encounter was, was missed; it happened elsewhere, "another locality, another space, another scene, *the between perception and consciousness*" Lacan says, quoting Freud (*Sem XI* 56.) Thus, what is apprehended about the original 'real' event is "only my representation that I recover possession of", Lacan stresses (57). As exemplified in the Tancred story, the only access to that trauma is through the compulsive repetition of killing, which can only be understood in the metaphorical recreation of the subject's fantasy response to the original 'missed' crisis expressed in the *objet a* of Clorinda's voice. Through Lacan's rendering of Freud's trauma, we see the condition is erased of its pathological nature, naturalized as part of the formative and ongoing lived experience of the oedipalized subject, beginning with the subject's first trauma of oedipalization.

Caruth's project to 'listen' for his trauma, took cues from Freud's understanding that, what matters is not whether the analysand is telling the truth or not, what matters is what the she/he is saying. For the reason that the trauma was missed, the interpretive project of uncovering the trauma is far more complicated than simply digging, in archaeological terms, for what has been repressed, disavowed, forgotten in memory; in fact, the trauma was so unexpected, such a shock, that the original crisis cannot even manifest at the level of memory. That is, trauma is only accessible retroactively, and only in

repetition, and partially. These fundamental principles of trauma explain why there is no perpetrator, but also, why there is no such thing as memory in trauma studies. For example, in Badiou's consideration of the ethical response to the event, the subject's passive relation to the 'event', it *happens to you*, we recognize that the event is unrelated to memory: "Never forget what you have encountered. But we can say this only if we understand that not-forgetting is not memory (oh! The unbearable journalistic ethics of memory!) Not-forgetting consists of thinking and practicing the arrangement of my multiple being according to the immortal which it holds, and which the piercing through (*transpercement*] of an encounter has imposed as subject" (*Ethics* 52). In this tangle of not-forgetting, we recognize memory is not an issue; thus, we see how Lanzmann's *Shoah* remains true to his journalistic integrity to offer no false memories; in that respect, Lanzmann is 'directly seized by fidelity' to the truth of the trauma of the Holocaust. There is nothing to remember, there is only the ethical response to the 'event', as bearing witness to its disappearance; or giving voice to the one who cannot speak (Agamben *Remnants* 146). Unfortunate for Holocaust studies, trauma analysis as a method is indifferent to the perpetrator and blind to memory; the prevalence of guilt by survivors, I believe, explains why melancholia has come to serve a distinctive function in the research to complement trauma, and go where trauma fails.[52]

Caruth bears witness to Freud's *Moses and Monotheism* as a Lacanian 'fantasy' that reflects a historical trauma: "Through the notion of trauma, I will argue, we can understand that a rethinking of reference is aimed not at eliminating history but at resituating it in our understanding, that is, at precisely

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[52] LaCapra draws on Freud's melancholia in significant ways to make up for what trauma analysis cannot accomplish in understanding Holocaust testimony; that is, melancholia addresses the guilt inherent in survivors testimonies. The guilt of surviving; the guilt of not saving his/her family member from death, etc.. The dominant affect of grief in Holocaust testimony may account for the condition of melancholia, but accounting for the perpetrators crimes and the justice those crimes demand, remains elusive in the psychoanalytic approach.

permitting history to arise where 'immediate understanding' may not" (11). In letting history 'arise', Caruth's hermeneutic relies on the metonymic value of Freud's 'leaving', reflected in the Biblical Exodus, repeated in Freud's reflection on the child's *for-da* game, which, in Freud's personal terms, is reiterated in being compelled to leave Austria. In this repetitive pattern of 'leaving', Caruth lets the trauma of Freud's historical period arise as the 'Exodus'. By re-focusing the trauma onto the circumstance that would inspire the foundational narrative of the Judean faith, Caruth makes a brilliant move to explain how Freud's crisis was recreated as a fantasy of deliverance from persecution in his *Moses*. What Caruth's Exodus focus lacks, however, is the primacy of ethics reflected in the guilt lodged in Freud's murder narrative, and reflected in his reference to the ethical foundation of the Judean history of the faith, the one god of Moses' God, as an ethical God (Moses, 63), who demanded 'living in *maat*' (truth, justice) (61-62).

If Caruth does not address the ethical issue in Freud's *Moses*, she does raise it in her chapter on the ethics of memory through Lacan's ingenious interpretation of Freud's analysis of the father's waking from his dream to his son saying, "Can't you see I'm burning?" The father's guilt for not having saved his son from death by fever returns in this nightmare that wakes him to the reality of his son's body being consumed in actual flames. "The dream *itself is the site of the trauma*" (100), Caruth asserts following Lacan, and the awakening, is the ethical response to trauma, or what Lacan defines "as an *ethical relation to the real*" (102). Reflected in the imaginary touch and voice of the dead son, the rupture caused by the real of a trauma can be seen through Badiou's terms as not about memory but about 'not-forgetting'; it is the trauma of the demand. In this case, according to Caruth's use of Lacan, the demand is that of survival, a demand that deeply echoes the humanities research of Holocaust survivor testimonies done by Caruth's colleagues. The father is

caught by the voice of his 'dead son'. If Caruth identifies the voice of the wound as the trauma, what she misses is Lacan's principle of the ethical practice as reflecting the subject's relation to his desire. Guilt rises up when the subject gives ground on its desire; which is to say that, ethical action means to follow through on one's desire. A subject's desire as the ethical demand, as Mladen Dolar points out in his *A Voice: And Nothing More* (95), reflects the subject's relation to ideological interpellation.

INTERPELLATION

For Lacan, the *tuché* is the rupture of the subject's symbolic order with the real, which the subject subsequently seals over, or heals, through fantasy. Lacan defines fantasy with the formula: S<>a: i.e., the subject's relation to the *objet a*, the indivisible remainder. The child's fort-da game is an example of a fantasy response to the trauma of the mother's departure, enacted in the child's relationship to the *objet a*, the spool and thread. The voice and the gaze are manifestations of an *objet a* both of which differ from the child's game object in that they belong "to the register of what Lacan calls the real" (Fink 92). That is, as 'unspecular', immaterial objects, the voice and gaze "resist imaginization and symbolization", leading to their repetitive echoes; or, as expressed through Dolar's interpretation of Lacan's idea of cause, the voice is the cause of that which "doesn't work"[53], the inassimilable, par excellence, existing at the border between the real and the symbolic. The politics of the voice, "the same operation as in the realm of ethics" (121), is where we find Althusser's interpellation, which, as a particular call, "sustains social injunctions and symbolic mandates" (122). Of this ethical realm, Dolar highlights the "precarious shifting line, in the interpellating voice" which is the demand to

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[53] In *Voice*, Dolar quotes from Lacan's *Seminar XI* (22) with the phrase, "There is only a cause in something that doesn't work" (10).

comply with that which is never explicitly stated; what the subject is saying yes to, is never fully grasped. This is why, in practice, ethics seems like such an unstable concept, in Badiou's terms "contingent". You could say that this 'shifting line' of the voice indicates the contingency of the symbolic limit of what is 'inassimilable' of the real; it defines the quandary of the subject's desire and subjection in Althusser's interpellation.

Responses to Althusser's revision of Marx's 'ideology' through psychoanalysis in "Ideology and Ideological State Apparatuses: Notes Towards an Investigation" (1970), have been polarized between supporters and critics; the critics tend to hear incoherence in his idea of interpellation, or, as with Eagleton's critique, an unbelievable subject who is too 'static' (144). This vision of Althusser's subject as non-dynamic would suggest the absence of the dialectic of the unconscious within the oedipalized subject in Althusser's work, except the oedipalized subject is present throughout his project, but notably subordinate to the imaginary of the ego: "…the human subject is de-centered, constituted by a structure which has no centre, either, except in the imaginary misrecognition of the 'ego', i.e., in the ideological formations in which it 'recognizes' itself" ("Freud and Lacan" 62). Althusser's emphasis on the imaginary of the ego in interpellation points to a distortion equivalent to Dolar's 'shifting lines', or that margin between meaning and chaos, or madness and sanity; I would suggest that, in light of Althusser's psychosis at the end of his life, a marginal psychotic incoherence may account for the critics' assessment of his theory as being riddled with inconsistencies or confusion.

The first diagnosed schizophrenic, Daniel Paul Schreber, claimed in his *Memoirs* (1903),[54] that he was chosen by God to be messiah and also to be God's wife. In Lacan's terms, Schreber exemplified the psychotic's condition as

[54] Feud's diagnosis published in 1911 was based on reading Schreber's memoir; Freud claimed Schreber's condition was repressed homosexuality.

being caught in the imaginary, or 'hallucination', without the symbolic rudder of the Name of the Father (NOF). Since the 'hallucination is located in the real' (*Seminar III* 136), and since the NOF is foreclosed, Lacan argued, the psychotic cannot organize his experience through the symbolic order as 'fantasy', in the sense of symbolic formations associated with poetic revelatory texts like those by St. John of the Cross;[55] without the stabilizing factor of the master signifier, the psychotic, lost in a sea of signifiers, "is spoken by the unconscious". Lacan's preference for the Saint's poetry over the psychotic's testimony explains his conviction that the symbolic "offers a framework for treating psychosis" although "concrete guidelines for treating psychosis… cannot be found in his work", Stijn Vanheule observes (*The Subject of Psychosis* 80). That is, Lacan aimed to theorize the psychotic's condition, but, especially as is evident in his last project on the psychosis of the poet James Joyce, recognized that psychosis was not an example of a failed Oedipal subject, but reflected an approach other than the NOF to resolve the maladjustment integral to human subjectivity.[56]

Althusser's concise approach cannot be compared to Schreber's hallucinatory wanderings, but critics seem to identify problems with the symbolic elements of Althusser's theory that I would say point to that 'shifting line' of meaning. According to Althusser, "ideology hails or interpellates concrete individuals as concrete subjects", which explains how the subject is not even aware of the fact that the apparent freedom to consent is actually an

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[55] Speaking about St. John of the Cross, Lacan claims: "I would say that even the briefest testimony of an authentic religious experience you can see a world of difference" (*Seminar III* 77).

[56] In *The Subject of Psychosis: A Lacanian Perspective*, Vanheul's analysis draws out the very nuanced approach Lacan took to psychosis, emphasizing his contributions to Freud's work such as introducing the term 'foreclosure' to replace Freud's concept of rejecting the oedipal (34) to account for the passive nature of not accepting the NOF. He traces Lacan's contribution to concepts such as hallucination and delusion, and discusses Lacan's final observations about the synthome in relation to the psychotic, James Joyce, which troubled old standards of mental health. That is, the synthome does not alert an analyst to a problem, but signals the subject's effort to find fulfillment in life.

illusion; thus, "ideology has no outside (for itself)" (32). That point is contested in Stuart Hall's persuasive critique of Althusser's ideology in "Signification, Representation, Ideology". Hall claims Althusser's ideology ignores the autonomy of the individual (99), so that any political action for freedom or equality would be swallowed up by the repressive ideologies. What is clear is that there is a kind of paranoid insistence in Althusser's idea of the subject living 'without free will'; yet, Hall's optimistic vision of the ideological struggle (111) and the freedom of civil institutions to ensure human rights, overlooks the fundamental fragility of this freedom and weakness of the struggle. In Canada, for example, the Charter of Rights which gave citizens the right to demonstrate peacefully at the G-20 Toronto Summit in 2010, and that gave citizens not participating in demonstrations the freedom to walk the streets, were erased by police measures that claimed the citizens were "not in Canada" that weekend (*Toronto Star* June 6, 2012); they had no rights with which to protect themselves from unlawful arrest. Efforts to make the police accountable for taking away these rights have been thwarted generally, but not entirely, as witnessed in Mr. Adam Nobody's charges against a Toronto police officer of assault. Yes, Hall is correct to trouble Althusser's ideology as oppressive and maybe even paranoid. Yes, one can resist the call of ideology (of the Nazi race policies), as Freud did on leaving Austria for England; but Freud's escape did not silence the voice interpellating him or other Jews as inferior. Mahmood articulates the reality of ideology, which Michael Jackson's vanity ironically expressed: we cannot change our skin colour just as we cannot change our culture. Yet, while there is no outside ideology there is, as Žižek argues in *The Sublime Object of Ideology*, a way through its symptom to the 'kernel' of the real hiding in it that supports Hall's criticism against Althusser for its categorical claims about ideology's dominance: Freud's escape reflects that the interpellation of ideology can be contested on ethical grounds.

Critics find fault with Althusser's interpellation as the 'hail' on the street as being absurdly irresponsible and unrealistic: "Assuming that the theoretical scene I have imagined takes place in the street, the hailed individual will turn around. By the mere one-hundred-and-eighty degree conversion, he becomes a subject" (32). Perhaps it was the term 'conversion' that inspired Terry Eagleton (*Ideology, an Introduction, New and Updated Edition*, 1991) to point out the ludicrousness of this scenario; what self-respecting adult, standing on a street corner, would 'convert' in answer to the call of a stranger (145)? And how does this 'conversion,' a 180 degree turn on the street, signal any kind of assent or an ideological affiliation? We can see that Eagleton's trouble with Althusser's consent, or 'conversion', is that it is simply irrational. I would say that what is irrational, or absurd, in the event is not in the caricature of the call on the street, but because it reflects what is 'real' of its demand made by those who are closest to us.

According to Lacan, the subject does not choose to consent to the Oedipal event that leads to the subject's *Spaltung*. Lacan associates that lack of choice in the subject's relation with her/his mortality; 'death' is introduced by the 'signifier' which kills the thing "… because the signifier as such, whose first purpose is to bar the subject, has brought into [the subject] the meaning of death,"[57] and barely veils a representation of the biblical narrative of original sin based on Paul's sin and the law (VII, 83).[58] That is, the only relationship we have to our mortality is through the signifier, through the symbolic; we do not consciously know and understand what we are consenting to when we accept the NOF, those of us who have done so. In this respect, a grown adult may consent to ideological interpellation in the same way the infant responds to the

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[57] From Lacan's "Position of the Unconscious" (*Écrits* 719).
[58] That is, the procedure described in Lacan's Oedipal event of the subject's acceptance of the master signifier, the NOF, is fundamentally a secularization of the biblical narrative of the fall of Adam and Eve, the event of the first prohibition leading to mortality.

NOF: in a compromised position to our desire. The subject's consent is predetermined by the community in which she/he finds herself/himself. Interestingly, Badiou explains the same passive acceptance experienced by the infant's Oedipal event with the adult's encounter with the Event: "We might say, more simply: the 'some-one' was not in a position to know that he was capable of this co-belonging to a situation and to the hazardous course of a truth, this becoming-subject" (*Ethics* 46). What is crucial in this 'becoming-subject' is this: not only does it reiterate the process found in Oedipalization or the interpellation of a subject to any ideological order: the truth of the Event is not initially known. In Badiou's terms, the Event is the trauma that *happens to you* (51), and as a subject you are responsible to answer the call made of you by the event. Lacan articulates the contingency of this 'Event' and its ethical implications for the subject in the case of Antigone. Her desire to bury her brother as per the laws of the gods is rejected by Creon who upholds the law of the state that deems her brother ineligible for burial because he was a criminal. Creon offers Antigone a deal: her brother will be buried if she sacrifices her life. In following her desire to honour the law that "comes to us from heaven", wherein heaven is Lacan's euphemism for the real, Antigone commits suicide.[59] Her act is a pure ethical act because she has not conceded an inch of her desire. When Lacan says that the unconscious is ethical, he means to say that the unconscious puts in the subject's path the 'real' of heaven's law as the subject's desire which is the ethical injunction, indicative of Freud's *Whatever it was, I must go there*, and articulated by Žižek as "the desire of the Other

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[59] Lacan uses Sophocle's *Antigone* as an example of this singularity. Antigone is faced with two issues: the civil law carried out by Creon which stated that her brother as traitor could not be buried and her desire to bury her brother because the law of the god's demanded it. Creon would only agree to her brother's burial on condition that she die for it. By following through on her desire, Antigone's suicide can be seen as ethical: "the laws that come to us from heaven [are] the same laws as Antigone's… the laws of heaven in question are the laws of desire" (325); this is to say that while the laws of desire remain ambiguous, particular to the individual, and in some cases ambivalent to social mores.

beyond fantasy" (*Sublime Object of Ideology* 132).[60] Moreover, the interpellation of the event is as unnerving as Dolar's question suggests: "Is ethics about hearing voices?" (83). The implication that the subject's call brings on a kind of 'madness', as in hearing voices, can serve to rethink what the critics claim is impossible in Althusser's interpellation by recognizing its radical quality.

Even so, Althusser's representation of Moses' experience on Mount Sinai is somewhat misleading. Introducing this event as the ideological interpellation misrepresents the ethical nature of Moses' call: "And Moses, interpellated— called by his Name, having recognized that it 'really' was he who was called by God, recognizes that he is a subject, a subject of God, a subject subjected to God, a subject through the Subject and subjected to the Subject. The proof: he obeys him, and makes his people obey God's Commandments" (*Ideology* 35). The symbolic organization of interpellation imposed by the Absolute Subject (God) in the biblical narrative is less like the infant's Oedipal event than Antigone's privileging of divine laws over human laws. If the laws of Moses made the Israelites antagonistic towards the ideology of the Roman rulers, so also Antigone's desire to follow divine law made her an enemy of Creon's state. In both cases, the ethical message of the subject's desire is in conflict with ideology's interpellation. Thus, what Dolar defines as the 'shifting line' of the call is actually not just ambiguous, but a dangerous struggle between interpellations: not only are there the calls of ideology, but there are the calls of the laws of desire that put the subject in conflict with ideology. This dynamic offers a new way of looking at Freud's narrative of Moses which can address what is missed by Caruth's focus on the 'event' of the Exodus as the trauma critical to Freud's *Moses:* the significance of seeing Freud's idea of guilt in ethical terms.

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[60] Lacan's reference to Freud'

To one extent or another, scholars on Freud's interpretation of Moses have been guided by the ethical issues raised by his focus on anti-Semitism in *Moses*.[61] The hatred which Christians had for Jews for having supposedly murdered Jesus twenty centuries ago was, for Freud, compulsive and irrational behaviour that indicated an unconscious effect of a trauma. Ernst Sellin's thesis that Moses was murdered (*Moses*, 74) was the basis for Freud's Egyptian priest, the first Moses, while Eduard Meyer's research of the Midianite who worshiped the volcanic god, Yahweh, served Freud with the details of the second Moses. In "Freud, Sellin and the Death of Moses", Robert Paul notes that Freud ignores the scriptural proof Sellin offers for his thesis, which is a complicated analysis that links two brief Biblical references to the prophet of the Exodus (Hosea 12:14-15 and Numbers 25:1-3) to Isaiah 52 and 53, the retelling of the murder of the chosen one, or messiah (825). Notable is the fact that, in the Christian tradition, Isaiah's suffering servant has been considered prophetic proof of Jesus. Robert Paul argues that Freud ignored Sellin's biblical interpretation because it would detract from his argument that Moses was an African, not a Jew (834). I would like to add something to his argument. While Freud does not use all of Sellin's research, he alludes to the association between Moses and Jesus as the Isaiah 53 messiah in the following statement: "If Moses was the first Messiah, Christ became his substitute. Then Paul could with a certain right say to the peoples: 'See, the Messiah has truly come. He was indeed murdered before your eyes'" (114). In the seven letters attributed to Paul, the word murder to describe Jesus' death is never used. Of course, Freud attributes this anti-Semitic statement to the Saint based on certain conditions; so long as Moses was a

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[61] In *Moses the Egyptian*, Jan Assmann argues that Freud's focus on anti-Semitism revealed that the root of this Jewish hatred is not inspired by Judaism or Christianity, but the universalist revolution of Aknhenaten's monotheism (167). Barbara Johnson's more literary approach, in *Moses and Multiculturalism*, traces Moses as a multicultural trope in literature, film, philosophy and religious texts. In this multiplicity, she argues, Freud's radical thesis that Moses was not a Jew, but an African (57), introduces the instability of ethnic identity.

messiah, then the condition that Paul could have said this about Jesus, would have been justified. As it stands, Moses is considered a prophet, not a messiah; this raises questions about Jesus also being a messiah, and makes Paul's statements impossible, proven by the fact that Paul never said these things. In this logic, anti-Semitic hatred is illogical; therefore, Jews are free not to convert to Christianity because anti-Semitism is delusional. Based on this logic, not only would Sellin's research detract from Freud's focus on the hybridity of Judaism, as Robert Paul argues, it would entrench, rather than dissolve, the anti-Semitic grounds of Nazi persecution.

Freud asserts that anti-Semitic hate is fueled by the illusion of 'Jewish election': "I venture to assert that the jealousy which the Jews evoked in other peoples by maintaining that they were the first-born, favourite child of God the father has not yet been overcome by those others, just as if the latter had given credence to the assumption" (116). It is this assumption that Freud addresses by secularizing the terms of election; the Israelites were not chosen by God, but by an Egyptian priest. Through this secularization, hatred should dissolve, but it does not; all it can do is expose the ironic tragedy of the inversion of Jewish election in the way the Jewish citizens of Germany and Europe were being singled out, interpellated as undesirable, and 'chosen' for incarceration (death) by the Nazis. What is expressed in this tragedy is this double energy of the 'charge' of trauma, which Santner defines as both 'charged with a crime" and also charged as in "filled with a symbolic mandate" (*Psychotheology* 31), highlighting the indeterminacy of the ethical demand Freud was confronting— or, in Badiou's terms, the truth of the event.[62] What was the Event except the impossible one masterminded by the Nazis? In Lacanian terms, the guilt Freud identified reflected the unconscious tangle of desires of his Jewish identity and

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[62] It seems to me that to see the Holocaust as a trauma means that it could only be understood as a Badiouian Event. The denial of fidelity to the truth of this event is evidence of evil.

his life as a man of science. On the one hand, answering the call of his ethical distinction meant giving up on his desire to be a good, secular atheist Jew; on the other hand, denying his racial/cultural distinction meant legitimizing the Nazi's condemning of Jews to death. As Hall can well appreciate, there was no outside this network of ideological binds for Freud. In trying to write himself through this irrational guilt, he recognized it predated his generation by centuries, a conviction that was animated in his reflection that Jesus identified the return of an anterior trauma originating in Moses.

It is only because of the second Moses, Freud argues, that the Israelites could retroactively organize being 'chosen' around the fantasy of deliverance as redemption for the people elected by God. By the same logic, it is because the Jews did not disappear into Christianity that Jesus's death came to be organized as a fantasy of murder by the descendants of the Israelites. This logic of a latent return is implied in Freud's work, haunting ironic statements like this: "We have been delivered from all guilt since one of us laid down his life to expiate our guilt" (174). The fact which Freud's *Moses* references but never explicitly states is that Jews pay for Jesus' murder with their life; or, literally, are murdered. This unstated fact explains how Freud's use of 'murder' in *Moses* is over-determined; it is articulated in anti-Semitic ideology, in the death of the father of the Primal Horde, and in Sellin's interpretation of Biblical texts, but is never used about the Nazis. That is, Freud does not use Sellin's research because there is a necessary unreality to the trauma he traces evident in in the fictional quality of the murders. There is no evidence to prove that either Jesus or Moses was murdered; the 'murder' trope in fact only serves ideological practices. That is, Jesus's death, what the NT defines as a sacrifice ordained by God, has been written as a crime of murder to serve the ideology driving the anti-Semitic agenda to murder Jews. In Sellin's exegesis, Moses' murder authorizes the Christo-centric messianic narrative. By keeping Moses' murder posited, and not

part of an argument as fact, Freud could concentrate on tracing the pattern of latency in the return of the repressed, and thus side-step the dilemma raised by Sellin's Moses thesis: if Moses was murdered, then Jesus was the messiah, thus affirming the ground of anti-Semitic hate. Freud's representation of the catastrophe that led to a double Moses in the Hebrew period in the wilderness must be seen for what it is, a fantasy, in the Lacanian sense. Moses' function in the fantasy, from the perspective of the analyst, is in being the indivisible remainder, the *objet a*, of an ancient encounter which returns in Jesus. Based on this analytic position, I argue that what connects Jesus and Moses is not a murder, but the real that signaled the encounter with the ethical God who exacted a demand, or a call, which, as Dolar observes, remains indeterminate and so all the more difficult to navigate, and all the more necessary to heed, since it returns again and again.

It is this difficulty that is developed in Eric Santner's reading of Rosenzweig's work through Freud's principle of trauma in *On The Pyschotheology of Everyday Life*. Santner observes that trauma in Freud's terms is "an excess of demand" which causes a 'breakdown of this very operation of translation, leaving the mind flooded by excitation" (32). Santner's idea that translation fails to reflect the trauma echoes Dolar's concept of the 'call' as indeterminate; they similarly indicate an affinity with the Lacanian argument that the symbolic has no power in the real. Santner goes on to qualify a difference between the juridical source of Freud's trauma, indicative in the inscription of the law (105) wherein the super-ego inspires pathological behavior, and Rosenzweig's idea of revelation, which introduces an interpellation that unbinds the subject from the law. Opening up to the potential in human agency, revelation initiates the "messianic task", as "the interruptive bringing to light of the law's traumatic 'foundation' in excess of validity over meaning" (115). I want to draw attention to the fact that Moses'

encounter with the divine on Mount Sinai from which he received the Ten Commandments, what Althusser identified as interpellation, is in Rosenzweig's terms, an example of revelation. Moreover, Santner's understanding of Rosenzweig's concept of revelation as unbinding from the law echoes Pauline teachings on the revelation of the Christ. While it is possible to already understand that Althusser's interpellation represented by Moses and Rosenzweig's idea of 'revelation' are equivalent as the ethical impulse of a subject's unconscious desire, Althusser's interpellation of ideology differs from the ethically grounded 'call' of Rosenzweig's revelation which is more in line with Antigone's 'call' or Badiou's Truth Event. The significance of the difference between the call of ideology and the call of the Event will be explored in the Pauline chapters. In those chapters I will also problematize what Santner identifies as an opposition between law and revelation, or Moses and Paul in Rosenzweig's thinking.

Though Moses and Jesus are the central figures around which Freud builds his argument against anti-Semitism, Paul stands out as a historical figure used by Freud to describe the ethical constellation of crime and guilt. According to Jacob Taubes in *The Political Theology of Paul*, Paul was a Jewish political figure with revolutionary aims whose contemporary equal was Freud: "Freud, who is involved in the basic experience of guilt, is the direct descendent of Paul" (89). That concluding thought is based on his provocative thesis that "Christianity has its origin not properly in Jesus but in Paul" (40), and Paul's real message, improperly understood by the German Liberal Protestants' vision of Jesus as abstract '"pure love" (61) through Marcion, is actually a message of redemption in the tradition of Moses. Taubes highlights that Freud, like Paul, wanted to lead the way to redemption: "Freud, so to speak, enters into the role of Paul, of the Paul who supposedly brings redemption only phantasmatically, while Freud realizes it through his new method of healing, which is not only an

individual method, but also a theory of culture" (95). Taubes' inspired

paralleling of Freud with Paul, is the last flourish of the unconscious

associations that this project has been tracing, and signals my turn now to Paul.

PAUL AND THE TRUTH EVENT

Of the four major philosophical works on Paul[63] published in the last several

decades, Badiou's *St. Paul: The Foundation of Universalism* stands out for my

project on two counts; his vision of Paul's significance for contemporary

society; and his vision of Paul's role in the formation of early Christianity. With

respect to the former, his interest in Paul as a kind of Marxist militant through a

Lacanian lens is like Žižek's; with respect to the latter, he recognizes Paul as a

first-century historical figure much as Taubes' and Agamben's project have

promoted him. But with respect to his interest in excising the Christian-ness

from Paul, Badiou establishes the trajectory of my project.

For Badiou, what is important about Paul is not the Jesus he promoted,

but the event, or truth-Event, he identified as the resurrection: "Christ is *a

coming*; he is what interrupts the previous regime of discourses. Christ is, in

himself and for himself, *what happens to us*" (48). It would seem that Christ, the

trauma, happened to Paul, and Paul preached that it was for others too; the

hope that "all" would be saved meant that, according to Badiou, he had to

liberate his 'good news', his Gospel, from the restrictive Jewish community of

which he was a part (13). As "poet-thinker of the event, as well as one who

practices and states the invariant traits of what can be called the militant figure"

(2), Paul's significance for Badiou is his politics of the universal: "The driving

[63] Taubes, *The Political Theology of Paul*; Žižek, *The Puppet and the Dwarf*; and *The Fragile Absolute: Or Why Christianity is Worth Fighting For*; Agamben, *The Time That Remains*; Badiou, *St. Paul: The Foundation of Universalism*.

force behind Paul's universalist conviction: that 'ethnic' or cultural difference, of which the opposition between Greek and Jew is in time, and in the empire as a whole, the prototype is no longer significant with regard to the real, or to the new object that sets out a new discourse… As Paul declares, defying the evidence: There is no distinction between Jew and Greek (Rom 10:12)" (57). As such, Paul is for Badiou a 'guide' to a universalism that can cut through social, political, and class differences, which have been destabilizing contemporary society. By following Paul's message, we can emulate "an indifference that tolerates difference" (89-99).

In the historical record, Badiou asserts, there is technically no Jesus, but there is a Paul, whose letters, "are, quite simply, the oldest Christian texts to be handed down to us" (18). In order to read Paul's truth-Event in those letters, his historical context is necessary, even though that context is not fully accessible (18). While Badiou acknowledges the historian's point that Paul's experience on the Road to Damascus, called a 'conversion' (17), was a fable proposed by Luke-Acts, a gospel most likely written at or after Paul's death, he also relies on this fable to contemporize Paul as a participant in the Spanish War: "The fascist Paul goes on a mission to see Supporters of France. On the road to Barcelona, travelling through southwestern France, he has an illumination. He joins the camp of the antifascist fighters" (38). This is a politically charged representation of Paul, revealing Badiou's prejudices and limitations. The politics of Paul is not only represented as a left Marxist figure convert from fascism, and thus reflecting the 'all' of the universal in paralleling Paul as both Judean and Christian; this convert from fascist to resistance fighter in the Spanish war is echoed in the WWII French resistance fighters such as Maurice Blanchot, who was such a convert. While Badiou's project at the symbolic level seems to function with precision, exchanging elements from Paul of the past to the Paul in the present, its symbolization unwittingly adapts a central conceit in the Acts

narrative: that Paul was a convert to Christianity. In the historical sense, this conceit points to several problems, not least of which is an apparent homology between leftist politics and Christianity. I will get at one other problem later. With respect to Badiou's representation of Paul in contemporary politics, another homology appears between the Spanish War and WWII through the struggle against fascism. Thus, in Badiou's work, the trauma of two 20th-century wars is represented as analogous to Paul's first century politics. With respect to Paul's imaginary value for Badiou, it could be said that Paul is Badiou's indivisible remainder of a left political trauma.

In adapting the truth procedure of Paul's message to the contemporary project, Badiou must de-historicize Jesus: "What the particular individual named Jesus said and did is only the contingent material seized upon by the event in view of an entirely different destiny. In this sense, Jesus is neither a master nor an example. He is the name for what happens to us universally" (60). If Jesus is only a name for the 'real', then technically, there is no Jesus in Christianity. This is an exciting move; it promises a political truth procedure of the universal beyond religious reach; that is, by executing the Lacanian move to identify the fantasy as a false real, Badiou's truth procedure can rid the core of Christian ideology from the content of Paul's message and so liberate the universal for 'all'. The only trouble is that erasing Jesus 'the man' does not erase the ideological web of Christian thinking from discourse, and Badiou's own writing is implicated in this trouble. For example, Badiou's use of Luke-Acts perpetuates the assumption that Paul was Christian. The fact is that the concept we have for Christianity did not exist in the first-century, which has also led scholars to trouble what Luke-Acts identifies as a 'conversion.'[64] To identify followers of Jesus as Christian is problematic on two counts; when we call someone Christian, we are not calling them messiahs, in the literal sense, but

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[64] Alan Segal addresses this issue in *Paul: The Convert* (1992).

members of a faith. The term meant to identify a member of the particular religion. When applied to followers of Jesus who did not live by our definition of Christian faith, it is a misleading definition. Moreover, a significant occlusion of Paul's message in Badiou's universal highlights the extent to which Badiou's universalism may not need its historical Jesus, but continues to serve its Christianity.

When Badiou quotes Paul in *Romans* 10:12 as the term of universalism, he excises the Christ condition, evident in this quotation: "because if you confess with your lips that Jesus is Lord and believe in your heart that God raised him from the dead, you will be saved. For one believes the heart and so is justified and one confesses with the mouth and so is saved. The scripture says, 'No one who believes in him will be put to shame.' For there is no distinction between Jew and Greek: the same Lord is Lord of all and is generous to all who call on him. For, Everyone who calls on the name of the Lord shall be saved" (*Romans* 10:9-13.) The universal promise promoted by Badiou excludes the fact that, according to Paul, only certain people will be saved; only the Jew and the Greek (all) who call on the Lord (not all) and confess to the Lord, will be saved by the Lord who is Jesus. Even if there is no 'man' Jesus but only a name that inspires faith in eternal life, anyone who is not inspired is excluded from salvation. Though Badiou has identified the indivisible remainder as just a name, Jesus, Badiou has not erased the symbolic content of the fable of the resurrection from its root in the crucifixion, which signals an exception to the salvation. Agamben has critiqued Badiou's universalism for ignoring the exceptionalism inherent in Paul's message, what he calls the Apelles' cut (*Time That Remains*, 50); Caputo reiterates Agamben's critique of Badiou's unconscious prejudice in his introduction to *St. Paul Among the Philosophers*: "By adapting Paul's figure of a passage from death to new life, the figure of rebirth and a certain resurrection, Badiou is signing on to part of the

content of the Pauline event" (8). By not addressing the way in which the indivisible remainder has become bound to the fable of the God that will not die, Badiou's militant figure is still determined by a Christian paradigm "not far removed from radical theology or death of God theology" (9). Caputo's critique may be seen as pre-determined by his Jesus/crucifixion prejudice; that is, Caputo's commitment to his politics would explain a resistance to Badiou's strategy to replace Jesus with Paul. Having said that, Badiou may believe that de-linking the absolute remainder of Jesus from the historical Paul is the task that de-religifies Paul's message; on this point, however, the philosophers' critique indicates where Badiou is blind. I propose that one more step is required to 'liberate' Paul's message from Christianity, and that involves delinking the name of Jesus from the Christ; that is a task the philosopher can do only with the aid of the historian's method.

St. Paul Among the Philosophers is an interesting collection of articles not just because it invites historians' to respond to philosophers' interpretations of Paul, like Badiou's, but also because it exposes some striking disciplinary limitations for both the historian and the philosopher. The historian is interested in accessing the past 'as it was'; in that respect, Paul is a fascinating subject because he left behind a small but detailed library of his thought, which reflected on a critical moment in western history. According to Fredriksen, Badiou's article is in company with Origen and Augustine in misrepresenting Paul as a "coherent universalist" which, she argues, indicates that Paul is used as a kind of cypher for the philosophers' contemporary politics.[65] The trouble the historian Fredriksen has with this variety in interpretation is how selective it is: "Our three different readers drop different things. But what all three drop is

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[65] Interestingly, this point suggests that Paul was seen by philosophers as the indivisible remainder of the first century. The question of course is: is the trauma that Paul stands for of the first-century event of Jesus' crucifixion, or some other trauma? That is a question I will continue asking throughout this project.

Paul's apocalyptic" (70). In short, these philosophers can only read Paul as 'theology's project' (72), which is problematized by the fact that their hermeneutic, "this is what Paul means," is a historian's claim, and so "such assertions can only be anachronistic; and an anachronistic historical claim can only be false, whatever ideological merit it might otherwise display" (72). Badiou has grounds to contest Fredricksen's critique since his work on Paul may be called an anti-theological one, and as a philosopher, he is not bound to the historian's credo to avoid anachronisms. Fredricksen's critique reveals more about her than it says about Badiou.

According to Fredriksen, "Badiou de-eschatologizes Paul by concentrating so resolutely on the resurrection as a contextless 'event'…. The significance of Christ's resurrection for Paul is that it indicates what time it is on God's clock. It's the end of history, and the hour of the establishment of God's kingdom. The form of this world is passing away (1 Cor 2:31)" (71). For the historian, the apocalyptic energy of Paul's time is central to his Gospel, explaining the interest and attraction to his message by the Greeks; especially with the new material at the historian's disposal now because of archaeology,[66] the historian is able to understand how much Paul was responding to apocalyptic anxiety. While Fredriksen is correct to take issue with the elision of apocalypticism in Origen and Augustine which, as Blumenberg has affirmed, initiated the conditions which have led to the formation of contemporary secularism, and by association, the trauma of my project, and she correctly understands that Badiou 'de-contextualizes' Paul's thinking especially from the religious content of Jesus, she entirely misses the eschatological foundation of Badiou's work.

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[66] See John Joseph Collins' *Apocalypticism in the Dead Sea Scrolls* (1997) and also James H. Charlesworth's edited collection, *Old Testament Pseudepigrapha, Vol 1 and 2* (1983).

Badiou is a philosopher of our time and in our time Messianic discourse persists everywhere. In culture, we are witness to the resistant trope of the end-days in works such as Kubrick's *2001: A Space Odyssey*, Cameron's popular *The Terminator*, and Hoban's experimental *Riddley Walker*, to name a few. In political terms, we are inundated with apocalyptic anxiety evidenced by events such as the Russian Revolution, the Holocaust, and Hiroshima and Nagasaki, not to mention the self-fulfilling prophetic acts at places such as Waco and Jonestown, or as expressed in anticipated events like the Mayan calendar ending December 21, 2012, and the May 5, 2011 deadline as advertised by the American evangelist. Philosophy engages in this anxiety, from Rosenzweig's redemption (1921) to Benjamin's 'weak messianic force' (1939), to Derrida's messianic with messianism (1989) and recently Žižek on 9/11 (2003). The philosophers who have chosen to think and write about Paul, do so because of shared apocalyptic thinking which perhaps explains, in part, Agamben's assertion that, "there is a kind of secret link… between Paul's letters and our epoch."[67] In light of Agamben's claim, it is tempting to suppose that Paul is not only Badiou's indivisible remainder, but is so also for Agamben, Taubes, and Žižek. While Taubes and Agamben are more explicit on the apocalyptic and messianic content of his letters, Badiou's Marxist reading of Paul implicitly references an eschatological vision of the revolution; that is, 'Christ is 'a coming'.

On the issue of Paul's putative universalism, E. P. Sanders's contribution to *St. Paul Amongst the Philosophers*, not only raises issue with the conditions for salvation in Christianity, but also, highlights Paul's contradictions internal to his thought. Sanders quotes two texts by Paul, one that is a conditional universal and the other a universal beyond conditions. Regarding Paul's assertion of universalism, "For as all die in Adam, so all will be made alive in

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[67] Quoted by Santner in "Miracles Happen" from Agamben's book cover (128).

Christ" (*1 Cor* 15:22), Sanders concludes with the point raised by the philosophers already: "Paul appears as a Christological exclusivist: someone who holds the view that only those who put their faith in Jesus as the Christ will be saved, while the others will be destroyed" (84.) In contrast to this exclusivism, Sanders notes, Paul claims in Romans 11:25-34 that the Jewish people will be saved along with the Christ believers, but mysteriously. This contradiction Sanders identifies is one of many explored by historians in Paul's thinking, which historians are trying to resolve by considering Paul's education, and his social and cultural environment (87) living as a Jew amongst Greeks, in Asia Minor. What is interesting about Sanders' observation is that, on the one hand, there seems to be an impulse to a universalism in Paul, but on the other hand, there is nothing on the record that reflects how Paul thought this universalism would come about.

Sanders' contends that in order to read Paul we need to know what his words meant, to what extent he was educated in the Jewish faith and its scripture, and what he knew of Greek philosophy. This means that painstaking research needs to be done on Paul's idiomatic expressions, such as 'law of Moses' and "law of Christ', work vs. faith, and most notable, the 'evangelion'.[68] Steve Mason, Josephus historian, contests the assumption that the Christian "gospel', or Announcement, or in Greek terms, the 'evangelion', was, as Helmut Koester claimed, "the common gospel of the entire enterprise of the Christian mission"; and the term originated with Jesus, as Gerhard Friedrich insisted, (*Josephus, Judea and Christian Origins*, 284). This traditional view of the origin of the term had been assumed based on its titular use in 'The Gospels' of the *New Testament*, itself only a product of mid-second century "by the time of Marcion and Justin" (284), which was encouraged by the earliest composed

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[68] Sanders introduces a new word into scholarship to express Paul's Greek term for one who is made righteous: "righteoused'.

gospel of Mark's 'fascinating' title "The Origin of the Announcement of Jesus Christ" (296). Mason asserts that the use of the term became absorbed into Christian Orthodoxy as belonging to Jesus, but in fact originated with Paul, proven by the fact that his letters pre-date the *Gospels* by several decades.[69]

In the epistolary review, Mason highlights that Paul's defensiveness of his authority as an apostle with his 'evangelion' is not simply, as some scholars have assumed, aimed to justify his place amongst the apostles who knew Jesus as a living man; rather, his defence reflects efforts to justify the importance of his mission which "was well underway before he made his first brief visit to Jerusalem (*Gal* 1:15-24)" (Mason 290). Paul claimed that he received the Announcement from a non-human source *(Gal* 1:12); he is distinguished for having a mission consecrated by the Christ to save the Gentiles from the upcoming apocalypse: "Gentiles who embraced Paul's Announcement faced the social-political predicament, before the promised evacuation, of not having a place in the world, and the obvious place to turn was Jesus' own long-established Judean culture, which was in any case receiving considerable interest from people of other nations" (Mason 291).[70] Paul's gospel, which he repeatedly identified with the possessive article, (*Gal* 1:11), which was "proprietary and special to him" (292), was his mission to convert the Gentiles: "Consider also Rom 15:15-20. Just as in Galatians, The Announcement is something that Paul alone has been charged with disseminating, by Christ, among his Gentile 'assemblies' (another distinctive term of his mission.)" (293). Badiou's assertion that Paul tried to drag his gospel out of the constricted Jewish

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[69] Paul's Thessalonians, his first letter, dates to around 40 CE (Mason *Early Christian Reader* 37); 1 Corinthians dates to the 40s CE but may have been written as late as 53-55 CE (P. 45); 2 Corinthians sometime after 1 Cor; Galatians, sometime in the 50s ("Late in his career" P 108); and Romans 54-57, before his death in 58 CE (*Early Christian Reader* 125).

[70] Historical records attest to considerable interest in the Judean faith during the time of Paul; i.e. Josephus (War 2.559; Ant. 20.17-96; Ag. Ap 2.282-86) and Tacitus (Hist 5.4) (291); current scholarship on the point can be found in Shaye Cohen's *The Beginnings of Jewishness* (1999).

community is fallacious: the fact is, the evangelion was intended only for the Gentiles, and the reason it attracted so much negative attention from Judean apostles was because it promoted exempting the Gentile convert from circumcision, a standard rite for new proselytes to the Judean faith.[71] Thus, it was either rejected outright by the Judean Jesus followers, or suffered by few. Mason argues that, based on the unpopularity of his mission to the circumcised followers of Jesus, Paul's discomfort in speaking about his 'evangelion' in his "Letter to the Romans", would indicate that the community at Rome was primarily composed of circumcised Judean followers of Jesus (294).[72]

In light of the fact that Paul's 'evangelion' was meant only for the Gentiles, Badiou's use of Paul's message for universal ends points to assumptions that miss the extreme nature of both Paul's mission, and his militancy. For the Jew and the Greek to reflect equality, the assumption is that they existed together in a unified assembly signaled in their 'conversion' to Christianity. As the historical record shows, Paul's putative 'unity' was aimed primarily at Gentile audiences; and its outcome only led to disunity amongst followers of Jesus, where division erupted between those who did and those who did not accept the uncircumcised Gentile convert, in many cases leaving the Gentile converts to exist in communities isolated from the Judean Jesus followers. The other assumption at the foundation of this vision of unification is that they were all Christians, which, by association, leads to the primary assumption that Paul was Christian. To say Paul was a Christian is to miss the flux of political dynamics in the events in the first century CE of the Roman Empire, and especially Paul's partial contribution to this flux, which,

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[71] Paul preached his evangelion to Judeans first, and then to Gentiles; the majority of Judeans gave him a hard time finding his ideas to be heretical.

[72] Mason provides a more comprehensive analysis of the composition of the audience of Letters to the Romans in "'For I am not Ashamed of the Gospel' (Rom 1:16): The Gospel and the First Readers of Romans" (*Josephus, Judea and Christian Origins* 303-328).

anachronistically, was given prime place of honour because it was attributed to Jesus.

The historian and the philosopher have very different hermeneutic practices. The historian tends to read literally; sometimes, this reading leads to some specious interpretations, but on the other hand, recognizing the idiomatic nature of language, it sloughs off the embedded anachronisms that obscure historically specific discourse. The historian's project is a technical one, even corrective, which means that most operations are heuristic and any conclusion is qualified as indefinite. In that respect, you could say the historian is interested in Jesus and Paul, the men; for Badiou, the philosopher, the human agent in ancient times is subordinate to the truth procedure of his speech; or, as the historian quipped, Badiou reads like a theologian because he relies on the truth of Paul's message. More than that, Badiou is a Lacanian thinker, interested in unveiling what is embedded in a subject's speech. That is why Badiou can read Jesus not literally as the man in history, but as the empty signifier, the indivisible remainder, behind which is nothing but the reeling void of the real of Paul's revelation. I take selective advantage of these disciplinary methods in this project. I am not interested in Jesus the man or the Christ, but in de-linking Jesus from the Christ; I am not interested in Paul the Saint, but the poet Badiou sees in Paul. Paul is a poet because he uses rhetorical tropes of repetition, parallelisms, and especially because his political message is conveyed in metaphor and metonymy; but in order to read Paul as a poet, understanding the language of his historical context requires use of the historian's methods and categories.

CATEGORIES AND METHODS
The revitalization of Roman Antiquities period scholarship has been influenced by radical changes to the discipline in the past century, including discoveries such the Nag Hammadi library in Egypt (1945) and the Dead Sea Scrolls (1947).

This pseudepigraphical and apocryphal material offered unprecedented access to late Second Temple period and early Christian thinking, which called into question the Orthodox Christian view that dominated Pauline scholarship. A New Perspective on Paul was initiated, aimed at dismantling assumptions about his work and addressing confusions about his theology that date to Marcion. As with contemporary historians of the Biblical period, scholars of this New Perspective on Paul were influenced by advances in historical method introduced by the new soft sciences such as archaeology, which defined criteria for interpretation and found more effective ways to determine provenance and reliable artifactual witnesses.[73]

New Perspective historians are self-reflexive, and address "problems of bias, perspective, context, construction, particularity, otherness and diversity", (Mason 329), when interpreting texts. That is to say, the historian, in trying to access the past 'for what it was', is committed to dispelling the centuries of assumptions that have obscured the past from a 'true' view. As well as dispelling terms of contemporary prejudices limiting analysis, historians are also focused on defining the limitations of good scholarship. Barclay's article on 'mirror-reading', an effective method in Biblical Studies research, which I note reflects a method used in psychoanalysis, identifies the limitations of the method when analyzing Paul's letters. The case study Barclay focuses on is the scholarship on Paul's "Letter to the Galatians". This epistle was written to his Gentile converts in Galatia who, on the advice of circumcised apostles, decided to circumcise; in the letter, Paul is angry and somewhat hysterical in trying to convince them that the Gospel absolves them of the 'cut of the flesh'. Using the mirror-method, wherein the language in the text is decoded to define the audience the writer is addressing, this letter offers scholars a window into

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[73] Provenance was a big issue in archaeology, reflecting the new anxiety with fakes raised by various archaeological hoaxes, the earliest and most famous being Heinrich Schliemann's putative discovery of Troy.

seeing who Paul's opponents were based on what he had to say against them. To offer one example of the trouble historians face with this method, Barclay claims that, "Because Paul constantly pits the cross against the law and circumcision (3.1, 13; 5:11; 6:12, 14-15), many scholars have concluded that the opponents, who taught the law and circumcision, must have played down the message of the cross" (81). In other words, the opponents were considered anti-Christian based on an assumption that "law" was Judean and "cross" was Christian in Paul's thought. Barclay concludes that the anti-Christian assumption of Paul's opponents is improbable. The multitude of contradictory proposals by historians about the semantic values of Paul's various 'laws', some of which I shall consider in chapter 4, serves the fundamental trouble in determining very much about Paul's community through his language alone.

Paul was neither a Jew nor a Christian. That statement is true in that these predicates are anachronistic, or, in Fredriksen's terms, avoid false claims. During the time of Paul, not only were there no Christians, there was also no such thing as religion; there were those who Paul persecuted as heretics of the sect which followed Jesus, and with whom he became associated after his revelation. Moreover, Paul's message introduces the term "Christ", the Greek word for the Hebrew "mesiach", or messiah, to define the dead Jesus, and, because our record of the period prior to the destruction of the Second Temple is limited to Paul's letters, there is no evidence to prove 'Christ' was used by Paul to define followers of Jesus, much less, that it reflected the 'religion' we know today as Christianity. In her scholarship on Paul, Colleen Shantz chooses to use the word "christian", in the lower case to signify the movement in its early formative period (*Paul in Ecstasy* 19). For my part, since there was not even a formal concept of religion in Paul's time, and there were only sects of the faith of the Israelites, known to us through first-century historian, Josephus,

namely, Pharisees, Sadducees, and Essenes, and some Sicarii,[74] I favour the more period focused and literal expression, 'Jesus followers' in this project.

While my work follows Taubes in seeing Paul as a first-century Jew, I agree with the problems highlighted by historians that Paul's Jewishness, or his affiliation with Judaism, is another anachronism; to repeat, there was no Jewish religion, as we know religion. Moreover, there was no identity as Jew, in the same racial/ethnic terms it is used today. Shaye Cohen points out that our word for Jew, denoting the Jewish people, came from the Greek, *Ioudaios* and Latin *Iudaeus*, which "were generally ethnic geographic terms like 'Egyptian', 'Syrian', 'Cappadocian', 'Thracian', and so forth. Thus instead of 'Jews' we should, in many cases, speak rather of 'Judeans', the residents of Judea (geography), who constitute the *ethnos*, 'nation' or 'people' of the Judeans (ethnicity)" (*Beginnings* 14.)[75] Mason problematizes the ethnicity implied in the term Judean, of Judea, by noting the variety of other expressions that existed in ancient Judean, derived from the terms, *Yehuda* and *Judaismos*: "Yehudaism" is attested no earlier than 5th century CE (143); "Judaizing" meant to circumcise (146), and "'Judaismus' came into practice in early Christian writings" (150.)[76] The term for *ethne* was applied to a group based in a geographic settlement which, for the Roman empire, signaled their tax exemption; the *ethne* was applied to individuals associated with the cult practices of that settlement by people not associated with the *ethne*; therefore, Judean referred to a person who was a member of the people whose cult practices originated in Judea, and that included ex-patriots Philo of Alexandria, and Paul of Tarsus. Thus, to speak

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[74] Josephus, *The Wars*, 133-147.

[75] The term "Judean" is used by many contemporary historians; for example, Mason identifies Flavius Josephus as a Judean.

[76] Mason reviews the particular uses of "Judaismus/os" in early Christian texts from early second century with Ignatius of Antioch to Epiphaneus to fourth century Eusebius in "Jew, Judeans, Judaizing, Judaism" (151-155). I find interesting the fact that Judaism is a term that distinguished those who practiced circumcision in contrast to the non-circumcised followers of Jesus. Did the invention of the name Judaism take root in the formation of Christianity?

of Paul as Jewish only displaces how he positioned himself in his life, and amongst his followers; he was from Tarsus, a Roman citizen, a Judean living in Asia minor, and self-identified as a Pharisee. I will in my project identify the first-century community of Jewish people in Judea and in Asia Minor as Judean.

According to Luke-Acts, Paul had a revelation 'on the road to Damascus" which led to his conversion. The fact is that scholars do not hold much faith in the facts of Luke-Acts about Paul, since it was written only at the end of Paul's career as an Apostle, if not after his death around 67 CE. What Paul tells us about himself in his letters is very little, but he repeatedly attests to at least one divine encounter[77]. That divine encounter testimony points to one more category, which I add as a headline rather than as content for discussion here, and that is 'religious ecstasy'. Colleen Shantz's title alone, *Paul in Ecstasy: The Neurobiology of the Apostle's life and Thought*, indicates the interdisciplinary nature of the scholarship on religious ecstasy which, she notes, has not been explored much with respect to Paul in historical research (Shantz 12). That category of religious ecstasy contextualizes the psychoanalytic nature of my project as a whole, while, in specific terms, it is the focus of chapter 5.

My interest in exploring Paul's religious ecstasy requires attention to his writing, which is why I limit my analysis to a consideration of only letters commonly attributed to Paul: i.e., Thessalonians, Philemon, Philippians, 1 and 2 Corinthians, Galatians, and Romans. Any references to Luke-Acts will be made because a scholar's argument requires it, but I will refrain from engaging critically in the reference. These letters written by Paul during his ministry spreading the Gospel to the Gentiles, starting in the late 40s and ending with his last letter to the Romans sometime during the early sixties, reflect one period of Paul's life and did not reflect a theological project, nor were they read as

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[77] Morray-Jones argues that there is too little evidence in the letters to determine how many experiences Paul had; though he does point out that the event of his first encounter is different from his ascension to the third heaven 2 Corinthians 12:2.

scripture. They were written by a man on a political mission to save people from the apocalypse. In that respect, Badiou misrepresents the political activist Paul as a Saint. If Paul was not a Christian, he was not a Saint, either; in saying this, I do not aim to de-sanctify Paul, or show any disrespect to believers, but simply want to refocus this modern lens on the past when Christianity did not exist; what did exist in the first century was a man whose ecstatic experience I call a trauma was documented in his letters.

THOUGHT EXPERIMENT

Badiou contends that, "Death is a construction of the evental site insofar as it brings it about that resurrection (which cannot be inferred from it) will have been addressed to men, to their subjective situation" (*St. Paul* 70). In other words, the crucifixion of Jesus only serves to highlight the truth-Event of the resurrection. Žižek contributes an eschatological emphasis to Badiou's 'truth-Event': "The naming of the truth-Event is 'empty' precisely insofar as it refers to the fullness yet to come" (82). If Christ is 'a *coming'* as an event that *happened*, in Badiou's terms, and in Žižek's terms, what happened is a promise of his return to affirm the resurrection to come, to this I add that the return will finally confirm or deny his crucifixion. Until that day, the historical Jesus persists only as symbolic energy in the dynamic exchange between the crucifixion and the resurrection.

As a thought experiment, I would like to signal a rethinking of Badiou's truth event of the resurrection. His implicit identification of Paul as a Christian perpetuates the false assumption that Paul's 'truth-Event' was also Christian. In order to follow through on Badiou's promise to free Paul's message from Christian-ness, I would like cut the desire/drive cycle of the

resurrection/crucifixion by de-linking Jesus from the Christ.[78] That delinking

begins with Paul's "gospel' which came through the inhuman source: it was a

revelation very much like Althusser's interpellation, or the call. The

'interpellation', or 'call', *happened to him*. In the historian's circle, this 'call' is

the ecstatic experience.

In terms of Freud's method of analysis (it does not matter if it is true or

false, what matters is what the subject is saying), when we hear Paul excitedly

proclaiming his 'interpellation', or call: "the gospel is not… of human origin…

but through a revelation of Jesus Christ" (Gal 1:11-12), the question raised is not

whether or not Paul's authority as an apostle came from an inhuman source,

because we know, through Althusser's somewhat awkward representation, how

the inhuman can speak to people, on a spectrum from the psychotic episodes of

the nervous energy of Schreber's two Gods, to the quiet insistent inner voice

Dolar inherits from Freud, and everything in between; nor is it strange to think

of the dead speaking to us in dream, because the father's dream of his son

attests to that being a reality, too; no, what is inexplicable is Paul's relation to

the dead Jesus who came to him as resurrected. If the logic of the Christian

symbolic of the indivisible remainder is that resurrection is only possible for the

dead, what must be added to this logic is that, without Christ's resurrection,

there would be no Jesus crucifixion. Paul's letters are our only access to the

'real' void, which the name covers over. I accept that that 'real' trauma will not

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[78] This delinking strategy is carried out by a small group of biblical studies scholars through a
philological investigation of the meaning of messiah in first-century Judea. The modern
discovery of the Dead Sea Scrolls and other archaeological finds of the twentieth century have
troubled the definition of the signifier Christos to designate Jesus as messiah. Novenson
considers the semantic exchange between 'Christ' and *mesiach* in *Christ among the Messiahs:
Christ Language in Paul and Messiah Language in Ancient Judaism* (2012), by outlining the
scholarship that has gone a long way to de-linking the orthodox Christian principle of Jesus
Christ as messiah from the Judean concept of the messiah/christos used by Paul. My research
contributes to Novenson's project from a psychoanalytic perspective.

be found, but that a re-vision of the indivisible remainder that Paul, the first century Judean Pharisee, had in mind, is possible in a limited way.

I take one more step in this thought experiment. In purely logical terms, we recognize that the following statement is true: the dead Jesus was able to speak to Paul because he was resurrected. What is not logical is how Paul, who never knew Jesus as the historical preaching and healing man, could know this resurrected figure was Jesus. Unlike now, back then there was no currency of the image via TV or photography by which to identify someone. There is no reason to believe Paul had any means of recognizing Jesus by sight or voice. Subtracting the illogical from the logical, then, the most we can say about what Paul wrote is: there was a revelation about resurrection because of death.

In the chapters ahead, I will be driven by the following questions. With the un-binding of Jesus from Christ, what is visible in Paul's Christ? In delinking these forces of Christianity, can Paul's experience continue to be identified as conversion? In erasing our anachronistic Christian-ness from Paul's experience, does our inherited trauma look different from those already proposed?

CHAPTER 3: MESSIANIC ROADS AND HIGHWAYS: FROM PAUL'S
WEAKNESS TO BENJAMIN'S WEAK

INTRODUCTION

The process of delinking Jesus from the Christ, the signifier from its predicate,
involves identifying the point of articulation of messianic redemption with the
Christian figure. What that means is not as simple as it sounds. For one, the
Christian messiah has had a monopoly on the messianic expectation of western
culture for twenty centuries, and notably invisible through the secular
paradigms, as Löwith has argued, which is to say that its original moment has
been obscured by centuries of assumptions. For another, while Judaism "has
always maintained a concept of redemption as an event which takes place
publicly, on the stage of history and within the community" (*The Messianic Idea
in Judaism* 1), as Scholem argues, there has been an effort in rabbinic Judaism to
suppress apocalyptic thinking raised by the first-century gnostic thinking of
Merkabah literature, and early Jewish mystical practices that anticipated the
'end days', which explained a general reticence to speak about the messiah in
Jewish culture (70). As James Dan explains in his study of the divide between
the political messiah and the mystical messiah: "It was Scholem in his detailed
study of the subject who proved that Jewish messianism is a constant
component of Jewish belief, always present, even if for long periods it is
subdued and does not express itself strongly in historical occurrences" (James
Dan 121.) Scholem's historical review of the messiah in Jewish history
coincides with a scholarly re-visitation of the idea of the messiah in the first
century based on discoveries of first-century artifacts such as the Dead Sea
Scrolls. As expressed so clearly in Neusner's edited collection title, *Judaisms
and Their Messiahs at the Turn of the Christian Era*, research by Jewish scholars

of both secular and sectarian backgrounds have problematized the Christian paradigm of a singular redeemer sent by God. The essential conflict between the coherent Christian messiah and the multiplicity of and resistances to the Jewish notion of the messiah contextualize Benjamin's decidedly ambiguous messianism.

My investigation in the pages ahead exploits the ambiguity of Benjamin's messianic for the reason that it has inspired a debate traced by contemporary concerns with Jewish identity and Marxist politics. In *The Time That Remains*, Giorgio Agamben proposes that Benjamin's 'weak messianic power' in his "Theses on the Philosophy of History", is a 'quote without quotation marks' of Paul's idea of strength in weakness in 2 Corinthians 12:9-10. Brian Britt is adamantly opposed to this theory. As I will show in the pages ahead, not only is it a delicate business to distinguish what first-century messianic traces are defining Benjamin's thoughts on redemption, it is difficult to isolate the juncture at which a Christian messiah is not a Jewish messiah in the first century. By way of exposing the different assumptions driving Agamben and Britt each about Benjamin's messianic, I review scholarship on Paul's idea of the Christ in conjunction with a consideration of the first-century messiahs in literature contemporary to Paul, and conclude with an attempt to address the disagreement between Agamben and Britt about Benjamin's 'weak messianic power'.

PART ONE - THE 'CITING WITHOUT CITATION'
In their introduction to a special messiah issue of the *Journal of Cultural Research* (Vol 13, Issues 3-4, 2009), Arthur Bradley and Paul Fletcher suggest that, "we might trace the evolution of modern thought through the figure of the messianic itself" (183). They point to how Heidegger's work on Paul's letters in

Phenomenology of Religion led to his idea of 'ontological messianism' which, they say, can be traced through work by contemporary philosophers, especially in the expression, "messianic now" (184), a distinctly Pauline reference. What is clear about this messianic figure of the 'now' in modern thought by religious and atheist scholars alike, such as Derrida, Levinas, Benjamin, Žižek, etc., is its dialogue, ranging from covert to overt, with the Christian foundation. Assuming a Christian privileging in the Pauline messiah seems to be at the root of Brian Britt's critique of Agamben's theory that argues for a link between Benjamin's "Theses on the Philosophy of History" (1939) and Paul's *2 Corinthians*. In, "The Schmittian Messiah in Agamben's *The Time That Remains*", Britt faults Agamben's 'theory' for misrepresenting Benjamin as upholding a Schmittian fascism that enforces a Christian messiah, the politics of which, he stresses, Benjamin spent his life resisting. To emphasize his point, Britt declares, "Not all messianic roads lead to and from Paul" (279). What does Britt mean by disconnecting Paul from a plurality of messianic roads? In relation to the supposed connection in Benjamin's work with Paul's letters, Britt implies that Paul's messiah is Christian and so, by way of destabilizing the Christian monopoly on the contemporary messiah, he gestures to the messianic ideas preceding Paul.

Most scholarship agrees that when Paul identified Jesus as Christos, he was translating into Greek from the Hebrew '*mesiach*, meaning the anointed one[79]. The fact that 'anointed' distinguished one group of believers from the

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[79] In "The Jewish Messiahs, The Pauline Christ, and the Gentile Question" (*Journal of Biblical Literature* 128 (2009): 357-373), Matthew V. Novenson reviews the possibility that when Paul was identifying Jesus as Christos he was not identifying him as a 'messiah', though he affirms that a connection between the Greek Christos and the Hebrew 'mesiach' exists. In his book-length project, *Christ among the Messiahs*, he brings more evidence to current scholarship that troubles the orthodox understanding of Paul's term 'Christos'. He argues that in Paul's time, the concept of 'messiah' was a fluid one referencing biblical literature about the 'anointed one' who would be a political leader. As an example of the trouble in apprehending semantic values in the obscure historical period of the first-century, Novenson points out that 'anointing' people

larger group of believers, has ideological implications whose irony is not often acknowledged and does bear considering in detail, but which needs to be postponed until after I have completed separating Jesus from Christ. The meaning of messiah that we have today is a retroactive rendering of the original concept of 'anointed'; in the OT, *mesiach* identified a public figure like a King, such as David, or a priest, such as Aaron; implicit in the anointing was divine approval. In Paul's time, '*mesiach*' came to denote explicitly a figure chosen by God to save or redeem the people. To complicate this etymological shift, there were many different ideas of messiah. By focusing on considering what first-century scholarship can say about Paul's idea of *mesiach*, I aim to contest Britt's argument of Agamben's thesis.

In *The Time that Remains*, Agamben's project to reintroduce the term 'messiah' into discourse on Paul, argues against Badiou's theory that Paul's message was intended to be universal: "an indifference that tolerates difference" (89-99), Badiou claims, aimed to dissolve the politics of ethnic difference since, "[t]he production of equality and the casting off, in thought, of differences are the material signs of the universals" (109). For Agamben, this way of reading Paul misses the point of Paul's 'evangelion', or good news. According to Agamben, the good news of the gospel is actually that Jesus Christ, the messiah, signaled a new relation to the law which involved a break, a cut in the law, leading to differences and distinctions that can never be transcended as a universal concept: "The messianic cut of Apelles clearly never adds up to a universal" (52) which leads Agamben to conclude: "You see, it makes no sense

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was a practice that stopped in the second century BCE, but as a practice of sanctification, it continued as a practice in places (51). Therefore, the term was not understood to be literal but figurative. Borrowing Loren Stuckenbruch's idea that use of the term in that time was 'creatively biblical", Novenson concludes: "It follows that all such [messiah] texts should be taken into consideration as evidence of this interpretive practice and, second, that no one messiah text has a claim to represent 'the messianic idea' in its pristine form over against other messiah texts that do so less adequately" (62-63).

to speak of universalism with regard to Paul, at least when the universal is thought of as a principle above cuts" (53). It is on the principle of the distinctions, and the Schmittian concept of the sovereign's power to define the exception, that Brian Britt critiques Agamben for imposing a Schmittian concept of the messiah on Benjamin's *Theses on the Philosophy of History*; and specifically Agamben's work to prove a correspondence between Benjamin's 'weak messianic power' and Paul's phrase "but [the Lord] said to me, "My grace is sufficient for you, for power is made perfect in weakness" (*2* Corinthians 12:9), which Agamben defines as a 'citing without citation".

In criticizing this thesis, Britt emphasizes that his "primary concern is not Agamben's reading of Paul but of his reading of Walter Benjamin as a Pauline thinker through the lenses of Carl Schmitt's political theology" (263). Britt is convinced that Benjamin is merely a tool for Agamben, a tool for scholarly legitimacy, which makes Benjamin out to be a Schmittian (267). Thus, in the effort to delink Benjamin from Schmitt, Britt's task is to prove that what Agamben sees as a Pauline citation in 'weak messianic power' is no more than "a loose associative allusion, not a citation" (270). This delinking is centered on the fact that Agamben ignores the *Sitz im Leben* of Paul's messiah within the context of the historical concept of messiah which Benjamin was drawing on: "Agamben's claim to discovering a one-to-one correspondence between Paul's text and Benjamin's oversimplifies the broad, complex strands of biblical tradition" (282). In my review of Britt's critique below, I want to qualify that, even if Agamben claims a one-to-one correspondence, which he does not, but rather uses Benjamin's metonymic 'citing without citation" expression, I am not out to prove a one-to-one correspondence, but a correspondence that is stronger than Britt's diminutive 'allusion." Secondly, while Britt has grounds for complaint that Agamben does not do his biblical homework, Britt's effort to show the absent homework only emphasizes that Britt's argument

overcomplicates the connection Agamben claims to have found while at the same time proving plausible the idea of seeing a hidden citation of Paul in Benjamin's work.

As far as Britt is concerned, being able to see a connection between Benjamin's 'weak messianic force', and the *schwachen* and *Kraft* in Paul's 2 Corinthians 12;9, is weakened by the missing 'messiah' in Luther's translation of "my strength is made perfect in weakness" (*denn mein Kraft ist in den Schwachen machtig*) (2 Corinthians 12:10) (268). Agamben is apparently aware that there is no 'messiah' in the Pauline text, but is obviously unaware of the trouble Britt claims this engenders. Britt's observation seems the most damning critique of Agamben's discovery: How could there be an actual 'citing without citation marks' if the Pauline line involving 'weakness' has no messiah? In defense of Agamben's intuitive reading, the 'weak' in Paul's lines, which the Lord claims Paul must accept, is made bearable by "the power of Christ" which dwells in him; that is, a messiah appears in the passage though not as weak, but as the voice of the Lord (my grace is sufficient for you), which is the power of Christ that allows Paul to claim, "whenever I am weak, then I am strong" (2 Corinthians 12:10). Having said that, Britt's observation that the messiah is not weak in Paul's 2 Corinthians as it is in Benjamin's text is a keen observation, which explains why linking weakness to the messiah becomes the thread that he follows in his analysis.

Having identified the missing messiah, Britt proceeds to offer alternative sources for Benjamin's *Schwachen* (268): The Suffering Servant in Second Isaiah points to 'my chosen one', or messiah (42:1-4) but no 'weak'; we read 'God has been my strength' but again, no 'weak' (49:1-6); the suffering of the 'servant', ugly and 'despised', is not defined as 'weak' (52:13-53:12). When Deutero-Isaiah was written, the suffering servant was not a messianic figure, but was a prophet or the nation as a whole, reflecting an eschatological interpretation

sometime during the critical period of the Babylonian exile. The messianic significance in Isaiah was a retroactive interpretation of the Biblical text in response to political troubles which some date from the rule of Antiochus IV and the Maccabean Revolt. As the Judean desire for independence from first Greek, and then Roman rule in Judea, gained traction, an eschatological expectation of redemption began to take shape through a divine intercessor in a movement known as apocalypticism. Paul, the Pharisee from Tarsus, versed in the law and Biblical scripture, was a participant in this apocalyptic thinking, which helps explain his use of Deutero-Isaiah's suffering servant as messianic. The complexity of interpretation which Britt brings forward about the suffering servant to fill in what is absent from Agamben's research does not, ultimately, prove the insignificance of Agamben's discovery; the small pool of literature used for messianic projects, which together reflect various and even competing ideas of redemption and salvation as they have come to be associated with the messiah in the first-century CE, contextualizes Paul as a Judean author writing within an amorphous messianic tradition.

On the matter of combining 'weak' and 'strong', Britt suggests looking at Joel 4:10: "... if not explicitly messianic, [it] is clearly apocalyptic: "Let the weak say, "I am strong!" (*Der Schwache spreche: Ich bin Stark!")* (269). Scholars date Joel to about 400 to 350 BCE; its hybrid prophetic and apocalyptic structure mentions no messiah. While apocalypticism came to be associated with an eschatological anticipation of a future redemption, not all apocalyptic texts had a messiah (Collins 11). What remains confusing for me is why Britt would think it feasible that Benjamin circumvented Paul's letters to fuse Joel and Isaiah in a messianic expectation, when the precedent for placing 'weak' in some kind of indirect relation to the messiah is found in Paul's letter. In short, the only messianic way to Joel or Isaiah is through Paul. Though Britt is correct

to assert that not all messianic roads lead to Paul, Britt's historical review overlooks the convergence of ideas within Paul's letters.

Britt's effort to detach Agamben's thesis of Paul from Benjamin with each biblical reference only re-attaches Paul to his context, and that is especially obvious in Britt's admission when reviewing the significance of *Erlösung* (redemption) and *Erlöser* (redeemer) in Benjamin's theses. As Britt observes, references in "Thesis 6" to the redeemer parallel those to the redeemer in Isaiah (9, 11, and 40-55), which is "a text that precedes and influences Paul on the idea of a weak Messiah" (270). If Britt can here affirm Paul's use of Isaiah for messianic purposes, then why ask the reader to see Benjamin use Isaiah as the preferred messianic source in 'weak messianic power', overlooking Paul's use of Isaiah for the 'weakness' of the suffering servant? While this is a contradiction within Britt's article that signals problematic assumptions about Christianity and Paul, it also points to a problem with Agamben's thesis that Britt's critique circles but cannot clearly articulate. It is true that Agamben's theory does not appear to be substantiated by the historical record, and Britt's cursory review of the historical record shows no substantial support for Agamben; it is also true that if Benjamin invented combining the messiah with weak, then Paul's reflection is only passably more direct than Isaiah, thus an 'allusion'. Thus, Britt's identification of the 'absent messiah' appears to weaken Agamben's thesis; a deeper investigation into the historical record, however, and specifically the biblical scholarship on Isaiah and other pre-Christian texts introduced by Britt's brief review, will show that, far from making "Agamben's case for a primarily Pauline influence even more dubious" (279), this literature will offer proof that Benjamin could have had Paul in mind when writing 'weak messianic power'.

NOT ALL MESSIANIC ROADS

When Britt claims "not all messianic roads lead to and from Paul" (279), the pivotal factor in this statement is Paul; he is not the historical figure, but the letter writer who represents Jesus Christ. Yet, for Britt, the problem with the Pauline messiah, a.k.a. Jesus Christ, is not its Christian-ness, per se, but its Schmittian-ness: "Agamben's messianic genealogy from Paul to Schmitt and Benjamin really amounts to the imposition of Schmitt on Paul and Benjamin" (278). In Britt's assessment, even Paul's messiah needs defending against Schmittianism. Britt's protectionism of two dead people's ideas implies that their works cannot speak for them. In order to save both Benjamin and Paul from Schmitt's fascism, Britt focuses on messianism, which "emerged ... from a large number of biblical and postbiblical texts and became part of the culturally pervasive biblical tradition theorized by Benjamin" (278). Indicative of Britt's animus against Paul's Christian messiah, which I assume is a means of rectifying centuries of prejudice for Christianity by here speaking against it, Britt substitutes Jesus with Jewish messiahs: "Although It can be argued that messianic texts in *Isaiah* 9, 11, or 53 do not reflect a coherent or full-fledged doctrine of the messiah, Michael Fishbane shows how early rabbinic understandings of the Messiah have strong biblical roots..." (278). Following Britt's gesture to include a literary period for analysis, I concentrate on the suffering servant in Deutero-Isaiah in this section, to draw into focus a period that remains obscured by limited textual evidence. When the messianic ideas emerged and, more importantly, how they spread, can only be supposed, based on the limited library at hand. In this analysis, I want to highlight that, while Britt is mainly correct to see that not all messianic roads lead to Paul, his assumption that Paul promoted the Christian messiah over other messiahs overlooks Paul's pre-Christian context. With respect to messianism after Paul, I will not have the space to engage in depth with that assertion, but rather, at the end of this section will point to some of the scholarship that outlines how

Judaism has engaged in a dialogue with the dominant Christian messiah over the centuries which problematizes the second part of Britt's assertion.

For Britt, the issue of the difference between Benjamin's messiah and Agamben's Pauline messiah, comes down to a scholarly struggle between the Jewish and the Christian messiahs. That is evident in Britt's introduction of Israel Knohl's scholarship on the messiah in the Dead Sea Scrolls. Knohl's thesis is simple; the "Self-Glorification Hymn" (4Q491b), a first-person text by someone who claims to be a messiah, is the messiah who, preceding Jesus, "influenced the emergence of Christianity" (52); this messiah supposedly preceded Jesus and thus, for contemporary readers, displaces Jesus from his primacy. Moreover, Knohl asserts, "in my opinion, there is evidence that the speaker in the hymn was a leader of the Qumran sect who saw himself as the Messiah and was so regarded by his community" (20). Unfortunately, Knohl's research collapses on too many outstanding failures of the example, based on a thesis that is purely speculative.[80] For the thesis to stand, the messianic claimant would have to have been a resident of the site where the scrolls were found, that is Qumran; he would have to have existed before Jesus; and especially, he would have to have existed at all. No matter how possible the assertion, there is simply no concrete evidence for either proposition.

Knohl's emphasis of the uniqueness of the scroll—no other messianic voice exists in the Qumran material—is less proof of an actual messiah, than it is a sign of an anomaly; anomaly or not, this figure is equal to Jesus, in Knohl's review, because the suffering servant passage from Isaiah 53 used by Paul to define Jesus' vicarious suffering, is found in the Self-Glorification hymn scroll:

> "My glory is in[comparable] and besides me no one is exalted, nor comes to me, for I reside […], in the heavens, and there is no […]… I am counted

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[80] "The possibility that the figure in question was a messianic leader was briefly considered, among other possibility, in E. Puech, "La croyance des Esseniens en la vie future: Immortalité, résurrection, et éternelle?" Ebib 22 (Paris, 1993): 392-395" (Knohl 110).

among the gods and my dwelling is in the holy congregation; [my] desire
is not according to the flesh, [but] all that is precious to me is in [the] glory
[of] […] the holy [dwel]ling. [W]ho has been considered despicable on
my account? And who is comparable to me in my glory?... who bea[rs all]
sorrows like me? And who [suffe]rs evil like me?" (4Q491 Frag 1; 6-8
Martínez p 981).

According to Knohl, the last lines echo Isaiah 53:3, "he was despised, we held
him of no account; Yet it was our sickness that he was bearing; our suffering
that he endured" (Isaiah 53:4). Then he proposes that this messiah figure
preceded Jesus because, when he identified himself as 'beloved of kings",
Knohl singles out a friend of King Herod who is named in Josephus' *Jewish
Antiquities* 15:372-79 as Manaheim (55). Knohl's hypothesis (51), already weak
because it relies on a single document, is further weakened by a fundamental
literalism that does not grasp the figurative nature of 4Q471b, (it is not the
actual voice of the messiah in heaven), or its performative quality (it is alluding
to Biblical scripture.)

As Knohl outlines in his Appendix A, scholarship has proposed some
feasible authors for the messianic hymn, one of which is the author of the
Hodayot scrolls, who some argued was the Teacher of Righteousness, a leader
mentioned in the CD who may have been a leader of the community[81]. Collins
argues against seeing a connection between the messianic hymn and the
Teacher's hymns (the *Hodayot*) because the language cannot be compared
(*Apocalypticism* 146). Eshel notes: "The resemblance between the Teacher of
Righteousness and the Eschatological High Priest could have led some scribes
to incorporate the Hymn of Self-Glorification, which was composed in the

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[81] So much of the Scrolls remain a mystery, so that claiming a connection between the Teacher
of Righteousness and the author of the *Hodayot* Scrolls remains in the area of speculation.

name of the Eschatological High Priest, into the *Hodayot Scroll*" (Eshel, "4Q471b: A Self-Glorification Hymn," 202). At the most, the messiah hymn points to a redaction of the Teacher's hymns, but does not affirm that the Teacher was a messiah, much less affirm it is the words of an actual person who was a messiah; rather, the most that can be said about the scroll is that it reflects a messianic expectation by the author and probably those who read the hymn. Hengel remains agnostic about interpreting 4Q471b as messianic at all; the elevated status of the figure suggests seeing him as the arch-angel Michael, though when the figure compares himself to human rulers, the angelic reading crumbles; with respect to the *Hodayot* scrolls, he argues against scholars who have claimed the author reflected a messianic figure like the suffering servant since, if he suffers, he does not suffer vicariously[82].

I would make the same argument against the messianic scroll author: his suffering is meant to glorify himself; when he claims to 'bear all sorrows' like no one else, he is only boasting about his capacity to suffer, and makes no reference to the fact that he is suffering on behalf of others. Knohl has identified a link to Isaiah 53 in the *DSS* messianic scroll, but any concrete evidence that could substantiate the suffering servant in Isaiah as the messiah expected in the *DSS* writers/readers remains obscure to scholars. To this research I would add one more point against Knohl's assertion of a messiah which predated and influenced Jesus' mission: there is no evidence that 4Q491 (and its variants) predated Jesus and Paul since the Qumran library was in operation until Rome destroyed it, a few years before 70 CE, the destruction of the Second Temple. To add fuel to a burning fire of speculation, I would suggest that rather than being a source which influenced Christianity, this messianic scroll could have been

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[82] Martin Hengel and Daniel P. Bailey, "The Effective History of Isaiah 53 in the Pre-Christian Period". *The Suffering Servant: Isaiah 53 in Jewish and Christian Sources*. Edited by Bernd Janowski and Peter Stuhlmacher. Grand Rapids, MI/ Cambridge, UK: Eerdmans, 2004. 118.

influenced either by Jesus himself[83] or Paul's mission in the twenty years he was preaching before his death in 67 CE.

The variety of messiahs represented in the wealth of material found off the shores of the Dead Sea affirms Britt's assertion that there were many messianic expectations in Paul's time. The more eschatological scrolls can be said to fit into a body of literature of this period identified as apocalyptic. As Joel shows, not all apocalyptic literature points to a messianic figure; and, as 4Q471b highlights, not all putative messianic texts are apocalyptic. Technically, as Saperstein notes, the messiah is an anachronistic concept (8); it is a term that has been applied to OT figures in response to a Judean phenomenon of a real anxiety about the future in the face of political struggle against the ruling forces. The figure has evolved over time, incorporating key tropes; namely the chosen one as the 'anointed' of *mesiach*; sacrifice, as exemplified in the suffering servant; and exultation, variously represented as resurrection and or simply ascension to heaven or, as in the self-glorification hymn, superiority.[84]

The messiah as the "the anointed one", originally in the OT signaling a figure chosen by God, like king David, or a priest selected for office, over time came to be associated with a saviour / redeemer figure[85]. Exactly when the

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[83] The central paradigm of this project is that Jesus is not the author of his messianic status; it was conferred post-mortem, and the record suggests that it was done so by Paul.

[84] For a useful reference with some commentary of the use of the Hebrew 'mesiach' in OT texts and in pseudepipgraphical material, see Gerben S. Oemega's *The Anointed and his People: Messianic Expectations from the Maccabees to Bar Kokhba* (1998).

[85] Seeing Jesus as the messianic fulfillment of a long-standing Jewish tradition in the OT was central to approaches taken by biblical scholars such as Sigumund Mowinkel in his *He That Cometh* (1956). As a result of the widespread access to the Dead Sea Scrolls, some scholars have raised questions about this research because the rare use of 'mesiach' in the documents suggest that messianism was not central to the Judean cult or its eschatological hopes. Therefore, there is no direct correlation between the messianism of Jesus Christ and Judean cult practices of the time. James H. Charlesworth's edited collection of articles, *The Messiah: Developments in Earliest Judaism and Christianity* (1992) is indicative of this critical scholarship. In his article, "From Messianology to Christology: Problems and Prospects", Charlesworth points out that Jesus was not identified by Paul, or most of the other early texts, as having

suffering servant came to be associated with the saviour messiah remains obscured by our limited understanding of Second Temple idiomatic expressions. Hengel traces the anointing of the suffering servant from Isaiah 53 through various texts of the pre-Christian period. Determining what is meant by anointed, or who is anointed, in Isaiah remains difficult; anointing can be literally blessing someone with oil; or in more figurative terms, being called or chosen by God. Sometimes the Suffering Servant was the priest or prophet who was anointed; sometimes the anointed Servant was seen as the collective of the nation of Israel: "Under certain circumstances the two possibilities [individual or collective] could be viewed simultaneously as different aspects of the text, because a messianic figure is always at the same time a representative of the whole" (81). Thus, the *mesiach* of the pre-Christian period remained ambiguous. Moreover, the "Son of God" motif "can be applied collectively to Israel, to the Messiah, and to the individual godly, pious, or wise person" (82). Thus, when reading apocalyptic literatures that reference a *mesiach*, an anointed figure, and especially the enigmatic "Son of God"[86], we know we are encountering a non-standard idea used creatively by a diverse faction of politically motivated Judean apocalypticists.

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messianic attributes (ie. son of David) (8), thus leading to questions about whether Jesus was in fact a saviour figure before his crucifixion, and raising questions about when his messianic status was determined after his death. If the DSS are any proof of messianic thinking of the time, Charlesworth argues, then "statistically we must admit that messianology was not a major concern of the community" of Qumran (25). N. A. Dahl takes a semantic approach to the relation between the Hebrew 'mesiach' and the Greek "Christos', highlighting the selective use of 'Christ' which suggests the existence of conflicting agendas within the Christian movements (398). That is, texts that represent Jesus a messiah of the crucifixion rarely use "Christ" to define Jesus; whereas texts that distinguish Jesus as resurrected use Christ often (primarily Paul). J M Roberts provides a brief review of the etymological/social development of the Hebrew 'mesiach' in "The Old Testament's Contributions to Messianic Expectations". In light of Freud's theory of the Egyptian origin of Moses teachings, Roberts makes a very interesting point that Egyptian royal protocol may be the foundation for "much of the mythological dimension in the later messianic expectations" (43). I believe there is enough tension in this idea to warrant an expanded study.

[86] For more reflection on the role of the Son of God in Pauline letters see Shantz, Segal, Tabor, Morray-Jones, or chapter 5.

The scrolls found at Qumran exemplify this diversity. In *The Apocalyptic Imagination* (1998), Collins claims "there is little evidence for the anointing of prophets in the Hebrew Bible," yet, "prophets are 'anointed ones'" in the Qumran scrolls, CD (*Damascus Document*)[87] 2:12, 6:1, and IQM (*War Scroll*) 11:7 (166). In some texts, the priestly messiah is identified as the Interpreter of the Law (1Q28 a 2.11-20), or prophet in the Star of Jacob (4Q175 and 4Q *Testimonium*). Then there are scrolls that reference a royal messiah, such as the King David reference in the 'root of Jesse" from Isaiah 11 (4Qp161 11-21; 1Q28b 2.22-5.20). In the *War Scroll* we read that the messiah is God (1QM 11.11), but we also see a fusion of the King and priest as the Warrior-Priest (1QM 15.4-6). In the CD[88] we read of two messiahs, one priest and one King (CD VII.19),[89] and we also read of a prophet and the anointed of Aaron and Israel in 4Q*Testimony*. A highly unorthodox editorializing in Isaiah 51:5 of the *Great Isaiah Scroll* (Isa), wherein the first person pronoun of God's voice in the MT text was changed to third person denoting the anointed servant, suggests the primary importance of Isaiah amongst the community at some point in their association. Regarding the tendency by scholars who assume that the scrolls represent one group of people at the site known as Qumran, Schiffman "cautions against seeing the material found in the cases as a monolithic corpus, the elements of which may be harmonized with one another at will" ("Messianic Figures and Ideas in the Qumran Scrolls" 129). Those scholars who contest the long-standing theory that the residents were Essenes offer the same

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[87] The name Damascus Document applied to texts found at Qumran is meant to recognize that it is a copy of a scroll found in a Geneza in Egypt in the first half of the twentieth century.

[88] Florentino García Martínez and Eibert J. C. Tigchelaar, editors. "The Damascus Document." *The Dead Sea Scrolls: Study Edition, Volumes 1*. Leiden: Brill; Michigan: William B. Eerdmans Publishing Company, 2000. 561. All subsequent Dead Sea Scrolls excerpts cited are from this translation.

[89] "And a star is the Interpreter of the Law, who will come to Damascus, as is written: Num 24:13 [sic] 'A star moves out of Jacob, and a scepter arises out of Israel.' The scepter is the prince of the whole congregation and when he rises he will destroy all the sons of Seth" (CD VII.19).

caution.[90] In summary, the most that can be said about the writers and readers of the Scrolls, as different as they probably were, is that they maintained an eschatological expectation of defeating evil with divine support, and that conviction probably reflected many factions in Judea. Collins contends that the Qumran documents overall do not necessarily show that a messianic expectation was central to the community from the beginning, but they do show that in Judea "a messianic expectation eventually arose" (83); and that this expectation was closely connected with the political energy of apocalypticism.

Even when it was first written, Isaiah reflected an eschatological expectation of the redemption of Israel (Gignilliat 65) and Israel's role amongst the nations: "the servant is given a unique, dual role—that of restorer of the remnant of Israel and as light to the nations" (Isaiah 49.1-6, Gignilliat 80). That was adapted in various ways by the pre-Christian texts, as either priest/prophet or Davidic messiah, or a combination thereof; in the Christian tradition, the messianic suffering servant took on a decidedly singular identity as Jesus. While most scholars claim that Paul's use of Isaiah in his letters affirms Jesus as a suffering messiah, not all scholars see that Paul's use of Isaiah reflects only Jesus;[91] some have argued that Paul cites Isaiah to identify himself as the suffering servant. Donaldson, for example, claims that Paul cites Isaiah 49 not for Christ's suffering, but for his own suffering.[92] Contributing to this argument,

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[90] The long standing belief that the community at Qumran were Essenes, comes from the earliest archaeological finds on the Dead Sea Shores where the scrolls were found at a site that had buildings that suggested a community lived there, evidence which seemed to affirm Josephus' claim that the Essenes lived on the shore. Steve Mason critiques this thesis in his "What Josephus says about the Essenes in the Judean War". Stephen G. Wilson and Michel Desjardins, eds., *Text and Artifact in the Religions of Mediterranean Antiquity: Essays in Honour of Peter Richardson* (Waterloo: Wilfrid Laurier University Press, 2000), 434-467.

[91] As well as the scholars outlined forthwith, James Tabor is a name I add to the list of those who believe that Paul self-identifies as a suffering servant (*Things Unutterable* 41).

[92] Terence Donaldson, *Paul and the Gentiles* 254.

Lane argues that Paul's call in Gal 1:15 and 2 Corinthians "indicates that he has been called to prophetic office", where the 'call' signifies 'anointing'.[93]

Paul relies on Isaiah frequently to make his point which, in the letters to the gentiles (Thessalonians, 1 and 2 Corinthians, Galatians), was meant to justify his responsibility to the Gospel. An echo to Isaiah 49:1-3 can be heard in Paul's Gal 1:15: "But when God, who had set me apart before I was born, and called me through his grace". The suffering which Paul endures for his mission (2 Cor 11: 23-33) and which, because of proximity, identified metaphorically as 'the thorn in his side" (2 Cor 12:7), which points to his suffering on behalf of the mission as demanded by God, could suggest the vicarious nature of his suffering; he endured persecution on various fronts[94] in order to spread the 'good news' to the gentiles, a mission grounded in Isaianic language: "he has sent me to preach good news to the poor, to bring up the broken hearted, to proclaim liberty to the captives and release the prisoners...." (Isaiah 61:1.) In light of Jesus' messianic status, Paul's self-identification as the Isaiah messiah is provocative, but perhaps explained by the fact that Paul identifies himself as Christ: "It is no longer I who live, but Christ who lives in me" (Gal 2:20.) There is an implicit theological significance to these layers of identification, which shall be further developed, in the next chapter[95].

Gignilliat concedes to arguments for seeing Paul's self-identification as the suffering servant (*Paul and Isaiah's Servants*, 58), but raises objections both

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[93] William L. Lane. "Covenant: The Key to Paul's Conflict with Corinth" 7.

[94] As a Jesus follower, Paul was persecuted by the very Pharisees he once associated with; but as a Jesus follower with a mission for the Gentiles, he was also attacked, as *2 Corinthians* and *Galatians* suggest, by fellow Judean Jesus followers.

[95] Paul's thinking tends to be circular; he claims he has died in Christ and now, it is not him who lives, but Christ who lives in him. The future he promotes for the followers of Jesus is that, if they believe in Jesus Christ, then they will also be like Paul, who is like Jesus: they will die in Christ and, reborn, will have Christ live in them. If we take this 'christos' concept through Paul's thought to its logical conclusion, Paul's letters suggest that, not only are believers in Jesus saved at the end of time, but they become Christos, or, in other terms, messiahs before that end time. That is not as revolutionary an idea as it sounds for us today, considering that, in Isaiah's terms, all of Israel was anointed: *messiah*.

in principle and in application. In principle, Christ is the messiah and Paul is the apostle; one is divine and one is human. In application, Gignilliat asserts, Donaldson's idea of Paul's identification with Isaiah is contradicted by Paul's use of Isaiah 53 in 2 Cor 5:14-21 to identify Jesus as the Christ: "he died for all, so that those who live might live no longer for themselves, but for him who died and was raised for them". As far as Gignilliat is concerned, Paul cannot be the Servant: "The typological significance of the Servant is a weight too great to be placed on the shoulders of Paul. Someone greater than Paul is needed to carry this significance and it has been argued that this person is Jesus Christ" (109). I find this an interesting statement perhaps most because of his assertion that 'it has been argued' that Jesus is the servant. If there is an actual argument, Gignilliat does not provide details. The fact is, Gignilliat's claim is riddled with assumptions, the primary being that there is only one messiah and that is Jesus because he is more than human; the ability to suffer on behalf of others is so 'great' that Paul's mere mortal existence could not sustain the demand; moreover, it assumes that the suffering servant, as identified by Isaiah in the Babylonian exile, was a messiah, predicted as being chosen by God. This of course means that Paul's encounter with God (2 Cor 9) could not make him equal to the servant's call, and that Paul's use of the suffering servant could only point to the divine resurrected Jesus because his part in the mission of messianic redemption is inferior. Gignilliat accounts for Paul's apparent self-identification by defining him as "the servant of the Servant" (142). That argument solves a contradiction he claims is evident in Paul's letters while it tidily avoids addressing the supposed arguments questioning Jesus' legitimacy; this avoidance shall be taken up shortly.

Gignilliat's main argument that affirms Paul's use of Isaiah to define Jesus's messiah-ship is found in Romans 15:12: "The root of Jesse shall come, the one who rises to rule the Gentiles/ in him the Gentiles shall hope". The 'root

of Jesse' identifies the Davidic rule of the messianic expectation apparent in several Dead Sea Scrolls and is proof, Novenson argues, that Paul had meant the "messiah" when he identified the risen Jesus as the Christ (christos).[96] I would like to qualify Novenson's affirmation that Paul does mean 'messiah' when he says Christos, by pointing out what he later affirms in his book-length project, *Christ Among the Messiahs*, which is that Paul's 'messiah' was a fluid concept, very much like Hengel's idea. This fact can explain to some extent, what scholars of Paul's letters read as contradiction or incoherence.

Scholars tend to address incoherence in Paul's letters as reflecting his audience or, seeing as the letters were written over a period of two decades, the changes in his thinking over time. Thessalonians was his first letter; Romans was his last and was written just before his departure for what would be his third and last meeting in Jerusalem before his arrest and subsequent martyrdom in 67 CE. Paul had been operating independently of Jerusalem which seemed to be the hub of the movement; he met with Cephas and Jesus' brother James three years after his 'call' experience (Galatians 1:18-19) and did not return to Jerusalem until fourteen years later (Galaltians 2:1) when he was given the green light to spread the gospel to the gentiles. Unlike his letters to the gentile communities that he started, the Letter to the Romans has always been recognized as different because of the scripture cited; there are at least twenty-four references to Isaiah. Walters notes that, when one reads these passages in their groupings, the priorities indicate "Paul uses these scriptures along with his own hermeneutical methods to defend his gospel".[97] Supporting this theory, Hays suggests that the Christological significance of Isaiah 53, the sacrificing

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[96] Novenson, "The Jewish Messiahs, The Pauline Christ, and the Gentile Question" 358.
[97] J. Edward Walters, "How Beautiful are my Feet: The Structure and Function of Second Isaiah References in Paul's Letter to the Romans" 39.

suffering servant, in Paul is rather undeveloped[98] in comparison to Paul's use of Isaiah to promote his gospel: "Paul was not so much interested in proving that Jesus "was" the Servant. Rather, Paul was seeking to show that Isaiah revealed the prophetic promise of God's redemption of the world, embracing Gentiles as well as Jews" (48). Hays' and Walters' observations encourage seeing that Paul's citation of Isaiah in all his letters was rhetorical and that he saw his gospel as being on a par with Jesus's message; Paul wanted to show that his gospel promoting equality amongst the Judeans and the Gentiles was anticipated in Isaiah.

These observations are made more interesting when considered with Mason's observation that the otherwise profuse use of 'evangelion' in his letters to his Gentile missions is restricted in Romans (320). According to Mason, this resistance to discussing his 'evangelion', points to the fact that the audience at Rome was composed primarily of Judean Jesus followers who were likely resisting Paul's mission to the gentiles. In that light, the profuse use of Isaiah in this letter, written and delivered to an audience that knew Isaiah, suggests Paul's agenda was to emphasize Israel's responsibility as 'a light' for the gentile nations, and indirectly support his role in the project. This move contrasts his tendency to self-aggrandize in the letters to the Gentiles. Since the audience in Rome was probably mostly Judean, they would have known the Isaianic references, unlike the Gentile audiences in Thessalonia, Galatia, Corinth, Philippa, which probably would have not. The inconsistencies are explained by Paul's creative rhetorical adaptation of Isaiah to justify his mission to the different audiences. That is, Paul's use of Isaiah to substantiate his 'exulted' status as having a mission from God would have been key to his gentile audience, secondary or dependent on Jesus' messianic status, and since his

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[98] Richard B. Hays, *The Conversion of the Imagination: Paul as Interpreter of Israel's Scripture*, 49.

mission was not widely accepted by the Judean Jesus followers, Paul's focus with the Letter to the Romans was to highlight that Jesus' exulted status reinforced the legitimacy of his call to spread the Gospel to the Gentiles. While this would suggest Paul's use of Isaiah was primarily rhetorical, reflecting an indifference to the content he was using, the argument against that indifference centres on his conviction that his mission to the Gentiles was blessed by God.

With respect to his mission, at least, Paul seems to have seen his role in God's mission as equal to Jesus', and not as Gigilliant argues, subordinate to Jesus' role as the resurrected. This is affirmed in his self-identifying with the resurrected Christ, and also being the suffering servant. Paul's use of Isaiah would attest to what Hengel identified as fluidity in the concept of 'messiah', wherein his identification with being the prophet, the suffering servant, and the light to the Gentiles as an Israelite, was in a historical sense not indecent or far-fetched. This variety of meaning is attested in the double messiah motif in the *Damascus Document* which, in turn, helps to interpret Paul's use of Isaiah; If Paul used Isaiah to identify Jesus as the royal Davidic messiah in Romans, then we can see Paul, representing himself as working with Jesus for God's plan to spread the word to the nations, identifying as the priestly messiah complement. In this respect, the silence, which Mason notes in Paul's use of the gospel in Letter to the Romans, is echoed in his not self-identifying with Isaiah's suffering servant. This tension evident in Romans points to a number of possible reasons of which I would propose two: for one, Paul downplayed his gospel in *Roman* because of a sense inferiority amongst the other apostles (1 Corinthians 15:8-11), and the criticism he experienced by some or many Judean Jesus followers because of his gospel; for another, the fact that Jesus stands out as the dominant messianic figure in Romans (Isaiah 11:10), in comparison to the pre-Christian messianic multiplicity which Paul relied on while writing his other letters during his two decades of apostleship, may indicate a limiting of the messiah idea to a

singular figure near the end of Paul's missionary years possibly indicating pressure around him demanding justification for his heretical gospel.

Whether Paul initiated this limitation, or whether it was part of the movement around him, or even postdated him, all that the evidence allows us to say today is that the concept of the singular messiah is cemented by the time of Acts 8:32-35, wherein Paul's Conversion (Acts 9) follows Philip's identification of Jesus with Isaiah scripture: "Like a sheep he was led to slaughter…". The fiction of Acts is that, almost perfectly inverting the reality that Paul introduced the Isaiah language for the messianic significance of the Jesus movement, Philip introduces Jesus as the messiah promised in Isaiah. In this reification, the plurality of Paul's messianic Isaiah has been reduced to a single figure, Jesus. From this point on, there is no messianic accomplice or competition as found in the pre-Christian tradition as I have argued is evident in Paul's letters; there is no issue that Jesus is the messiah, because he has fulfilled the promise anticipated by the suffering servant of Isaiah 53. There is no argument. Gignilliat's resistance to seeing Paul as a suffering servant seems to break down on the issue of his inability to wear the mantel of 'messiah'. It could be that Paul's concept of 'anointing' was not directly associated with a 'redeeming saviour' figure we have come to know in Jesus, the saviour sent by God. We understand he saw himself as an actor in God's plan for mankind who, suffering on behalf of others (suffering servant), fulfills his part in God's plan. This is to say that Paul did not identify with the Jesus we know in the Christian faith, a resurrected God, because that figure did not exist for him: in this respect, Gignilliat makes an argument where there is none. Paul saw himself as part of the nation of Israel, chosen by God to fulfill the plan to redeem all of mankind, and in that way, he was fulfilling God's plan by fulfilling his 'call'; thus, he suffers persecution (on behalf of others) making him both 'anointed' and also the 'suffering servant'. I want to emphasize that, Paul's

distinguishing of Jesus from all mankind is part of the narrative of his fantasy which is skewed by his rhetoric in support of his gospel. Understanding what this fantasy signifies must wait till the end of Chapter 5. All that can be said now is that it is problematic to identify the Christian messiah as a Pauline concept, since the messiah was not God made incarnate in Jesus, but was a responsibility shared by all Israel, both the individual and the community. Against this plurality, the new tradition of a singular and particular messiah, which Britt targets as Paul's, is both true and not true, and so, misleading.

While I have made a case against seeing Paul as the author of the single messiah of Jesus Christ, since his use of the term 'Christos' was so fluid that he included himself as one on occasion, in Isaianic terms, his place in the continuum of influence in early Christian teachings suggests that he is the 'author' in the strictest sense,[99] in equating the suffering servant with the Christos in Christian thinking. By implication, then, he may be seen as indirectly responsible for reactions to the singular Jesus Christ found in rabbinic material. That is, if we close the gaps of transmission, we see Paul's hand reaching into rabbinic teachings. Adna's review of the use of Isaiah 52:13-53:12 in *Targum of Isaiah*, a rabbinic text dating to between 70 and 130 CE, highlights the singular messianic figure: "Targum of Isaiah has drawn all the three figures (prophet, messiah of Aaron and messiah of King David) into one… the picture of the *Mesiach* in Targum Isaiah 53 presents an analogy to that of the New Testament, though it must immediately be added that the New Testament description of the messiah-ship of Jesus Christ places the accent on very

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[99] I had always found fault with Foucault's article about the death of the author because the idea of the author's irrelevance erased the author's political context. In this specific incident of Paul's use of Isaiah as part of the narrative developed around the historical Jesus, I become sensitive to the salient element of Foucault's argument: no author writes in isolation but borrows and represents the climate of thinking around her/him. Paul was not thinking alone, and for this reason, the Isaianic concept was probably reflecting sentiments of his contemporaries at least about the idea of a political messiah being identified as a 'suffering servant'.

different terms."[100] What Adna calls an 'accent' can be redefined as evidence of a dialogue; this is the dialogue that Britt does not take into account in his sweeping and dismissive claim that "not all messianic roads lead *from* Paul." While Britt's claim is logically true since, the odds for at least one messianic path not connected to Paul exists, the documents in rabbinic Judaism and Christianity in the period post-Paul reflects a focus on the Christian messiah, either in support or against. The Judean "triumphant' messiah speaks against the Christian messiah as the 'cursed' crucified Jesus, a trope which is reiterated in the living example of the messiah leader of the last Judean rebellion (132-135 CE) who was, tradition claims, identified as the messiah Bar Kokhba by R. Akiva; notably, the letters written by the rebellion leader, *Bar Kosiba*, and archaeological coins found by contemporary archaeologists[101] affirm *Bar Kosiba's* dual role as both priest and warrior-King messiah. The failure of the rebellion in 135/136 CE made it possible for Justin Martyr to have and record a conversation with a Judean named Trypho just after the last Judean rebellion (132-135/6) in his *Dialogue with Trypho,*[102] in which the exultation of Jesus "our

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[100] Jostein Adna, "The Servant of Isaiah 53 as Triumphant and Interceding Messiah: The Reception of Isaiah 52:13-53:12 in the Targum of Isaiah with Special Attention to the Concept of the Messiah". 224.

[101] For information about the full collection of the letters, including those found by Yagil Yadine, see *The Documents from the Bar Kokhba Period in the Cave of Letters*. Jerusalem: Israel Exploration Society, 1963. For detailed discussion on the coinage, see Leo Mildenberg. *The Coinage of the Bar Kokhba War*. Frankfurt am Main and Salzburg: Verlag Sauerländer, 1984.

[102] The significance of Isaiah's suffering servant only becomes concretized after Paul's mission, exemplified in Justin's work which never contained a direct quote, according to Werline ("Transformation of Pauline Arguments in Justin Martyr's *Dialogue with Trypho*, 80). In order to prove to the Jewish refugee from the Bar Kokhba War that Jesus was indeed the messiah, Justin cites OT prophecies to prove that Jesus Christ was the messiah anticipated and that his mission was to speak to the Gentiles. As Bates notes, "The significance of Isaiah is that he, like all of the other Hebrew prophets, was a faithful vehicle of the divine *logos*. The prophecies which the *logos* spoke through Isaiah announce that the 'true Israel' is the Christ and those who follow him" (540.) The scholarly review of Isaiah in Justin emphasizes a key issue of absence. Bingham notes, "The cross, though not explicit in Isaiah 53, is inherently there by means of the theme of shameful, innocent suffering" (251) evident in *Dialogue* 36.6; 49.2; 85.1; 110.2. It is a strange argument to say that Christ's suffering on the cross is 'implicit' in Isaiah when, as the record shows, it was not written about Jesus; and as the review of Paul's work shows, Isaiah was used

suffering and crucified messiah" (111.2) seems a cruel jibe at the failed Judean messiah. The rabbinic community had a vested interest in knowing what the Christians were up to in order to at least re-assure the faithful that the messiah had not come, or as Scholem's research suggests, to suppress the havoc caused by messianic fever.

Rabbinic efforts to control messianic expectation after the last Judean rebellion did not erase messianic hope in Jewish communities in the diaspora; a confluence of political and spiritual conditions, Scholem argued, led to the eruption of messianic fervour inspired by the Polish messiah, Sabbatai Zevi (1626-1676) who, notably, justified his conversion to Islam to save his life by using Pauline principles of breaking with the law.[103] In nineteenth-century France, self-proclaimed messiahs modeling their projects after Paul's mission, inspired Marx's vision that communism fulfills history, and the nation becomes the means of redemption in his communist project (Talmon 285). In much more reactionary terms, Nietzsche's raging anti-Pauline polemic in *The Anti-Christ* reiterates another aspect of the Christian monopoly on the messiah. This literature was the culture that Benjamin inherited.

Clearly, any messianic road that Paul was on was not a pre-determined road, very much as Britt asserts, but as far as what came after Paul, the historical record shows that the dominant messiah dates to the first-century concept. True, not all roads lead from Paul, but the main highway of messianic hope, off which other messianic roads branched, points to Paul as a source; he authored the scriptural concept of the Christian messiah, and also, shared the same

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rhetorically to support his mission to the Gentiles as integral to the tradition of the faith in Israel's role as a suffering servant to be a light to the nations.

[103] Scholem asserts that the ideology justifying Sabbatai's apostasy utilized Pauline 'faith' to accommodate the paradox of following a messiah who was a convert to Islam: "Both Christianity and the Sabbatian movement took as their point of departure the ancient Jewish paradox of the Suffering Servant which, however, they stressed with such radicalism that they practically stood it on its head" ("Sabbatai Zevi, The Mystical Messiah" 1992, 321).

messianism that runs through the apocalyptic energy of mystical practices of his time. For that reason, to say that not all messianic roads lead from Paul overlooks the fact that a Judean culture dominates his Christian legacy. Moreover, though he is associated with the singular Christian messiah by rabbinic Judaism, his relation to Jesus seems to have inspired a pattern of co-dependence between the messiah and his handler: Bar Kokhba was identified by R. Akiva,[104] Sabbatai Zevi would have had no audience without John of Cusa. A double messiah returns in Nietzsche's reactionary de-coupling of the inimical Paul from the 'real' suffering Jesus, indirectly reiterating the early Christian move to save the faith from the radical idea that Paul, too, was a 'suffering servant' or messiah. This series of cuts and sutures of a doubled messiah may in fact point to the repression of the first-century messianic message found in the priest and King messiah in Qumran Scrolls and the coupling expressed in Paul's message of Jesus, which may be said to reflect generally the historical and philosophical ground of Benjamin's 'weak messianic force'.

Britt uses Knohl to highlight evidence of a Judean messiah before Jesus and Paul. The fact is, Britt has targeted Paul's messiah because it is a Christian figure, which, in western discourse at least, has shut out the variety of messiahs around the idea of the suffering servant and has monopolized messianic thinking since its inception. While Britt is correct to contest the monopolistic

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[104] Current scholarship argues that there is no substantial proof that Rabbi Akiva named Bar Kosiba the messiah. In "Bar Kokhba and the Rabbis", Schäfer argues that, based on the few documents in which the story of the revolt is mentioned, we can only understand that R. Akiva was attributed to having identified Bar Kosiba as the messianic hope in the star of Num 24:17 (4); the reason why this story was important to the rabbinic community is a mystery (*21*); Novenseon iterates Schäfer's conclusion, arguing that 'the tradition that has in fact come down to us bears several telltale marks of inauthenticity" ("Why Does R. Akiba Claim Bar Kokhba as Messiah?" *556*); Adele Reinhartz emphasizes that Bar Kokhba probably was considered a messiah during his military campaign because the famous R. Akiva is used in rabbinic literature to authorize his distinction, which is immediately refuted by Ben Torta who calls the leader the "Bar Kosiba", the Hebrew word for liar ("Rabbinic Perceptions of Simeon Bar Kosiba" 181).

hold Christianity has on the concept of the messianic, he has conflated Paul with Christianity, duped by the early Christianity propaganda that there was only one messiah, and it was Jesus. What Britt would have overlooked in reading Paul's text within this tradition is that, when he claimed, "for whenever I am weak, then I am strong" (2 Corinthians 12:10) he was reflecting on the fact that his being anointed, in the Isaian sense of the 'mesiach', was the source of strength. That is, the messiah Britt does not see is Paul himself. Therefore, Paul's fusing of human weakness with the strength of Christ arguably shows the combination Benjamin uses in 'weak messianic power', thus providing some proof that Agamben's thesis is in the realm of possibility.

On the whole, I concede to Britt's essential argument that any strong evidence for seeing Benjamin's use of 'weak' as a conscious reflection on Paul's 'weak' in 2 Corinthians 12:9-10, would require more proof than Agamben provides, from the typological clue to the references to other Pauline texts in his concluding 'Threshold', as well as Scholem's implied observation that Benjamin identified with Paul (143 – 145). The fact is, an in-depth consideration of Benjamin's relation to Pauline literature, Luther's Bible, other literary influences, and perhaps the most impossible of all, some real access to Benjamin's conscious intentions, would be the only way to prove or disprove Agamben's thesis, definitively. In other words, a proper analysis of this situation would involve the work which Agamben's project does not supply. Perhaps the only failure of Agamben's thesis is in framing the connection between Paul's text and Benjamin's intentions for which there seems so little reliable evidence. Having said that, I am interested in what Agamben hears because, as I have shown, there is something to hear.

WEAK MESSIANIC FORCE

In the previous pages, I wanted to problematize the terms Britt used in his reflexive rescue mission against Agamben's Schmittianizing of Benjamin. That reaction, I have argued, is based on assuming that a Pauline reference in Benjamin's text signals pro-Christian ideology central to Schmitt's work on political theology. Britt's defense of Benjamin against Schmittianization conditions his Christo-centric reading of Paul. As Britt notes, Benjamin was concerned that Marx's 'classless society' and the new man had become internal to the state of exception as a 'contrived discontinuity": Britt quotes Benjamin: "A genuinely messianic face must be returned to the concept of the classless society, and that is in the interest of the revolutionary politics of the proletariat itself/themselves" (f.n. 28, 274). Benjamin's messiah is a political one, Britt argues; therefore, Agamben's conflation of Paul's 'weak' with the Schmittian exception undermines the very real confrontation Benjamin had with Schmitt and fascism: "The Schmittian reading of Benjamin—my main concern here— distorts or inverts a body of work that challenges the distinction between sacred and profane and resists messianic fulfillment" (280). Britt's logic here involves dismissing the exception as a Schmittian theory in service of a Christian ideology of weakness, ignoring the fact that the exception is not just a fascist theory but reflects real political examples of persecution and discrimination by the Sovereign. Britt's logic also assumes that Agamben's thesis sees Benjamin's text as unified with Paul's Christian principle. Granted, Britt's assumption may be seen as encouraged by Agamben who suggests in the "Threshold" that Benjamin identified with Paul,[105] and thus implies that there is a semantic correspondence between Corinthians and Benjamin's text. The fact is, the correspondence is not one of homology but of dissonance; in Paul, the

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[105] Agamben quotes Scholem's identification of the "Angel Satan" and Paul's thorn in the flesh" in 2 Corinthians 12:7, in Benjamin's *Agesilaus Santander* which leads Agamben to conclude that "Scholem is implying an identification with Paul on the part of Benjamin" (*Time that Remains* 145).

messianic is the power that gives strength to the weak; in Benjamin, the power of the messianic is 'weak'.

Apart from these references to Benjamin's possible intentions, it is hard to know what exactly Agamben thinks about this supposed Pauline 'citation' as his application of his theory to Benjamin's "Theses" is indirect and incomplete. Benjamin's "Theses on the Philosophy of History" was a political tract responding to fascism by meditating on the tension between the history shaped by enlightenment progress, which is written by the rulers, and the view of things from the perspective of the historical materialist devoted to the Marxist revolution to emancipate the oppressed. This tension is established at the start with the Puppet, otherwise identified as "historical materialism", which is playing a game of chess. Invisible under the table at which the Puppet plays is a dwarf which is directing the Puppet who "is to win all the time". The Puppet is assured mastery so long as it uses "the services of theology", which "is wizened, and has to keep out of sight". In the concluding pages of *The Time that Remains*, Agamben claims that his identification of Paul's Corinthian reference in Benjamin's "Theses" means we know the identity of "the hunchback theologian". Agamben never explicitly identifies who or what the 'hunchback' is, but the implication is that it is Paul's theology (141-145). Therefore, Benjamin's historical materialism is determined by Paul's theology. The singularity of this proposition goes against the general consensus in scholarship reflected in Britt's critique, that Benjamin's work is fraught with ambivalence and tends to reflect Jewish, not Christian, religious concepts.[106] My task in this

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[106] In his article "Benjamin's Ambivalence" (*Telos*, 11:1 No. 35, 1978), John Fekete claims "his work embodies ambivalence and tension rather than coherence and identity" (192). McBride cites the scholarship criticizing Benjamin's effort to bring together Jewish mystical thinking and Marxist ideas in "Marooned in the Realm of the Profane: Walter Benjamin's Synthesis of Kabbalah and Communism" (*Journal of the American Academy of Religion*, Vol 57, No. 2 (Summer 1989), pp. 241-266.)

concluding section is to read what Benjamin's text is saying about 'weak', and determine to what extent it reflects a Pauline reference.

The nature of the relationship between the dwarf and the puppet is pivotal for introducing Benjamin's project, Ian Balfour argues in "Reversal, Quotation". Writing some two decades before Žižek's identification of the inversion of the power relation between the dwarf and historical materialism, Balfour points out that the story of the dwarf and the puppet is a strange story used even more strangely to introduce the structure of his project as changing the old power-dynamic to the new: "the puppet is now figuratively pulling the strings of the dwarf, a reversal of the lines of power drawn in the first part of the thesis" (626). And the puppet is doing so by enlisting "the service of theology... which... is small and ugly and has to keep out of sight." In Agamben's terms, this 'theology' in Benjamin's "Theses" belongs to Paul. It seems clear that in the dynamic between the dwarf and the puppet, Benjamin is referencing Schmitt's criticism that secularism was determined by the hidden infrastructure of religion for critical ends. Throughout the "Theses", Benjamin calls out of hiding those religious terms, which have been buried in politics in the name of secularism, including the Marxian expectation of redemption in the 'messiah'. Thus, in the field of historical materialism on which Benjamin's philosophy is built, the 'services of theology' by secular historical materialism, terms like messiah, messianic, the Antichrist are called out of hiding and are reorganized for new political ends. Balfour's interpretation that Benjamin saw two kinds of "historical materialisms", the one that exists, and the one that 'might become' (627), is clearly signaled in the "Theses" by a new messianic expectation.

The power dynamic between the Puppet and dwarf establishes a motif of weak and strong throughout the "Theses" in binaries such as the working class and rulers, winners and losers, Fascists and their opponents, angels and progress. For example, there is the 'single catastrophe' witnessed by *Angelus*

Novus, and the wreckage it causes (IX). From the human perspective, that wreckage may be the product of war and conflict in history; from the angelic, eternal perspective, however, the mess is the product of a single catastrophe which has caused damage the Angel is compelled to heal, but cannot because it is being propelled backwards into the future by the winds of the storm of progress from "Paradise". The power of the angel to heal is diminished by the human factor of progress. In another example of the binary, Social Democracy disguises Protestant progress in the salvation of technology (XI), reinforcing the Protestant work ethic that oppresses the workers with conformism. The working class, like *Angelus Novus*, is weakened by enlightenment progress. In another example, Benjamin observes that Social Democracy's "cutting of the sinews of its greatest strength" (XII) involves the misapplication of 'redeemer' to workers, which weakens their will to change by making them forget their "hatred and spirit of sacrifice". What becomes apparent in Benjamin's vision of history is that, the disenfranchised worker, the economic exception, is targeted by fascistic propaganda, weakening his will for emancipation. Unspoken, but implied, in this history is the figure of the Jewish exception in Nazi-ruled Germany. In Benjamin's literalizing of the weakness of the exception by the Sovereign's "cutting of the sinews of strength", it is hard not to notice that Benjamin seems to have an 'ear' to a weakness that shows some relation to Paul's concept of 'weakness'.

I suggest that what Agamben hears as Paul's ideas in Bejamin may simply be Paul's legacy in Christian thought. Though the fusion of messiah and weakness is documented in Paul's letters, the association of weakness with messiah in the Christian tradition is attributed to Jesus' teachings in the Gospels. Take for example, the words of Jesus quoted in the *Gospel of Matthew*, "Blessed are the meek; for they shall inherit the earth" (Matthew 5:5). Paul never knew the human Jesus and Paul does not pretend to quote Jesus, but somehow Paul's

idea of 'weakness' permeates Jesus' teachings on the figure of the disenfranchised, or the exception. While tradition would argue that the 'weak' originated with Jesus, the historical record I have referenced suggests that it originated with Paul, though the message of the exception may have been common currency in Paul's time. Setting aside the problem with origins, the idea that the Christian is empowered by 'weakness' in persecution, suffering, poverty or meekness, inspired Nietzsche's rants against the Christian priesthood (i.e. Paul), and informed nineteenth-century European social movements, including Marx's communism. Sublimated in Marxist politics is the Christian culture of Jesus' teaching which can be understood as a sublimation of Paul's personal experience with the Christ, which itself probably reflected a sublimation of an earlier cultural idea. In this trace of sublimation, it is the link between Marx's project and Benjamin's "Theses" that explains what Agamben is hearing, to an extent.

Benjamin's principle of the universal in the messianic repeats another Pauline concept: that of the 'all'. Benjamin's 'weak Messianic power' is inherited by the 'we' of our generation: "Our coming was expected on earth. Like every generation that preceded us, we have been endowed with a weak Messianic power, a power to which the past has a claim. This past cannot be settled cheaply" (390). If we take seriously the idea of inheritance, and that the inheritance belongs to the 'all' of us as 'we', then we 'all' inherit and so we all have an equal obligation, from Benjamin to Schmitt, Charlie Chaplin to Goebbels. This obligation does not belong to our generation only, but connects us deep into the past and into the future generations about a shared understanding of 'end-time' or fulfillment of humanity. Whether this was conscious or not, Benjamin's 'we' echoes Paul's intended inclusiveness in the 'pan' or 'all' in Christ: there is no distinction between the Jew and the Gentile in

God's eyes.[107] On that point, we see the connection between the 'exception' in Paul's time, and the exception in Schmitt's theology. That is, where the 'all' of Paul's teaching is conditional on the Christ, Benjamin iterates the 'condition' of the all but in political terms: though we are all equally obliged to be responsible citizens, we do not share that responsibility equally. Fascism registered a messianic expectation of redemption, but in sinister terms had divested it of justice, turning it into propaganda for its mandate to serve some of the citizens, while excluding other citizens, and eventually, erasing these 'others' from the law as non-citizens. By reiterating the 'all' in the divide between those with power, and those without, Benjamin stresses that the 'messianic force' is weakened in its political manifestations. The Gentile who, two thousand years ago, was excluded until Paul's project of 'inclusion' through the Isaiah promise of "a light to the nations" drew them into the fold is, in Benjamin's Germany, eliminating all remnants of the Israelite nation. Whether or not Benjamin's text was referencing the Gentile/Jew divide central to Paul's message does not change the fact that his text is a poignantly ironic reflection on the return of first-century politics in twentieth-century Germany. The actions of the Nazis, and by association, Schmitt's theory of the exception, show that what is weak in messianic power is that, because it is directed to the 'all', it is blind. It does not choose its human subject; it does not determine how its 'power' manifests; it cannot stop fascists from using its promises for their political agenda. Perhaps its weakness is what protects us from utter annihilation.

Anson Rabinbach[108] highlights how Benjamin resists political action centering on language as the effective means of political action because

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[107] This 'all' was one of the few positive things Britt had to say about Agamben's analysis of Paul's letters (Britt 55) as the 'pan' evident in *1 Corinthians* and *Romans*, and was equal to the quality of Taubes' work.
[108] "Between Enlightenment and Apocalypse: Benjamin, Bloch and Modern German. Jewish Messianism", *New German Critique*, #34 (Winter 1985): 78-124. Web. Accessed 23/03/2013.

"language is the medium of redemption" (121). In seeing language as having messianic power, Benjamin adapts Jewish mystical thought, which sees that language is connected to its divine essence. In "On Language as Such and on the Language of Man", Benjamin outlines how language, profaned because of the mortal factor of the fall, retains its sacred power in a corrupted state as magic: "The Fall makes the birth of the human word, in which name no longer lives in tact, and which has stepped out of name language, the language of knowledge, from what we may call its own immanent magic, in order to become expressly, as it were, externally magic" ("On Language" 327). While the power of the divine 'im-mediate' language deteriorates with the fall, becomes weaker through the mediation of semantics and the Babel phenomenon of linguistic confusion (329), that weakness remains connected to its source of power. This is an important point because it explains ambivalence in Benjamin's concept of 'weak'. When Rabinbach claims that "Benjamin invests language with a Messianic power precisely at the moment of its fall, its disintegration into propaganda" (108), we can hear the paradoxical fact that, though Social Democracy's cut in Thesis XII has weakened the messianic power, the historical materialist whose activism is performed through language has access to language's divine strength, if weakened by the quality of post-fall language. Whereas Lacan identifies the 'failure' of language to mean because the signifier of the sign is arbitrary as it is linked to the incomprehensible demand of the Other through the unconscious, Benjamin insists that profane language remains linked to its inhuman divine essence. Lacan sees a disconnection between language and meaning, while Benjamin sees continuity in man's profanization of the divine source of strength even as it is tenuous. The link to power, that point of articulation, is what is weak, and ambiguously so our of necessity.

The new historical materialist is the one who perceives "a constellation saturated with tensions" which crystalizes "as a monad" by which he "recognizes the sign of a messianic arrest of happening" that signals the revolution (396). Not only does Benjamin reinterpret messianic power as the inhuman abstract idea of 'messianic time' (*Jetztzeit*), erasing it of the Christian figure of redemption, he expresses its power in terms of the potential reflected in the image of " 'now time' shot through with splinters of messianic time" (397). Benjamin's "splinters" conceptually reinterpret the cosmic event of the broken vessels in Lurianic Kabbalah for a modern secular society. In this Jewish mystical tradition, the breaking of the vessels was a catastrophe wherein six of the ten *sefirot*, emanations of God's light, shattered, leading to the dispersal of God's light in the universe. In Kabbalistic thought, the responsibility of mankind is to gather the shards, an ethical project known as *tikkun* (the restoration, the healing). In Benjamin's terms, the world is full of the shards of this first event, the trauma of which exists in the world as the opportunity for redemption.[109] The fractured state of divine emanations may be seen as reflecting a 'weakness', but that state of weakness does not detract from each part having strength; the shards have enabled the dissemination of God's light for all humanity, through human time, giving each generation "a revolutionary chance to fight for the oppressed" (390). Structurally, the positive force of messianic change counters the enervating force of fascistic messianism.

Benjamin's fusing of the Kabbalistic idea of redemption with the Marxist project for emancipation was unorthodox, as McBride points out, and has been the source of conflicted interpretations (242): "Some saw him as a Jewish

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[109]I think this is a valuable way of thinking about trauma, which in no way is meant to make any kind of judgment of an individual's experience of trauma. Lacan implies the same idea in his concept of the value of the synthome. The synthome is that psychic knot of pathological behaviour which is recognized as giving the subject a reason to live. More on the synthome can be found in *Livres XXII: Le Sinthome*. Editions de Seuil, 2005.

theologian and not really a Communist; some believing him a Communist but not really a theologian" (243). The fusing of Christian and Jewish concepts, has led to many criticisms about Benjamin's Marxist project, such as a criticism of 'tacking' Jewish mysticism onto historical materialism (Habermas, 1979:51), and judging the combining of apocalypticism and Marxism as inharmonious (Terry Eagleton 1981:81). The divide between scholars on Benjamin along ideological lines explains the conflict between Agamben and Britt, somewhat. Agamben hears a Pauline notion of the weak in Benjamin's promotion of the Marxist politics of the final emancipation of the oppressed. What Agamben does not hear, according to Britt, is the stream of Jewish mystical thinking that determines everything about Benjamin's 'messianic'. This means that Agamben's thesis needs to be modified to accommodate the radical fusion at the core of Benjamin's project. At the same time, what is radical in Benjamin's work demands a modification of Britt's perfunctory resistance to Agamben's thesis. There is a Pauline reference in 'weak messianic force', in part, and that part is not limited to the Marxist source, a fact probably not even consciously known by Benjamin, himself.

Britt saw only a Schmittian mandate serving a Christian agenda buried in Agamben's thesis, and that was supported by Agamben's project, if only because he sustained a Christian-based perspective, even though he introduced his project as being aimed to redress the stranglehold Christianity had on the 'messiah' (1), and to follow Taubes' effort to reclaim Paul as a Jewish thinker by focusing on Paul's Judeo-Greek language in *The Time* (5). The fact is, Britt can argue against Agamben's thesis because it does not account for Benjamin's Jewish mysticism, and Agamben would have to agree. This agreement describes a blindness both share about Paul. The Kabbalah is a mystical tradition that originates in the middle ages, but has roots in first-century mystical literature of the *Merkabah*. Paul was a first-century Jew whose sensibility, as I will show in

Chapter 5, reflected knowledge of *Merkabah* thought and it served his understanding of the Christ. The fact is, the twentieth-century cultural map from which Benjamin drew for his messianic power is traced with Pauline thinking via both the Christian and Jewish traditions. It is not an understatement to say that Benjamin's messiah reflects an affinity with Paul's 2 Corinthians.

What is striking about Benjamin's project of emancipation is that it is neither strictly Christian, nor strictly Jewish, but rather aims to fuse the Pauline principle of the weak in Marx's project with Jewish mystical thought, creating terms for a universalism in which all messiahs exist in messianic time. If Paul stresses that his weakness is made strong in the transcendent, Benjamin redefines the terms of weakness as the inhuman principle which serves the emancipation of the exception. In Benjamin, it is not the subject which is strengthened, as it was with Paul, but the divine source as the interference in "the sign of a messianic arrest of happening" (Thesis XVII, 396). Britt's issues with Agamben's interpretation of Benjamin's messiah reflect a sensitivity to tensions central to Benjamin's text which Agamben does not fully account for in his association of Paul's 2 Corinthians 12:9-10 with Benjamin's "Theses". That is, the Pauline agenda Agamben heard, whether it was the conscious or unconscious effect of an agenda critical of the Christian project of redemption, was reinvented by Benjamin as a 'weakness' of articulation: in the relation between mankind's search for power over others, and in the relation between mankind and the divine.

CONCLUSION

The extent to which I disagree with Britt's claim that Agamben has misheard a Pauline concept of messiah in Benjamin's "weak messianic thought" is the extent to which I detect a symptom of a first-century trauma in the twentieth century. If Agamben believes he hears Benjamin consciously 'citing' Paul's text,

I have shown that there are reasons for his theory. In fact, what Agamben identified as a 'citation' requires more knowledge of Benjamin than we have which is why I would use the term 'affinity' to describe the relation between Paul's 'weakness' and Benjamin's 'weak'. Benjamin's work reflects an affinity to Paul's thought through Marxist politics and Jewish mysticism. The social injustice exacted by Nazi fascism, which targeted the Jewish population of Europe as being excluded from the right to live, led Benjamin to reach for the messianic, seeking the same outcome Paul sought: salvation. Benjamin had a vested interest in reversing the fascistic legal power to decide the exception. The crisis was so severe that it seemed that changing that power dynamic was only possible through the radical intervention of messianic time: eternal time was a check-mate to the injustice of sovereign power to define the exception. The messianic broke the laws of time.

Benjamin's reliance on the messianic to resolve the exception repeats what Agamben defines as Paul's use of the messiah in his contemporary political conflict: "The distinction between Jews and non-Jews, those who are within the law and those who are outside, no longer holds in the messianic" (*Time that Remains* 106). In this resistance to 'distinction', the Gentile's exceptionalism is undone by the messianic. For both Paul and Benjamin, the messiah resolves the exception. This fact brings me to the thesis driving this project: it seems that the return of the messianic in contemporary society is a reconfiguration of the trauma of the exception. This leads to the question: what is the relation between the secular exception and the first-century exception? Since law determines the exception, being able to address that question requires an understanding of Paul's relation to the law.

CHAPTER 4: PAUL AND THE LAW: Love, Circumcision, and the Death of Sin

INTRODUCTION

With respect to Paul and the law, the philosophers and the historians are essentially opposed. Whereas the philosophers such as Badiou and Žižek hear coherence, historians such as Heikki Räisänen and J. P. Sanders hear contradiction.[110] Superficially, this difference is signaled by the fact that the philosophers seem only to be interested in Paul's law of love, whereas historians, attending to the letter of the law, pay attention to all of Paul's sayings about the law, which are many and seem contradictory. What is fundamental to these contrary perspectives on Paul's law is a methodological divide.

Meditating on Paul's power of weakness, Badiou recognizes an ethics, which is "profoundly coherent" (53) and reflects a unique approach to universalism: "love inaugurates the universality of the true" (97). Žižek similarly focuses on Paul's law of love, but in terms closer to Agamben, as the means of suspending the exception of the law, the *homo sacer*, and so accommodating difference. The philosophers' interest in Paul is political; in addressing the critical events of twentieth-century genocides, they have revitalized Paul's message of love as a solution. In the process, however, they have disappeared the very material reality on which historians' rely for understanding Paul's laws. The historians' interest in Paul and the law stems from their attention to his political context. He spoke about the ritual laws of circumcision to Gentiles

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[110] N. T. Wright argues against Räisänen's theses about Paul's theology in *The Climax of the Covenant: Christ and the Law in Pauline Theology*, arguing that seeing contradictions is based on a simplistic reading of the logic of Paul's argument where, on many occasions he is intertwining logic with unverified assertions (13). In fact, in terms similar to Badiou's assertion about Paul's thinking, Wright argues that what we hear as contradiction reflects "the theological 'deep structure' of Paul's thought" (16.) Wright's analyses of specific passages on Paul and the Law (CH. 2 Gal 3:10-14 and Chapter 1- Romans 8:1-11) are insightful and sophisticated, and especially useful because he acknowledges the limits of his analysis.

who wanted to convert to the Judean faith; he spoke about the Mosaic laws and the law of love with respect to Jesus and his resurrection; he also spoke enigmatically about the law of Christ.

The opposition identified in Santner's review of Rosenzweig's work as noted in Chapter Two has been the founding principle of historians' understanding of Paul's idea of the law. This simple opposition has proven problematic in analyzing Paul's theology because, in tracing and cross-referencing all of his laws in his letters, the difference between the negation of the law of circumcision and the promotion of the law of love collapses in contradiction. That is, if the Mosaic laws are being thrown out, then why is Moses' law of love retained? Or what does Paul mean when he says there is no difference between circumcision and uncircumcision (Gal 5:6)? Räisänen notes, "we find two conflicting lines of Paul's theology of the law. Paul asserts both the abolition of the law and also its permanently normative character",[111] leading him to suggest it "is not literally a law" (81). J. P. Sanders observes that Paul's idea of sin and the Law is confusing, in that Paul does not explain how the law can be abrogated if "it is not the law that changes, but the person".[112] This confusion is exacerbated by the fact that when it comes to understanding what Paul meant by the law of Christ (Gal 6:2 and 1 Cor 9:20), historians are unanimously flummoxed, especially because it seems to displace the law of Moses and yet, as is clear even in this introduction, it does not. With this imperative to understand the multiplicity of Paul's laws and their meanings, vaguely demarcated along the lines of negative and positive laws, some historians have suggested that Paul's theology is no theology, but simply reflects his changing thoughts about Jesus over time.

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[111] Räisänen, *Paul and the Law*, 69.
[112] Sanders, E.P.. *Paul, The Law, and the Jewish People*, 104.

Considering scholars of both disciplines are reading the same material, the dissonance in their research begs questions; however, the shear weight in kilos of the scholarship by historians on Paul in comparison to contemporary philosophers' small production simply complicates navigating the difference. Of all questions to pose, asking how Badiou, a philosopher who is so precise and thoughtful, could be so wrong about Paul, helped to focus on the relationship between material evidence and method. Both disciplines are looking at the same body of literature, and both share the same assumptions about Christ and sin, and both are self-conscious of the limits of disciplinary method, but only one has the advantage of psychoanalysis. It is by bringing to bear the philosophers' psychoanalytic understanding to the historians' research that I will offer a solution to the dilemma of the Law of Christ which potentially resolves the quandaries outlined by the historians, while at the same time, affirms the coherence Badiou hears in Paul, and most importantly, brings us to the exception of the law as it relates to the Christ event.

LETTER OF LOVE

In his Seminar on ethics, Lacan argues that sin is bound to desire which the law excludes as prohibition, and quotes from Paul's Romans 7:7 to explain the relationship between sin and the law (*Seminar VII* 83). The fact is, sin does not make the law, but the law makes sin.[113] In the logic of this bind between law and sin, the command, "love thy neighbour," logically, is bound to its transgression, hatred. This explains the paradoxical truth that "one knows nothing of love without hate" (*Encore* 91). This principle is fundamental to Freud's *Civilization and Discontents*; in that long essay, Freud argues that, as a

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[113] In Lacanian terms, sinning, going against the law, becomes a desire for death; the relation between sin and law therefore defines the cycle of desire and death.

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human emotion of inclusiveness, love promotes partisanship and a hierarchy of inclusion; therefore, love is at the root of discontent and war. Some are closer in love than others; some are farther; those who are loved are, because others are not. And amongst those who are loved, the concentric circles of inclusion point to the fact that some are closer to the inner circle than others; and those on the outer circumference are always in danger of shifting into the circle that poses a threat. Žižek's recognition of the perversion of this dynamic in Stalin's party politics contextualizes the very trouble Lacan adapted from Freud with respect to Paul's love for the neighbour: "everytime Freud stops short in horror at the consequences of the commandment to love one's neighbour, we see evoked the presence of that fundamental evil which dwells within this neighbour" (*Seminar VII* 186). Lacan's rewriting of Freud highlights that the evil in the neighbour is the same evil in the self which one distances oneself from: "To love him, to love him as myself, is necessarily to move towards some cruelty" (198). Freud's *Civilization* aimed to address the psychological ground of anti-Semitism as the absence of love; in similar terms, but with far more positive expectations, Badiou and Žižek address the same issue in reclaiming Paul's law of love for contemporary politics.

Badiou's focus on the modern Paul as a Spanish War fighter seems intended to de-center the impact of the 'passion for the real' of the Holocaust, born of the race laws which reflect the absence of moral laws, and especially that of love; this intention is emphasized by the fact that Badiou references anti-Semitism at the end of the book as an example of the absence of universalism, ironically asserting that the 'the same as the same'[114] intended by the Nazis who created a camp in which all inhabitants were equally doomed to death 'is

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[114] Badiou's phrase here echoes that found in Sarah Kofman's consideration of the Nazi death camps: "…as Empedocles taught, the affinity of the same for the same is governed by hatred, while love consists in the union of the heterogeneous, the lack of relation, the infinite separation" (*Smothered Words* 28.)

fraudulent" (109): "… the death camp produces exorbitant differences at every instant, that it turns the slightest fragment of reality into an absolute difference between life and death, and this incessant differentiation of the minute is a torture" (109). Badiou's rendering of Nazi politics as promoting false equality emphasizes his deep critique of the principle of fascist politics, aka Schmittian politics, which harnessed a campaign against the exception. The Third Reich's project excluded the European Jew from all terms of equality, especially that promoted by Paul's message: "The address to the other of the "as oneself", (love the other as oneself), was what the Nazis wanted to abolish" (Badiou 110). French resistance fighter, Antelme, says as much in his memoirs of the death camps.[115] As far as Badiou is concerned, the love Paul preached against difference is the antidote to any future acts of genocide.

Ferocious anti-Semitism, according to Žižek in his *Puppet and Dwarf*, is caused by the Christian mystic who 'has come too close to the pagan mystical experience" which means bypassing, "the Jewish experience of Law" (119). That is, Christianity for Žižek is a product of Jewish and pagan cultures: "When Christianity loses the mediation of the Jewish law, it loses the specific Christian dimension of love…" This exclusion of the Jewish law appears equivalent to Badiou's idea that Nazism erased the laws, including the law of love; yet Žižek's idea that pagan mysticism can be seen as the basis of Nazi anti-Semitism[116] is an awkward and ideologically problematic proposition. For one, while scholarship used the term pagan to define cultural/mystical practices expressing a belief in multiple deities which differed from the Judean belief in a singular divine figure, it is hard to understand fully how paganism explains Nazi

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[115] "Though shalt not be: upon that ludicrous wish an enormous machine has been built. They have burned men, and tons of ashes exist, they can weigh out the neutral substance by the ton. Thou shall not be: but, in the man's stead who shall soon be ashes, they cannot decide he not be." Robert Antelme in *The Human Race* (74).
[116] In the *Fragile Absolute*, Žižek equates anti-Semitism with fundamentalism (120).

hatred towards Jews, though Freud does identify those who practice anti-Semitism as descended from "badly christened" people who were "barbarically polytheistic" (*Moses and Monotheism* 117). While we may see that, in attending the Führer's rallies, Hitler's followers engaged together, unconsciously, in a suspension of the social order through the ecstatic joy of the Führer's speeches which may be equated to the unplugging historians recognize as pagan possession practiced in Paul's time;[117] the most we can say about anti-Semitism is that it evolved from a combination of first and second-century factors, the two primary being the Judean proclivity to 'unplug' from the social order so as to keep its rituals from corruption,[118] and Christianity's effort to assert its divinely sanctioned supersession of Judaism. Even so, the fact that many second-century Christians were of pagan background does not mean their anxiety against the Judeans reflected the racial hatred fueling the twentieth-century events whose history reflects a particular trajectory of persecution, expulsion, and forced conversions that led Spinoza to adapt Paul's law of love for political purposes. Obviously, anti-Semitism preceded the Spanish and Portuguese Inquisition, but that only signals an anterior date of origin being sometime after Paul's century, which remains obscure.[119] What I want to emphasize is that Žižek characterizes

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[117] Possession cults reflected pagan practices which, Eileen Shantz notes, served the community: "possession tends to relieve the social pressure that is present in the group and thereby facilitates the survival of the status quo" (161). In Shantz's understanding, Paul's use of glossolalia was a means of harnessing this activity for his congregation not to encourage possession, but to bind the community together in the spirit of the cult of Christ (163).

[118] The term 'unplug' comes from Eric Santner's *On the Psychotheology of Everyday life*: "Freud's error was to equate [divine violence] with a specifically Jewish cultivation of the superego. Rosenzweig, for his part, makes a compelling case that it must rather be understood as a conversion or unplugging from the 'normal' ways of succumbing to superego pressure, of remaining addicted to the repetition of compulsions—the "Egyptomaniacal" labors—that sustain idolatrous attachments" (115).

[119] Justin Martyr's writing points to a reaction by early Christians to formative rabbinic Judaism, but the power dynamic between the cults does not translate into the persecution central to the anti-Semitism we know today; persecution, as a power dynamic between the strong and weak, can only have taken root once Christianity had affirmed its place of supreme power globally, pointing to a period beyond my research.

contemporary anti-Semitism as originating in a primitive mysticism (pagan),
distinguished from Christianity and Judaism together, which on one level
absolves Christianity of responsibility for anti-Semitism.

The political significance of the law of love in Badiou's and Žižek's work
is inherited from Spinoza who, in the effort to address anti-Semitic policies by
European states, adapted Paul's notion of equality between the Greek and Jew
as arguing that all nations are equally loved by God.[120] Spinoza's philosophy
aimed for a universalism by separating the influence of religion on the state.
Badiou continues Spinoza's project and refines it by taking Paul's message of
love literally, reducing all laws to the abstract law which stands for love: "Law
returns us to life's articulation for everyone, path of faith, law beyond law. This
is what Paul calls love" (88). In even more abstract terms, the transcendent
figure of God, who both dispenses equality, but also commands love (laws), is
replaced by Badiou's concept of truth: "The militant real of that love is the
universal address of what constitutes [the truth]" (92). These abstractions do not
erase the particularities of religious elements as much as Badiou expects; that is,
sublimated in the formal role of truth in the event are the Christ/God predicates
of immanence and transcendence; truth is accessible to mankind, and is also
beyond mankind; therefore, the procedure of love (in truth), or the love for the
truth that there is no distinction between the Jew and Greek (i.e. from God's
perspective), establishes the universal. What Badiou does not include in Paul's
message is that love is conditional on the truth of Christ, which is the event of
the resurrection. What is implied about the Moslem woman who sees no truth
in this event; is she excluded from love? This is essentially Freud's point in
Moses and Monotheism about Jews in Christian Europe. In that sense, if love is

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[120] "Paul concludes that, since God is the God of all nations—that is, he is equally gracious to
all... God sent his Christ to free all men... So that no longer would they act righteously from the
law's command but from the unwavering resolution of the heart. Thus, Paul's teaching
coincides with ours" (*Political-Theological Treatise* 44).

the traversing of the fantasy of the particularities of difference, that which obscures the universal 'truth' of equality, then Badiou can be seen to have found a way to better Spinoza's project only by cementing the Christian principles, wherein love traverses the Christian legacy of anti-Semitism making it viable only for Christians. Interestingly, Badiou's acknowledgement of Christian culpability in anti-Semitic practice contrasts Žižek's effort to distance Christianity from anti-Semitism.

In contrast to Badiou's limited inclusive love, Žižek argues that love initiates what he calls a Radical universality which, linked to the Remainder by 'an umbilical chord' has a specific logic of inclusion by exclusion: 'it is those who are excluded, with no proper place, within the global order, who directly embody true universality, who represent the Whole in contrast to all others who stand only for their particular interests" (109). That is, Paul suspends the law which emancipates the exception through the law of love. Contemporizing Paul, Žižek argues that this negation of the rule of the law means that "Paul's gesture [breaking from Judean law] is thus his break with any form of communitarianism: his universe is no longer that of the multitude of groups that want to 'find their voice', and assert their particular identity, their 'way of life', but that of a fighting collective grounded in the reference to an unconditional universalism" (130). Clearly, Žižek sees only problems raised by partisan alliances in 'communitarianism', and so, contrary to Paul's actual idea of equality as conditional on Christ, appears to be in agreement with Badiou's universalism as being beyond 'difference', and thus, like Badiou, sustains, rather than destabilizes, the Christ condition.

If both see Christian love as universal, it is noteworthy that neither address anti-Semitism effectively. Badiou suggests love can traverse the fantasy that leads to anti-Semitism; unfortunately, his idea is caught in a paradox. Love cannot undo the exclusion of the law of love central to anti-Semitism because

exclusion, exception, is central to any partisan community, Christianity being the unconsciously dominant example; there will always be those who are excluded from love, and those excluded are necessary for defining those we love. Žižek sees this, and thus agrees with Lacan and Freud on the reason for a fundamental conflict amongst peoples, which accounts for the exception enforced by anti-Semitism; Žižek's pagan references, unfortunately, render anti-Semitism awkwardly as a product of a non-Christian source, which protects the Jesus fantasy from negative associations. It is striking how his prejudices describe that hierarchy of Freud's love; the proper place of pagans and Jews remains outside the sacred circle of Christ believers; they are both fighting neighbours to each other, but together are Christianity's unwanted Other.

Scholars have noted that Žižek is essentially a Christo-phile[121]; his Christo-centrism has been served by Lacan's thinking, the Christian foundation of Name of the Father (NOF) (Pound 14) and the exchange of God for the unconscious (Labbe 17), and is exemplified in Žižek's apparent self-identification with the apostle Paul.[122] With respect to his project to engage critically with Christianity, Pound argues, "Žižek remains locked into the very system he is critical of" (19). I would agree; the pagan reference is a case in point, and is affirmed by his concluding statement in *Puppet*: "That is the ultimate gesture that awaits Christianity: in order to save its treasure, it has to sacrifice itself—like Christ, who had to die so that Christianity could emerge" (171). It strikes me that Hegel has already described this sacrifice of the treasure for secularism as the messianic *Aufhebung* (Agamben 106). Considering that I have identified secularism as the site of our contemporary trauma, I would have

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[121] See Marcus Pound's *Žižek: A (very) Critical Introduction* and Erin Labbie*'s Lacan's Medievalism*.

[122] Pound quotes Žižek: "Deep down I am very conservative; I just play with the subversive stuff" (16). Žižek in an interview with Robert Boynton "Enjoy Your Žižek: An Excitable Slovenian Philosopher Examines the Obscene Practices of Everyday Life, Including His Own," *Linguafranca* (March 2001): www.lacan.com.

to argue that any effort to preserve a treasure in Christianity misreads the compulsive nature of that preservation.[123] Žižek's subversive and chaotic play, entirely enamoured of the Christian fantasy of death and resurrection, draws out all the contradictions that the Christian fantasy aims to cover over (Pound 56), pointing in the direction of this project's trauma.

Echoing Paul's own question in Gal 43:19 (What of the law?) Žižek rightly questions how love functions for a subject ruled by law, (NOF) if the relation between law and sin represents the psychoanalytic cycle of the death drive and desire ("the sting of death is sin, and the power of sin is the law " (1 Cor 15:56) (116); that is, how can one suspend the law of the NOF if we are limited to our human mortal sinning reality? The event that led to the exception in Christianity, the product of the crucifixion and resurrection as the trauma of the cut (88), which happened as a moment of eternity in temporal reality, is translated, by Žižek, as 'love' (89) played out in conversion: "...the 'good news' of Christianity, however, is that, in a genuine Conversion, one can 're-create' oneself, that is, *repeat* this act, and thus *change (undo the effects of) eternity itself*" (89). Thus, the 'dying into the law" in Paul's gospel signals rebirth not based on a redemption or fulfilling of a past trauma, but in launching a radically new direction (*Fragile Absolute* 92).

Paul's revolutionary message, in Žižek's focus, is centered on the "love beyond law" (110). In psychoanalytic terms, "love is feminine, it involves the paradox of the non-All" (*Puppet* 116). In "Love Letter", Lacan roots the feminine and masculine logic in sexual difference; with a play on Paul's "the letter of the law kills", as literally letters of the symbolic system that oedipalizes the subject, he parallels man's relation to the Phallus as the 'all' function (all men are

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[123] Ward Blanton does not argue as I do that this return signals a trauma, but he does call attention to the fact that repetition is central to Žižek's final words in *Puppet*, in "Disturbing Politics: Neo-Paulinism and the Scrambling of Religious and Secular Identities". *Dialog: A Journal of Theology*. Vol 46, No. 1 (Spring 2007), 1.

caught by the phallus of the NOF) with masculine logic; while woman's special relation to the Phallus through the not-all designation as the barred A (Other), signifying how she is Other to herself (Lacan, *Seminar XX,* 81), denotes the feminine logic. As Žižek highlights in *Puppet*, "the 'non-All' means that not all of woman is caught in the phallic function: there is a part of her that resists symbolic castration, inclusion in the symbolic order" (67); thus, as the exception, she suspends the all of masculine logic. The fact that she is both excepted from and included in, the "all" function of the phallus means that she exists in a relation to both the masculine and the feminine logic, which means that she is able to swing both ways, so to speak: "One can also situate oneself on the side of the not-whole [like women]. There are men who are just as good as women… Those are the ones we call mystics" (*Seminar XX* 76). That is, the male mystic, like Paul, is privileged like the woman. In Žižek's terms, then, Paul's law of love is taken up in the *Aufhebung*, or the messianic suspension of the masculine law "all". What is signaled by this suspension is its ethical contribution to politics; that is, feminine logic "takes place in the intersection of ethics and politics, in the uncanny domain in which ethics is 'politicized' in its innermost nature, an affair of radically contingent decisions, a gesture that can no longer be accounted for in terms of fidelity to some pre-existing Cause, since it defines the very terms of this Cause" (*FA* 145-146).[124] Therefore, Christianity is determined by a feminine logic that promotes ethical action. This logic can be traced through Marx's project against oppression of the masses, as well as Agamben's project on the remnant in the *Muselmann* whose inability to speak for himself imposes the ethical imperative for the witness to speak on his[125] behalf.

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[124] The idea of fidelity to the truth event in regards to ethics is outlined in more detail in Badiou's *Ethics: An Essay On the Understanding of Evil.*
[125] *Muselmann* was a term used for the male inmate in Auschwitz; therefore, *Muselmann* remains a masculine signifier in my work.

Žižek's Christo-centric analysis of Paul's suspension of the Judean law through the feminine logic of love as an unplugging for ethical purposes reflects a centerpiece of scholarly interest in the exception, which is not strictly Christian. In fact, Žižek admits adopting 'unplugging' from Santner's use of it in *Psychotheology of Everyday Life* to describe the Jewish diaspora communities within European society: they lived as exceptions to society, self-sufficient and independent of the dominant culture around them (*Puppet* 118-119).[126] For his part, Santner credits the idea of 'unplugging' to the modernist philosopher, Franz Rosenzweig whose project on the 'new thinking' in *The Star of Redemption* (1921), aimed to reinvest religious experience in philosophy as an "awakening or exodus—a deanimation of undeadness—[.] granted with and {…}, indeed, coterminous with the event of revelation" (*On the Psychotheology* 65).[127] In short, the 'unplugging' that relieves the subject of the law is revelation. Paul's revelation of the Christ and Moses's Mount Sinai encounter are both examples of such unplugging. While they are traumas in the psychoanalytic sense, they are not, as was inferred in chapter two, the same as Althusser's definition of interpellation as the Oedipal event. The difference is explained by Santner's redefinition of Rosenzweig's unplugging from the law as "an interpellation beyond (ideological) interpellation" (*The Neighbor*, 132). Here we understand that Santner has differentiated Moses' 'revelation' from Althusser's ideological interpellation associated with the Oedipal trauma. That is, Moses' experience on Mount Sinai was the unplugging from the law (ideology or the

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[126] I would add that this behaviour by the Jewish people is not limited to the diaspora period; it also existed in the period of the Roman occupation of Judea prior to the destruction of the Second Temple that ended the Jewish uprising in 70 CE. Žižek reconfigures Santner's idea to codify the Christian concept of love as an unplugging or a 'suspension' of the Judean law by which the 'work of love' forms an "alternative community" in which difference is accounted for through distance (*Fragile Absolute* 120).

[127] Santner adds his own interpretation of 'deanimation and undeadness', which leads into territory my work does not go but which I find problematic with respect to Paul, in that the result of death is not a movement to undeadness, but, he emphatically stresses, new life as expressive of 'eternal life'.

Oedipal event), otherwise defined as the symbolic code of socialization;[128] his
revelation introduced new laws to the existing social code. By the same logic,
Paul experienced an unplugging from the law (ideology) through his revelation
of Christ. According to the philosophers, Paul's revelation became symbolically
integrated into Christianity as a revision of the Mosaic law of love to address the
politics of the exception.

What is striking is that the exception and the suspension of the law are
related in secularism through the messianic. Santner traces a confluence of
shared interest amongst Jewish German philosophers in the 'unplugging', and
its effect as messianic change which need not be a radical break but does reflect
an awakening that, according to Bloom, is "the freedom yet that can be our
time" (*Psychotheology* 64). Stéphane Mosès' identification of Benjamin's vision
of the revolution and messianic time offers an equivalent to the messianic
product of unplugging through the term 'unknotting': "If, for Benjamin, the idea
of happiness reflects that of Redemption, it may be said to be precisely as the
term (*Er-lösung*) must be understood as the 'unknotting' of the paradoxes of the
present".[129] In short, in this language of the suspension of the law of time, of
society, of class distinctions, etc., the messianic is the by-product of the
revelation, or the *objet a* informing the fantasy of change. According to Santner,
Paul is the source for the German Jewish scholars on the messianic fantasy
(132); while the messianic is not represented by the German Jewish
philosophers as necessarily Christian, the messianic idea does perpetuate the
Christian exception found in Pauline thought.

The same Pauline influence can be heard in Rosenzweig's use of the law
of love in relation to the Neighbour; being able to live in the secular world as

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[128] The psychoanalytic equivalent to this 'symbolic code of association' is the Oedipal event, or
NOF. I want to emphasize that we have no reason to believe they experienced the initial
socializing trauma with the same cultural significance (Oedipal) that we have given it.
[129] *The Angel of History: Rosenzweig, Benjamin, Scholem* 126.

the exception, as the one excluded from social love, is manageable because of the divine command to love your neighbor. Regarding Rosenzweig's work, Santner notes that: "the central paradox is that it is really *secular* thought that is most deeply invested in fantasies of exception, in other words, of being 'excepted' from the lot—and love—of finite human existence and that monotheism is actually a form of therapy that allows for a genuine return to the midst of life with our neighbour" (133). I emphasize two things suggested by Santner's observation about Rosenzweig's work: for one, in the secular world, fantasies of exception proliferate in many different guises, from the diasporic Jew, to the *homo sacer*, to the feminine exception, to Jesus Christ or a messianic change; and for another, love from a transcendent source sustains these fantasies. From Rosenzweig's perspective, we see that the source of love is inhuman, from elsewhere, and in a fundamental respect, does not address the universal 'all' of mankind, but the exception. Rosenzweig's understanding of love's exclusivity troubles Badiou's assertion that love is the universal principle that can traverse the fantasy of difference, and affirms Žižek's thesis of the Christian exception. In light of Žižek's focus on the exception as a Christian paradigm, Santner's correlation of the exception with secularism can be seen as evidence supporting Anidjar's assertion that secularism is Christian.

Badiou argues that "Christianity is a religion of love" (St. Paul, 89). Žižek iterates Badiou's claim and adds that Judaism is a religion of love, as well, exemplified in such texts as the Song of Songs (*Puppet* 124),[130] but in a fundamental way is different from Christianity. According to Žižek, love in

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[130] I note that Žižek misses an opportunity to reference Moses' Leviticus 19:17-18 as the original source of the command to love, and so perhaps does not develop fully the differences between Christian and Jewish love. That is, as one of the many laws in the Books Of Moses, Paul's interpretation of the law of love as the only law that represented all laws was a new idea inspired by his apocalypse which eventually came to define the Christian faith. I would suggest that what is difficult to navigate about the law of love is less about love and who should be given it and how, but rather, what is meant by that commend if it encompasses all the laws at once.

Judaism is ideologically driven as "an imaginary reconciliation of God and humanity" (124). What distinguishes Christianity from Judaism, Žižek contends, is that, on facing God's impotence in Christ's sacrifice (126), the Christian is "thrown back into [himself], compelled to assume the risk of freely determining the coordinates of [his] desire" (129). While for the Jewish people, anxiety is inspired by the law, and the command to love, for Christians, anxiety is inspired by the freedom to choose how and who to love. Žižek's comparative review of Judaism and Christianity may ostensibly highlight ideological differences, but in fact emphasizes that love in both religions is the same. Love is the *objet a*; it is the "mask" (103) covering over the traumatic rupture/gap (80), as the remainder or the unsayable of the real, "of an *Infinite Law*". Following Žižek's salient point that love is this remainder, and combining that observation with the fact that the exception is also an *objet a* of the Other, then love is synonymous with the exception. That relation between these *objets a* seems to reflect the Christian ideology of Pauline thought. While we can trace Paul's influence on the philosophers with respect to love and the Neighbour/Other, his influence on the various modern versions of the exception is not quite so clear. What does Paul consider to be the exception?

MATERIAL REALITY

If we were to read the philosophers as experts on Paul's theology, we would suppose that Paul's message centered on love. The fact is, love is mentioned in detail only twice in his seven letters: in 1 Corinthians 13:1-12; and Romans 12:9-10 and 13:8-10; and briefly in Galatians 5:14 and 5:22. The audience of 1 Corinthians was composed of Gentiles converting to the faith whose background in Judean scripture was minimal, and whose moral code troubled Paul. "It is actually reported that there is sexual immorality among you" (5:1),

Paul writes, and "I wrote you in my letter not to associate with sexually immoral persons… drive out the wicked person from among you" (5:9-13)[131]. In response to this immorality, Paul's reference to love is a highly accessible and poetic rendering of all that is morally good without being scripturally heavy: "Love is patient, love is kind; love is not envious or boastful or arrogant or rude," (1 Corinthians 13:4-5). In contrast, Paul's letters to the Galatians and the Romans offers a more succinct and practical understanding of that law: all commandments, Paul asserts, "are summed up in this word, 'Love your neighbour as yourself'. Love does no wrong to a neighbour, therefore, love is the fulfilling of the law" (Rom 13:8-10). The difference in audiences of the Galatians and Romans letters would suggest the similarity in message is problematic, until we recognize that at both locations, Paul is arguing against the rite of circumcision. In point of fact, there is a connection between Paul's law of love and his abrogating of the law of circumcision, and it centres on the Gentile who was the 'exception' to the Judean cult and which he was trying to bring into the cult.

Paul's abrogating of the ritual law relies on the opposition between the letter and the spirit of law: the letter of the law which demands circumcision, practicing *kashrut*, and keeping the Sabbath and the Holidays, has been made immaterial by the spirit of the law in Christ so that circumcision has become "a matter of the heart—it is spiritual and not literal" (Rom: 2:29). Without accounting for the material reality of the letter of the law, the philosophers' use of Paul's 'spirit' in the law of love misses the actual 'cut' Paul was addressing. In fact, Badiou's universalizing of Paul's message erases access to the trauma Paul reflected on: "Theorem 7: The Subject's process of a truth is one and the same thing as the love of that truth. And the militant real of that love is the universal

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[131] Issues of incest could support Žižek's notion of carnivalesque paganism amongst the Gentile converts to the movement of Jesus followers.

address of what constitutes it. The materiality of universalism is the militant dimension of every truth" (92). Badiou's patient concise statements are absorbing; nothing compares to the grace with which he represents the meta-ethical self. Even so, his approach renders Paul's political message flat and without context; the "materiality of universalism" is an antiseptic representation of the radical and heretical nature of Paul's gospel because Paul's message meant that devout believers would not have to suffer a painful and potentially dangerous operation. The actual militant real of Paul's message of love for the equal rights of all to God's salvation, meant erasing the Judean cult's painful laws of inclusion (circumcision) in order to be more inclusive (circumcision of the heart). The change of the law was meant to fulfill the role of the Israelites as a light to nations, which is obscured by Badiou's Marxist revolutionary leader of the Spanish Civil War. Paralleling Paul and Badiou's version of Paul we see that the resistance fighters led by Paul are Greeks, which means that Paul's 'bad guys' are bad because they are Judean; the anti-Semitic undertone, obviously unintentional, shows how Badiou's project reflects our broken dialogue with the first century and so obscures the political import of Paul's concept of the exception.

Similar to Badiou's depoliticization of Paul's message, Žižek invokes the immaterial reality of Paul's message of the resurrection and thus contradicts the material reality Paul was addressing. Žižek goes so far as to grant Paul anachronistic status as a postmodernist inventing, 'theoretical inhumanism', in his quoting of Paul's 2 Corinthians 5:16-17: "From now on, therefore, we regard no one from a human point of view; even though we once knew Christ from a human point of view, we know him no longer in that way. So if anyone is in Christ, there is a new creation: everything old has passed away; see, everything has become new!" (*Fragile Absolute* 118). Does Žižek realize Paul's use of 'we' here, reflects a covering over of his historical lack, since he never knew Jesus?

There is profound rhetorical messaging in Paul which Žižek overlooks, entirely misreading the principles of Paul's faith, and his inferior status in the Jesus community. Amongst Judean followers of Jesus, Paul is at a disadvantage because he is preaching a message many of them think is heretical; amongst Gentile followers, he is at a disadvantage in comparison to other apostles who are preaching what Jesus taught them in person, and preaching the true Judean faith because he never knew Jesus. The only novelty Žižek acknowledges Paul introduced into the Judean cult was a modification on the integral 'inhumanism' of God, which thereby signified the resurrection as an affirmation of God's plan to bring all nations to worship the God of the Israelites. By way of fulfilling that project for the nations (the Gentiles), Paul initiated a program that changed the Judean ritual laws of conversion, which inspired a backlash amongst Judean followers of Jesus. In 1 Corinthians, you can hear his shrill justification: "I think I am not the least inferior of these super-apostles" (11:5); or the faux humility in the following: "Then he appeared to more than five hundred brothers... Last of all, as to one untimely born, he appeared also to me" (15:27). In this respect, Paul's promotion of spirit over flesh, iterated in the fact that the knowledge of Christ in the spirit trumps the inferior human-centered knowledge of a man crucified in the flesh, can be heard as a defense against his ignorance of Jesus, the man, and the superiority of the divine 'inhuman' source of his gospel. Žižek's theory about a 'theoretical inhumanism' misses the necessity in Paul's fantasy of divine authority. Without the inhuman source of Paul's gospel, Paul's mission would be theory without practice.

While the philosophers have rewritten the historical inheritance out of Paul, in another respect, they have shown an unconscious integrity to his message. For Badiou, as I highlighted in this introduction, Paul's thinking is 'profoundly coherent'. Žižek's idea that 'unplugging' reflects the feminine logic of conversion may initially sound abstract and innocuous, but on reflection, it

represents the very real legal issue of Paul's Gospel; the conversion of the Gentiles which did not require a cut of the flesh as per the ritual laws, but rather a cut of the spiritual kind, was literally feminine; women proselytes were not required to circumcise to convert to the Judean faith.[132] In effect, the sublation of the 'flesh' for the spirit, the law for faith, points to a unifying principle behind Paul's law of love, which the philosophers grasp intuitively. The fact that contemporary revisions of Paul's love are directed at addressing the exception, but fails to address the hate central to anti-Semitism, affirms my earlier suggestion that love is no more than a by-product of the trauma, and therefore misapplied as a solution to the fantasy of difference. By shifting the focus from the spirit of the law of love as the philosophers have seen it, to Paul's understanding of the letter of the law by historians, and their attention to the issues raised by Paul's Gospel, I approach the unconscious trauma, which the historians have made audible as incoherence.

THE NEGATIVE LAW

In Biblical Studies, Paul's law is of interest because it reflects the earliest evidence of Christian theology; unfortunately, Paul's contradictions about the law lead to much confusion. If Paul's gospel is centered on the fact that, because of Christ, the law of circumcision has been abrogated, historians note that Paul contradicts himself when he claims that there is no difference between circumcision and uncircumcision (Galatians 5:6). Räisänen argues that it is not useful to search for a coherent theology in Paul's texts, but rather, to accept his work as essentially fraught with contradictions. What scholars agree on

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[132] In *My Own Private German: Daniel Paul Schreber's Secret History of Modernity,* Santner's book length work on the first diagnosed schizophrenic, Daniel Paul Schreber, who believed he had endured a sex change in order to serve God as his wife, Santner describes Germany's prejudice against Jews for being effeminate; he goes on to parallel that social reputation with the rabbis justification of circumcision as a necessary feminization of the male Jews; circumcision makes the Jew ready and receptive to God.

generally is that Paul's negative view of the law mainly targets the ritual laws (circumcision, *kashrut*, Sabbath/holidays) and his positive comments reflect on the moral law.[133] Having said that, Paul's 'Law of Christ' (Galatians 6:2 and also 1 Corinthians 9:20-21), remains the greatest puzzle.[134] It is at this point that I will begin to address this puzzle, starting with considering the historians' perspective on Paul's negative law.

In Galatians, we read of Paul's conviction that the believers of Christ not only do not need to circumcise, they should not if they are followers of his 'evangelion'. Not only does he rebuke them for 'deserting' his gospel (Galatians 1:6), he reasserts his authority as one to spread the 'gospel' (Galatians 1:11-2:10); and says negative things against Peter, the apostle to the Hebrews, by reinforcing his reproof of the Galatians (4:8-20) and then concludes paradoxically: "For neither circumcision nor uncircumcision is anything" (6:15). Why is Paul so upset if, as he admits here, to circumcise makes the followers like Saint Peter and so remain followers of Christ? His great disappointment is repeated in the letter and it is not just because, as Paul admits, these new circumcised converts to Christ are now bound, or 'enslaved' to follow 'all the laws'. What is at issue for Paul is that their act contradicted his gospel: "For if justification comes through the law, then Christ died for nothing" (2:21). It is unclear why, on the one hand, Paul can admit that there is no difference between circumcision and no circumcision; and then turn around and essentially contradict himself by asserting that if the Galatian circumcises and becomes justified by the law (of circumcision), that means that Christ died in vain.

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[133] The question as to whether laws were distinguishable in Paul's time shall be raised in the last movement of this chapter, taking into account the scholarship that troubles an anachronistic understanding of Paul's 'law.'

[134] Todd Wilson's article (*Currents in Biblical Research* 2006) is the most recent review of the scholarship on the topic, and shall be considered later in this chapter.

Paul's proselytizing to the Gentiles addressed the ritual laws that would allow a convert to live with the Judean faith. In this period in Asia Minor, the cultural exchange between Judeans and Greeks was leading to changes in perspectives in both groups. Many Gentiles were attracted to the simplicity of the Judean faith, especially the concept of a single human-focused godhead. Many 'god-fearers' as they were called would congregate at synagogue during prayer; and many male god-fearers remained on the outside of the ritual of prayer because they could not bring themselves to circumcise. Women had an easier time of it, if they were not tied down to family obligations and were financially independent, such as rich old widows.[135] The diasporic Judean community was trying to adapt to the influx of interest, and Paul's abrogating of the ritual laws was an example of that adaptation.

In abrogating circumcision or loosening the kosher laws, Paul did not give up his Judean faith, but remained a devout believer in the law he was raised with. Sanders correctly problematizes Paul's struggle with his faith while having to abrogate the ritual laws for the Gentiles: "He certainly knew that circumcision, Sabbath observance, and dietary restrictions were commanded in Scripture; and it was certainly with full intent that he said that they are not binding on those in Christ" (103). Some critical shift has occurred for Paul on the matter of these ritual laws so important to the integrity of the Judean community, and that shift reflected the greater community in Asia Minor. Several movements amongst Judean factions, Räisänen points out, questioned the ritual laws in response to the growing interest by Gentiles of the Judean faith[136], especially because of the hardship faced by male proselytes in accepting mutilation as a requisite for conversion. Raisanen's review of

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[135] Helen of Adiabene was one of the most famous of these rich widowed Gentile converts to the Judean faith.

[136] For an analysis of the changing dynamic in the Judean faith because of Gentiles' desire to convert to the faith, see Shaye Cohen's *The Beginnings of Jewishness (*1999).

Hellenistic Judean literature, texts such as Testaments of the Patriarchs, the Letter of Aristeas, Pseudo-Phocylides, the Sibylline Oracle, and work by Philo, shows that a variety of communities were questioning the commandments, the moral and ritual laws (34). For example, Philo saw a stronger ethical value in the moral law than in the ritual stipulations, evident in his 'lavish allegorizing' of the ritual laws; as Räisänen explains: "Yet [Philo] shrinks from the conclusion that the external rites could be left unobserved. His well-known critique of some Alexandrian 'allegorizers' shows indisputably, where he draws the boundary line—as well as the fact that he himself is extremely close to stepping over the line (Mgr Abr 89 ff) (35)".

The 'allegorizers' were Judeans named after their favouring an interpretive reflection of the law; they tended to reject the physical rituals as requisites for Gentile conversion, according to Peder Borgen, arguing that anyone who followed the ethical moral laws was essentially circumcised.[137] In Räisänen's review of the first-century literature, he notes the distinction between proselytizing in Asia Minor and proselytizing in Palestine; in the former region, ritual laws were minimized and interested Gentiles were welcome at synagogues as 'god-fearers' which, Räisänen asserts, might be read in psychological terms as a 'self-criticism' of the Judean faith (40). Perhaps because in Palestine the Temple and its rituals were so central to cult practice, Judeans were not as accommodating of the Gentiles; proselytes who refused to circumcise, were considered outsiders, and barred from entering past the outer court of the Temple (41). Within the context of Asia Minor and the positive and

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[137] In "Observations on the theme 'Paul and Philo'", Borgen argues that what Paul had to say about circumcision in Galatians reflected thinking by philosophers and scholars of his time, with a slight difference. Philo promoted that the moral law grounded the rites, which meant that circumcision applied to both the body and to the heart/mind (90). This concept of circumcision, Borgen argues, is adapted by Paul and then transformed; for Paul, the crucifixion of Jesus represented the spiritual circumcision experienced/endured by the new convert to Christ, and that was enough to fulfill the conversion ritual (91).

at least partially accommodating response to the Gentiles interested in the Judean faith, Paul's mission does not stand out as completely alien.

A few questions are raised. If Paul's mission existed within a changing community of Judean believers, why was he targeted by his fellow Jesus followers in Corinth and Galatia and possibly even Rome? Furthermore, why would Paul claim that a Gentile's circumcision meant that Christ died in vain, and also claim in 1 Corinthians 7:19 in what Sanders regards, "as one of the most amazing sentences that he ever wrote: "Neither circumcision nor uncircumcision counts for anything, but keeping the commandments of God" (103)? It is a paradox which Räisänen reiterates in his introduction: "...where Hellenistic Jews clung to the whole Torah with a new accentuation, Paul's solution amounted to 'the whole Torah and yet not the whole Torah" (41). That is, historians seem to agree that Paul's law remains obscure to us.

POSITIVE LAW

On Paul's positive reflections of the law, questions abound. If the law has been abrogated, then why is the Christian called to fulfill the law (Snodgrass 104)? How was it possible that the law was required for sin to be counted, when sin was counted anyway? (Sanders 1983 25-26). And, more significantly, what does it mean that believers die to the law through the death of Christ (Schreiner 57); or, how does one reconcile the fact that the Christian is free from the law because of Christ and yet Jesus Christ comes to fulfill the law; that is, if the law is fulfilled, does that mean there is no law anymore (Schreiner 47)? Considering the breadth of questions raised above, it is no wonder that both Sanders and Räisänen in their conclusions share a reticence in saying anything definitive about Paul's law except that it seems focused on the Christ event (Sanders 1983 114; Räisänen 1983 200). Räisänen ironically adds that depth psychology theory may be the only method left unused for understanding Paul's meanings;

"the actual driving forces have been concealed under the pretext of some more or less plausible rational reasons" (201). Räisänen seems quite prepared to accept what Badiou intuits as coherence, despite no proof. Without irony I contend that the 'rational reasons' do exist to quash the negative issues raised by the historians.

Both Sanders and Räisänen weigh in on the confusion inspired by Romans 5. A first reading of Romans 5:12-14 explains how confounding it is: "Therefore, just as sin came into the world through one man, and death came through sin, and so death spread to all because all have sinned—sin was indeed in the world before the law, but sin is not reckoned when there is no law. Yet death exercised dominion from Adam to Moses, even over those whose sins were not like the transgression of Adam who is the type of the one who was to come" (5:12-13). Sanders' trouble with Paul's passage derives from a combination of two factors; Paul seems to see sin as a universal thing, as Sanders translated, 'during the period from Adam to Moses, sin led to death even without the law" (35); and paradoxically, "Paul then inconsistently says that law is required for sin to be counted, but that it was counted anyway" (36). How can a sin be counted and then not counted; and how can sin be universal if sin can happen without the law? Sanders recognizes that Paul argues as if he has an argument (36), but if it is based on something real, Sanders is not privy to it. Caught in the poetic web Paul is weaving, Sanders misses the causal logic that Paul is emphasizing in describing sin as beginning with Adam and progressing until Moses' reception of the commandments.

In *Paul and the Law*, Räisänen attempts to resolve the confusion raised by Sanders by pointing out that before the law 'sin is not counted.' As he understands it, those living between Adam and Moses (the interim period) sinned but were not considered transgressors ("their deeds were not registered in the heavenly books"); by this, Räisänen is able to find Romans

comprehensible through referencing Romans 2:12-16: "those who have sinned 'without the law', will perish without the law" (v. 12) in "the last judgment" (v. 16).[138] Then he claims that Paul's distinguishing of God's punishment of sinners between Adam and Moses and the last judgment is a 'technical trifle." (146): "Until the law sin had been punished because it was sin; since the law, the very punishments are imposed because of transgression." Like Sanders, Räisänen's analysis of Paul is dependent on two things: that the law, which Paul is referencing, is that given to Moses on Mount Sinai; and that the sin Paul uses is always the same generic idea of sin.

The assumption of the Mosaic law and omission of the definition of sin in Räisänen's criticism, lead him to claim that Romans 5:13 contradicts Romans 7:8 ("apart from the law, sin lies dead") (147). The contradiction is legible to Räisänen because, according to 7:7, sin was 'dead' before the coming of the law, which means that the death of sin pre-existed the law. Räisänen proceeds to propose an idea, which, in the logic of his assumptions, seems valid: "5:13 is an artificial expedient which disturbs the argument of chapter 5... It is an infelicitous attempt to introduce secondarily the problem of the law into a train of thought with which they originally had nothing to do and into which they do not logically fit" (147). In other words, Räisänen's logic is that, since 'the law does not bring about sin', the relation of sin to death is a causal one from sin to death; therefore, the death of sin is a non sequitur. The sin of Adam's fall (Romans 5) is clear for Räisänen, while the sin of the law (Romans 7), which is peculiar to Paul, is the mystery. Räisänen acknowledges that Paul intended something ("not totally unconscious of the tension"), which he considered was Paul's effort to integrate 'by way of two incidental remarks', the law and Adam

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[138] Räisänen footnotes a contradiction in Paul cited by Turcke (145) between verses 13 and 14, as if to cite a confirmation of his point that what we read as incomprehensible is not our fault, but Paul's fault, but does not elaborate on his point.

(147). While Räisänen's critique of Paul's text as incoherent appears valid I will show, it is not only unfair,[139] but wrong.

Snodgrass humbly admits that the connection between the law and sin in Romans 5.20 is not obvious for a modern historian; and in seeing a dialectic procedure in Paul's arguments, he claims that the full meaning of Romans 5.2 is evident in Romans 7:7-13: "The most that we should say is that God permits the connection between sin and law in order that the true nature of sin may be displayed" (104). In his conclusion, he claims that Paul's meaning is clear in 7, where the tyranny of the law prevented mankind from serving God as it should: "Sin works through the flesh and uses the law to cause death." Interestingly, the law in Snodgrass' conclusion has assumed the somewhat aggressive characteristics noted elsewhere in Paul's description of sin (Romans 7:8-12), which, as I will show later, actually does reflect the law Paul intended to talk about. Despite the fact Snodgrass reflects a coherent interpretation of Paul's thought and does so without arrogance, he remains bound to the same assumption blinding Sanders and Räisänen: that Paul's law is the Mosaic Laws. Like Räisänen, Snodgrass also supposes the Law of Christ is a rebuttal of the Law of Moses.

Sanders' contribution to the issue of Law of Christ vs. Law of Moses in *Paul, the Law and the Jewish People* shows Paul's signature ambivalence. What does Paul mean in differentiating between the 'whole law' ("everyman who lets himself be circumcised is obliged to follow the whole (*holos)* law," Galatians 5:3) and "entire law" ("For the all [*pas*] of the law is summed up in a single commandment, "You Shall love your neighbour", Galatians 5:14)? Sanders asks. In assuming that the first citation reflects the Mosaic law, and the second citation reflects the Christian law, Sanders suspects there is some kind of

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[139] Snodgrass makes the point that both Räisänen and Sanders are harsher critics than Paul deserves. (96).

opposition wherein those following a Christian life are not under the Mosaic (*holos*) law (Galatians 5:17) (96). This proposition, he claims, contests Hubner's 'ingenious' claim that for Paul 'whole' was synonymous with 'all', and therefore, no opposition should be heard here. Sanders understands Paul's law is referencing the Torah given to Moses on Mount Sinai; therefore, Sanders contends, when Paul is quoting 'all the law" (Galatians 5:14), it is hard to believe that "a person of his antecedents could use this quotation to mean a law that has nothing to do with the law of Moses..." (*Paul, The Law* 96). Sanders in the end concedes to Hubner's argument that to understand the difference between the 'entire law' as the Law of Moses in contrast to 'all the law' in the Law of Christ, is futile (97); therefore, we cannot verify a dialectical correlation between the Law of Christ and the Law of Moses.

In "The Law of Christ and the Law of Moses," Wilson reviews the lack of consensus amongst scholars about how the two laws are connected (Barclay 1998:131-135; Hong 1993: 176-83; Longenecker 1998:86), and, for that matter, what the Law of Christ means that recurs in research as an anomaly. Sanders saw incoherence in Paul's use of law, generally[140]; and Barclay argued an intentional ambiguity in Paul's use of the term, 'law of Christ' (128); Dunn claimed there was no connection between the Law of Christ and the Law of Moses, the Torah (131); and Schreiner advises that, such a little-used phrase as 'Law of Christ' is best interpreted in the immediate context of Galatians (1993 159). Despite these efforts to explain away the anomaly of Law of Christ in Paul's epistles, Wilson acknowledges the persistent recognition by scholars that Paul is disturbingly consistent in its use (137).[141] And to that extent, Stoike

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[140] Wilson claims: "It should be kept in mind that while Sanders denies that Paul knew a distinction between 'the whole law' (5:14) and the Law of Christ (6:2), he ends up having to admit that he does not find Paul entirely coherent on the issue" (137).

[141] Wilson references Louis J. Martyn's argument in *Galatians: A New Translation with Introduction and Commentary* (New York: Doubleday,1997: 555), that the sheer repetition of a term affirms its definition: "Nartyn himself has recently underscored this point with some vigor.

argues that the apparent coherence could be explained by the fact that Paul "seized [it] from the vocabulary of his opponents" (139.)

Stoike's suggestion that there might be a shared and undocumented idiomatic origin to Paul's law of Christ, which implies support of Badiou's assertion of apparent coherence, independently and uncomfortable alluded to by Räisänen, here signals my eureka moment. I realized that, while the historians toggle between two laws, the Mosaic law and the ritual laws, the philosophers appear to be referencing a law that, for the most part, is absent from the historians' research; on the binary between death and sin, the philosophers account for natural law. The historians have notably addressed the relevance of this law to Paul in very tentative terms. For example, Sanders references Dodd's identification of natural law being the ground for Gentile knowledge of law *(*Romans 2:14-15), but discards the idea quickly: "the explanation on the basis of natural law in Romans 2 is striking because it is not otherwise employed" (82). The fact is, Dodd had identified an even more cogent reference to natural law in Romans 1:19-21,[142] but his focus remained on explaining the Gentile figure who returns in Romans 2 as a lesson to the Judean. In this Gentile focus, Dodd ignores addressing natural law as relevant to Pauline thought, especially since he has no reason to believe Paul had access to the Stoic idea of natural law (Dodd *The Parables of the Kingdom* 132). Though Dodd recognizes a connection between natural law and the law of Christ, he does not develop it further, nor does he see a link to the Law of Moses (141).

Reflecting on the universalism implicit in Paul's idea of the laws, Westerholm considers the significance of Philo's natural law "which is binding

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The appearance of *nomos* in Gal 6:2 is the thirty-first in the epistle and in each previous instance it is a reference to the Law of Moses" (Martyn 555), 135.

[142] "(Rom 1:19-20) For what can be known about God is plain to them, for God has shown it to them. Ever since the creation of the world his eternal power and divine nature, invisible though they are, have been understood and seen through the things he has made..."

on all people, finds perfect expression in the 'laws' of the Jews (cf. On the Creation of the World 3; On the Life of Moses 2.52),[143] but then retracts that idea by noting that there is no evidence in Paul's texts that Mosaic law "combines demands binding on all mankind and other precepts required only of Israel" (153.) In "Paul and Natural Law", Westerholm again reaches beyond Mosaic law with respect to Paul's idea of sin: "Like *Genesis*, Paul believes that even before the law was given, there was sin--and, thus, moral responsibility— in the world (Romans 5:13.) It was not the prohibitions of murder, adultery, or theft, that made these activities wrong, though the prohibitions did serve to turn what was already sin into the more flagrant wrong of 'violation' (Rom 4:15)".[144] Westerholm's recognition that sin existed before the law introduces seeing Paul's use of sin in more nuanced terms; yet, while Westerholm circles the first prohibition more closely than the other scholars, he still cannot see past the prominence of Mosaic law in scholarship, and so does not see the larger frame for Paul's idiomatic expression. As I will show in the next section, the way to that larger frame is through Philo's natural law.

PHILO'S NATURAL LAW

Seeing a Philo connection in Paul's mission has already been considered in this paper through Räisänen's review of the cultic rituals in Hellenistic Asia Minor; it is also evident in scholarship on his letters.[145] In a brief review of Hindy Najman's two papers arguing for the revolutionary contribution Philo makes to philosophy and the Judean faith by integrating the Greek idea of 'natural law' into the Mosaic law, I aim to apply a precedent for seeing Paul's thought as

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[143] See Stephen Westerholm's "Sinai as Viewed from Damascus: Paul's Re-evaluation of the Mosaic Law" (152).
[144] See Westerholm's "St. Paul and the Knowledge of the Natural Law" 442.
[145] For more information see Gregory E. Sterling's "'Wisdom Among the Perfect': Creation Traditions in the Alexandrian Judaism and Corinthian Christianity " in *Novum Testamentum*. Vol 27, Fasc 4 (Oct 1995). 355-384.

influenced by Philo's Judean philosophy[146], and for proposing that the abrogated law in his texts is connected to Stoic philosophy's idea of natural law. As will become clear in the final review, the ritual laws reflect a secondary abrogation only applicable to the Gentile, which explains why they are applied irregularly by Paul; this secondary abrogation, however, is only an offshoot of the first significant abrogation relevant for all.

In "The Law of Nature and the Authority of Mosaic Law" (1999), Najman introduces Philo's philosophy within the context of Philo's period as a Judean philosopher working in a diasporic community which resented Judeans' exclusivity; this tension led the Judean philosopher to contend with how Greek philosophy saw wisdom and ethics as superior concepts in comparison to sectarian cult practices reflected in Judean thought: this tension compelled Philo to find 'natural law' in the Mosaic law. Najman stresses that 'natural law' was at the cutting edge of Greek philosophical thought during Philo's time, particularly Stoicism, which was only just beginning to distinguish the law of nature as a relevant determining factor of life for humans, in contrast to the gods (1999 57).

In ancient Greek culture, the unwritten law was superior to the mundane civic or written law; that value judgment is evident in Sophocles' *Antigone*. Antigone refuses to let her brother's body go unburied, as is commanded by the King because he deemed Antigone's brother a traitor; rather, the unwritten law which is the law of the Gods, demands her brother's burial. In order to fulfill the superior command, Antigone sacrifices her life so her brother may be buried. Antigone's story is the central paradigm of Lacan's concept of ethics in his *Seminar VII*, wherein the law of the state is subordinate to law of the gods. Clearly, Lacan's concept of ethics reflects the Christian principle of the power of

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[146] Research on the connection between Paul and Philo is limited; Craig Keene discusses how early Christianity and Philo borrowed from another source in *The Gospel of John: A Commentary*, 343-347.

the spirit of God over the flesh of mankind, which comes via Paul from Philo. In adapting the latest Greek philosophy on natural law to the Mosaic law, Philo took advantage of the Greek elevation of the unwritten status over the written to explain the putative absence from Moses' texts of 'natural law' as the proof of its authority over the Torah: "Philo would have to show that the Greek concept of 'nature' was central to the authority of Mosaic law, despite the general absence from scripture of that concept, for which no Hebrew word existed" (1999 59). Najman makes a case for seeing the revolutionary impact of Philo's creative move in understanding the Law of Moses through Greek philosophy.

Philo argued that the putative presence of the natural law was evident as unwritten in Mosaic Law because, paradoxically, since nature cannot be adequately represented in language, then it cannot be written there; and since God created the universe, God is the author of the unwritten natural law (2003 57). Philo claims that Moses' books begin from the beginning because that beginning has embedded within it the essential natural law, which is God's law there unwritten. Najman quotes Philo's *Moses 2.48*: "...in relating the history of early times, and going for its beginning right to the creation of the universe, he wished to show two most essential things: first that the Father and Maker of the world was in the truest sense also its Lawgiver; secondly that he who would observe the laws gladly welcomes conformity with nature and lives in accordance with the ordering of the universe, so that his deeds are attuned to harmony with his words and his words with his deeds" (2003-59). Naijman argues that the paradox of Philo's claim that the written Law of Moses can contain in it the unwritten law of nature is possible because there is a culture in the Judean faith of interpretation; the Law of Moses, itself, is not simply the word alone, but is full of the meaning of that word revealed over time (2003 62). In the Judean tradition, it was believed that prophecy, or direct revelation from God, ended in the early Second Temple period. This sense of completion

of God's revelation led Judeans to meditate on the texts, and uncover patterns and so new understandings about God and the universe. That is, thinkers like Philo understood that the principle of revelation continued through methods of interpreting the texts of the Prophets. Philo's method of reading Moses' books for hidden truths about God was echoed in the contemporary interpretations of Ezekial which developed as the mystical practices documented in *Merkabah literature*.

The fact that the written text has authority over the unwritten was inconceivable to the Greeks; but, in turn, Philo's move to insert a Hellenistic concept of the unwritten to 'authorize a sacred, written text" (1999 68), was revolutionary. This move, Naijman argues, explains how Philo began to recognize the authority of the Law of Moses as 'based on the universality of its content" (1999 69); and the universality of that content is centered on the mortality we inherited from Adam and Eve, whose punishment for sinning by eating the prohibited fruit made our life contingent on death.[147] Clearly, Paul and the philosophers recognized that the first prohibition brought our mortality; thus, what is universal in Paul's message is not the vague concept of God for all, but the real fact of human existence: what the Gentile and Jew share because of their original father is mortality. They are both equal in the single unequivocally definitive characteristic of life: death.

In Paul's terms, Christ's resurrection signaled that the law of Christ, reflecting eternal life, pointed to the abrogation of natural law; this logic means that the Mosaic Law did not change. Thus, the historians' suspicion that there is no dialectic relation between the Mosaic Law and the Law of Christ is correct.

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[147] The following quote by Brian Rosner explains how a discussion with the philosophers would have introduced Paul to the principle of human mortality as the basis of universalism in his idea of sin: "Paul conceives of the law as a letter that kills, as a book that brings a curse, as decrees that stand against us, and as commandments to be obeyed. In every case, according to Paul, this is not how the law relates to Christians" ("Paul and the Law", *JSNT*, 418.)

Christ's law as I have outlined it explains Sanders' observation that the law does not change, but the person does and also certifies Räisänen's suspicion of some 'rational reason' motivating Paul's meaning. Most importantly, the law of Christ explains away scholars' confusion about the unsuccessful or partial abrogation of the identity laws; once the natural law was abrogated, the ritual practices were a relic of mortality, a relic which in one letter Paul admits shame in not being able to undo (Philippians 3:2-7). Paul knew, however, that circumcision could not be made to disappear, which is why in Romans 2:29, he kept it allegorically in the spiritual sense of a cut within the heart. In that respect, circumcision explains how the Judean, for Paul, becomes synonymous with the believer; even the Gentile can become a Judean in his heart. It also explains why Paul's conviction in his 'gospel', was centered on the fact that the Gentile convert should not circumcise; to circumcise would mean the convert had missed the significance of Christ's resurrection. Considering the putative source of Paul's theology, his grief in failing to ensure the Galatians follow the Law of Christ would have been severe. It would have seemed a sacrilege to his God, and a great personal failure of his call and role as apostle.

Philo's translation of the Law of Moses into Hellenistic terms can be seen to have influenced Paul's conviction of the equality amongst Jew and Gentile, and also explains how Paul's very Judean messiah became animated with Greek ideas of the inhuman. The 'unwritten' quality of the natural law in Philo is echoed in Paul's letters as the unwritten authority of the break with the law (1 Corinthians 2:7 secret and hidden) central to his mission--his gospel is 'not of human origin" (Galatians 1:11)--which explains how Paul wielded authority in the Gentile community he was converting. The unwritten source of his authority, which inspired the trust of his audience, clearly disturbed the Judean followers of Jesus and goes far in explaining why some followers of Jesus were compelled, for ethical reasons, to undermine his mission in Galatia. This

reaction by Paul's critics suggests that there was a conservative stream amongst the Jesus followers who, promoting the ritual laws, probably did not see Jesus as having changed much in the faith. That is, even if Jesus appeared to 500 people, as Paul says, he may have only appeared as an ascended figure, reflecting a Judean tradition of the ascension of prophets such as Moses, Ezekiel and Enoch. That is, there may have been Judeans among the followers who did not see Jesus as someone who broke the natural laws. You might say, Paul's critics describe the argument to which Gignilliat vaguely gestured.

When Paul claims, "Apart from the law, sin lies dead" (Rom 7:8), historians tend to search for a theological significance and are confused, while the Lacanian philosophers I have referenced (Badiou and Žižek), read 'sin' in psychoanalytic terms as reflecting the psychic dimension of the subject's relation to social law imposed by the NOF. For psychoanalysts, the subject's language is the material of the trauma; its metaphorical value contains evidence of the crisis. Paul's law of Christ is traced with the crisis: the cycle of sin tied to the law, expressed in the dynamic relation between desire and the death drive of the oedipalized subject, was arrested, according to Paul, by the messiah's resurrection. In this light, and contra the historians, Paul's theology is not non-existent or confused, but simple and elegant. Moreover, the message of Christ was intended for all because, advancing the universal principle of death in Philo's terms, Jew and Gentile, man and woman, adult and child were equally eligible for this second or eternal life. In this respect, Badiou's claim that Paul in "assigning to the universal a specific connection of the law and the subject" (7) displacing differences of ethnicity, gender, and age, and so provoking, "a cultural revolution upon which we still depend" (15) to define the terms of the universal, is somewhat misleading. For one, Badiou does not take into account that Paul's universal is conditional on the truth of Jesus crucifixion/resurrection. For another, Paul's 'universal' may be seen to have dismantled a real 'universal'

that was identified by Philo with the Stoics. Before the condition of Christ came into focus, all mankind, from Adam onwards, shared the same human destiny of death; Christ's resurrection broke that universal. This abrogation of natural law, however, was true only for those who believe in the resurrected Jesus, the Christ, thus signaling what Agamben identifies as the Apelles cut. The impact of the cut of the law, or the suspension of the 'exception', would have been negligible had it not been for Paul's use of the Greek concept of the immaterial through faith. Faith does not demand physical evidence, nor does it seek out written proof; it is based on the impalpable reality of the 'exception' of mortality that responded to the apocalyptic anxiety of his times: the future redemption was at hand as the bliss of eternal life in Eden because of Christ.

READING PAUL'S SIN

I shall take a circuitous route to Paul's trauma evident in this hermeneutic of the law of Christ, by first rereading the historians on Paul's use of law through a literary focus. The historian's interest in rhetoric periodically rises up as relevant to scholarship on Paul, evident in Räisänen's observation that the literary devices, dialectic and paradox, indicative of Paul's texts, were moves the 'Semitic mind' delighted in (4). Wright has approached Paul's text as narrative, exploring the "story in Pauline theology" in Romans 8:1-11, which has resolved seeing contradictions in his work.[148] These incidences of historians' doing literary analysis pale in comparison to the philosophers' approach. When Badiou asserts that Paul is a poet he means to call attention to the fact that his

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[148] N. T. Wright aims to address apparent contradictions by focusing on reading Paul's ideas not as fixed concepts, but as elements of a narrative: "To require of Paul that he should always say exactly the same thing about Torah all the time would be like criticizing the story of Jack and the Beanstalk on the grounds that it was internally inconsistent, because Jack was sometimes going up the beanstalk and sometimes coming down" (*The Climax of the Covenant,* 215). Wright's sensitivity to the spatial/temporal structure of implied narratives serves my analysis of Romans 7 ahead.

expression is not only 'fantastic' but also, highly condensed. Whereas the historians have been selective in their research on the matter of Jesus resurrection,[149] because the limitations of historical method reflect on issues of veracity, the philosophers, Badiou, Žižek, as well as Caputo, who each acknowledge the significance of the crucifixion in psychoanalytic and philosophical terms, are concerned less with the truth of the resurrection than with its impact on society in political terms. Following the philosophers' attention to Paul's creative use of language to represent reality, I shall forthwith draw out rhetorical and narrative elements in Paul's work with respect to the poetic impulse in expressing the inexpressible of how Christ's resurrection has changed the Christians' relation to sin, and therefore changed the law. That is, I shall set aside the historian's focus on events as factual, to get at the psychic foundation of his use of language.

I shall focus on rhetorical repetition in the narrative, and compressed poetic language in Paul's use of 'law' in interpreting Romans 7:7-13: "I would not have known what it is to covet had the law not said, 'You shall not covet.' But sin, seeing an opportunity in the commandment, produced in me all kinds of covetousness. Apart from the law sin lies dead: I was once alive apart from the law, when the commandment came, sin revived and I died, and the very commandment that promised life proved to be death to me." This passage, the very one used by Lacan to explain that sin is created by law in *Seminar VII* (86), is constructed on repetitions in such a way that calls attention to definitions. Law is essentially repeated in the term 'commandment', but on further analysis, this repetition only stands for a multiplicity of laws in the passage since the

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[149] Archaeological finds in Israel over the last several decades have uncovered nails from the Roman occupation of Israel which supplement the most important archaeological proof of the practice of crucifixion: in 1968, archaeologists found in a bone box (an ossuary) at a burial site outside of Jerusalem, a heel bone with a nail through it. Israeli, Yael, and Mevorach, David, Cradle of Christianity, The Israel Museum, Jerusalem, Jerusalem, Israel, 2000, English/HebrewThe Israel Museum, Publisher: Harry N. Abrams, Inc., 2005.

commandment of covetousness is one law within the context of the Mosaic laws as a whole. Yet, to read the law associated with the first 'apart' as either 'covetousness' or all the Mosaic laws does not illuminate what Paul means by "sin lies dead". I would suggest Paul is referencing yet another law in this short sentence. Reading with a logic of parallelism helps to decode how 'death' is a term for another law. For example, if law makes sin, then the law that prohibits covetousness creates covetousness. Similarly, the law of mortality, creates the sin we have inherited from Adam and Eve.[150] Born to die, humans live in a constant state of sinning. When Paul says that, "apart from the law sin lies dead' we see a break in the dynamic between law and sin as defined by Lacan, wherein sin no longer has power over mankind. That is, when the law of mortality is gone, sin no longer is created—it lies dead. Thus, the law from which one is 'set apart' is the law of mortality. Christ has initiated this tremendous event: the law of Christ, as the law of eternal life, has replaced the law of nature.

Paul shifts his focus in the second 'apart' to reflect the narrative of his own death and resurrection in Christ in a mirror-like inversion of the first 'apart'. Whereas the person with Christ's law is 'set apart from' the law of mortality in the first 'apart', we read in the second 'apart' that Paul's life before revelation meant he lived 'apart from' Christ's law; that is, he lived bound to his mortal destiny, to original sin, and followed the 'commandments that promised life' (the Mosaic laws) which encouraged him to persecute the Jesus followers. When he claims, "sin revived and I died," he is providing a précis of how his zealotry against the Jesus followers led to his encounter with Christ which was

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[150] W. D. Davies's analysis of Romans 7 In *Paul and Rabbinic Judaism*, is very similar to mine, sans a recognition that Jesus' contribution to a new religion involves a break with natural law, or the law of mortality. Davies argues that the sin, which Paul is referencing here in Romans, can only be the one associated with death, which is the one we inherit from Adam because of original sin. Davies references 4 Ezra and 2 Baruch as examples of this idea in Paul's time (32-33).

the death necessary for new life. In other words, the Judean faith promised a life bound to the law of death, which led him to his death; in his death, this promise was fulfilled as the resurrection through Christ.[151] Through his encounter with Christ, an inversion has occurred in the idea of natural law, which he is trying to replicate in this complicated shifting of positions in this short narrative; the relation of life with death (sin) was transformed into life without death (sin).

It is unnerving to read a text whose coordinates suddenly shift; one law is suddenly another law, and the flag for that shift is internal to the text. Why does Paul reference several laws in one and the same verse? Schreiner notes, footnoting a long list of scholars in agreement, that 'there is no evidence in Judaism for such divisions of the law" (63). Sanders qualifies in a footnote that, "Paul never explicitly distinguishes between the ritual and the moral law; yet one can observe that he never cites a ritual law which is valid for Christians, while he does so cite moral laws" (f.t. 22 117). That is to say, Sanders stresses, Paul knows what law he intends for each use of the word. Considering Najman's analysis of Philo's work, is it possible that there was some sense of the distinction of the laws by his immediate colleagues, but it was perhaps not common currency amongst the whole community? Would that explain Paul's obscurantism? In the case of Galatians, was Paul avoiding being specific in his rhetoric of exegesis on the law because he was dealing with Gentile followers, whose backgrounds in philosophy was varied and unequal, and who had no formal exposure to biblical scripture? Or, in the case of Romans, was Paul protecting the truth of his message for fear that he would be persecuted for his radical ideas? These are just some of the questions raised by Paul's technique

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[151] "For through the law I died to the law, so that I might live to God. I have been crucified with Christ; and it is no longer I who live, but it is Christ who lives in me... for if justification comes through the law, then Christ died for nothing" (Gal 2:19-21).

with the 'law'. Paul's apparent jumbling of all laws at once seems to mobilize indeterminacy on two fronts. On the one hand, we can see in this strategy to obfuscate meaning a reaction to those who had trouble with his message; on the other hand, there is a playfulness in the repetition of *nomos* (law) that may be seen as a poetic approach to the theological aspect of his message: all laws are manifestations of the one law that came from the first sin: natural law.

Considering the Letter to the Romans as a whole, in relation to the passage I reviewed, we can read how Paul was addressing a group of Judean followers of Jesus most of whom not only knew the Holy Scriptures, at least orally, but might also have been versed in contemporary Judean philosophy and Philo's Hellenizing of Judean faith in the *Book of Moses*. That would explain why Rom 1:18-32 would not, as Sanders and Dodd suggest, reference a Gentile community as distinguished from the Judean people, but rather, actually point to all of humanity in the early chapters of the book of *Genesis*; from Adam and Eve until Noah, including the relation between humans and Giants, the destruction of Sodom and Gomorrah, and the flood, we see sinning by everyone. This, however, does not explain Paul's perverse pleasure in troubling his meaning of law by way of expressing the inexpressible of it, coupled by his apparent self-promotion that repeats constantly. The self-centered nature of his writing would lead me to disagree with those scholars who claim that Romans 7:25 reflects mankind's relation to sin and the law generally; rather, I would argue that Paul means to situate his autobiography covertly in a universally shared experience. Paul is the central figure who, suffering sin, was saved (Rom 7: 24 "Wretched man that I am! Who will rescue me from this body of death?") by Jesus Christ. Moreover, when he claims he has died in Christ, when we read his self-identification with the death and resurrection of Christ, we can hear that faith in Christ not only frees a person from death but transforms that person by being 'anointed', or turns them into a messiah, in the Isaianic sense. This

transformation appears to be of the figurative order. In Chapter Five, I will make a case for seeing this change as literal.

There is much work yet to be done to trace the implication of my theory of the Law of Christ as the abrogation of natural law on the full body of Paul's letters. For example, when Räisänen and Sanders claim that the statements in Romans 5:13 are confusing or trite, it is because they have not distinguished between different kinds of sin, as Paul has. When Paul claims, 'sin was in the world before the law', he is not identifying generic sin outlined by the Mosaic laws, but the sin committed by Adam and Eve before their fall which condemned mankind to mortality; original sin existed before the first law of death. Moreover, when Paul claims that "sin is not reckoned when there is no law", he has shifted time and place; the law which has governed man from Adam to Moses until Paul's 'now', has been undone by the Law of Christ.[152] Christ's resurrection was the sign that God had forgiven mankind his [sic] sins; with the abrogation of this law, there is no more sin to count. Since we know the relation between sin and law is contingent on death, Snodgrass' reading of Rom 7:7-13 as "sin works through the flesh and uses the law to cause death" inverts the causal logic. Sin does not use the law; rather, in psychoanalytic terms, because the first sin created death, law uses sin to maintain awareness of our mortality. Overall you can see how important Paul's concept of Christ's law was. His conviction that Christ must be revered for freeing mankind from the bind of sin and death, signified a revolutionary change for himself. His role in

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[152] In research continuing a Marcion dilemma, Jerome Hall notes the trouble with understanding Paul's demonic angels in Gal 3:19 which, according to Hall, Hubner tried to resolve by separating Gal 3:19 "into two parts—the first being ascribed to demonic angels, the second obviously to God" (375). Where Marcion reached for a gnostic solution, contemporary scholars have remained stumped. I argue that the demon, which gave mankind natural law clearly does not signify God, but Satan in the guise of the serpent who tempts Adam and Eve to eat of the fruit. The demon is the temptation that causes the law of mortality.

that change, as having died and come back to life in Christ, points to the fact that he saw himself not only as a messenger, but as living proof of Christ.

CONCLUSION

What Paul identified as a cut in the fundamental law of life, repeating terms of exception for all mankind in the future of eternal existence, manifested as a crisis within the Judean faith because the satellite entity which came to be known as Christianity, gathering legitimacy around a supersessionist narrative, grew exponentially on the momentum of the invisible power of 'faith'; a cut in the Judean faith was the result. Tradition has blamed Paul for this cut; according to Paul, however, the responsibility of this cut was the Christ apparition of God's grace. Christian tradition continues to affirm that Paul encountered a divine being; it is an idea grounded in the OT tradition of visions and visitations by the divine 'Other'. What is different about Paul's representation of his divine encounter as based on the OT and those of the mystical tradition is centered on the trope of death. Whereas Jesus can be seen as equivalent to the prophets who ascended to heaven in their death, Jesus was different, according to Paul. That difference and its impossibility was reflected in Paul's own resurrection. At the end of chapter two I argued that Paul's encounter involved death and new life; I here qualify that statement to mean that, what Paul meant by death in relation to a resurrection, was his own. He was the one who died and, because of the 'risen Christ', he was resurrected. As a suffering servant, he was equal to Jesus in God's greater plan.
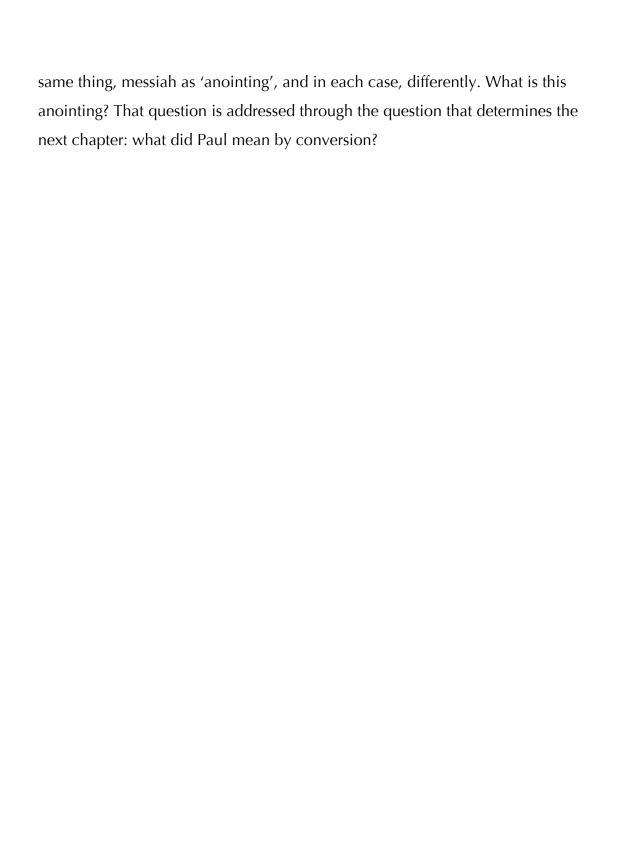
Now I shall further qualify what I mean by Paul's death and resurrection in psychoanalytic terms; the Law of Christ can be read as a traversal of the fantasy of oedipalization, or mortality. Looking behind this traversal of the fantasy of death, a traversal which stands as the Christian fantasy whose fulfillment has been deferred to Jesus' return, we see a momentary suspension of

the law of life. The same interruption of time or destiny in terms such as the "now time" in Benjamin's "Theses", and Santner's unplugging along with Rosenzweig's "interpellation beyond interpellation" all reflect a messianic fantasy, if not in actual terms as Paul and Rosenzweig have represented it, then in aspiring terms as Benjamin and Derrida have reflected on it.[153] What is significant for me about the interruption reflected in this unplugging, leaving aside the messianic obsession for the moment, is that it is an experience, which psychoanalysts would define as equal, in part, to the psychotic's foreclosure of the NOF. This means two things for my purposes. Paul's encounter with the real, in other words, his trauma, is the psychotic escape from the symbolic of the law (Judean faith, mortal destiny, oedipalization) into the roiling terrorizing atmosphere of the chaotic real; and that escape echoes what Rosenzweig registered as the call, or the 'interpellation beyond interpellation" whose mask,[154] is love.[155] In all these cases, to one extent or another, 'love' marks the

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[153] Santner traces a confluence of shared interest amongst Jewish German philosophers in the shift involved in 'unplugging', stressing that it need not be a radical break but does reflect a messianic awakening that, according to Bloom, is "the freedom yet that can be our time" (Psycho 64). Stéphane Mosès identification of Benjamin's vision of the revolution and messianic time offers an equivalent to unplugging as unknotting: "If, for Benjamin, the idea of happiness reflects that of Redemption, it may be said to be precisely as the term (Er-lösung) must be understood as the 'unknotting' of the paradoxes of the present".[153] According to Santner in his concluding thoughts in "Miracles Happen", "Saint Paul was the first great German-Jewish thinker, equal in stature to Rosenzweig, Freud and Benjamin"; furthermore, he suggests, Paul may be thought of as such because he was the source for these great German Jewish scholars (132), and that influence is reflected in the suspension of the law (of time, of society, of class systems, etc.), and especially in the concept of "fantasies of exception" in secular thought (133).
[154] I chose to use Žižek's concept of the imaginary aspect of love, for two reasons; it reflects the role of love to protect what is being hidden; it also reverberates between psychoanalytic and mystical texts on the issue of the feminine principle. Žižek's adaptation modifies the essential issue Lacan raises about the 'mask' or 'veil' in "The Subversion of the Subject and the Dialectic of Desire": "Such is woman concealed behind her veil: it is the absence of the penis that makes her the phallus, the object of desire. Evoke this absence in a more precise way by having her wear a cute fake one under her fancy dress: the effect is 100 percent guaranteed, for men who don't beat around the bush, that is" (Écrits 699).
[155] Rosenzweig introduces "Revelation" with the idea of love: "For love is not attribute, but event, and there is no place in it for an attribute... God's love is always wholly in the moment

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same thing, messiah as 'anointing', and in each case, differently. What is this anointing? That question is addressed through the question that determines the next chapter: what did Paul mean by conversion?

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and at the point where it loves; and it is only in the infinity of time, step by step, that it reaches one point after the next and permeates the totality with soul" (*Star of Redemption* 177).

CHAPTER 5: INTERPELLATION BEYOND INTERPELLATION

INTRODUCTION

During the American Comparative Literature Association's Annual Conference on the topic of Catastrophe, Collapse and Change in 2012, I attended a panel on conversion. There were a few presentations looking at the controversial conversion of T. S. Eliot; there was a presentation on 'coming out' and the confession as an expression of conversion; and there was one comparison of St. John of the Cross's *Spiritual Canticle* with a Hindi prayer that seemed incongruous at first, since its focus was on ecstatic experience. Besides this incongruity, I was struck by the absence of a self-conscious understanding of the Christo-centric vision of conversion in the papers presented, articulated by one panelist who perceptively asked, "Does conversion exist in other forms?" The fact that no one could address the question beyond Christo-centric terms, including me, struck me as indicative of a problem in scholarship; eventually, I came to the conclusion that this problem could be traced to the fact that Paul's influence on Christian conversion remained buried in the scholarship presented at this panel, especially in the paper comparing the Hindi prayer with *The Spiritual Canticle*.[156]

What was incongruous about this paper was the fact that neither the Christian poem nor the Hindi prayer were in any explicit way about conversion, an absence which was exacerbated by the fact the presenter unself-consciously engaged in a Christo-centric reading of the Hindi prayer. Implicit in this comparison though not consciously addressed, was that ecstasy was

[156] Gloria Maité Hernéndez. "Figures, Comparisons and Resemblances: The Comparative Act of Mystical Writing". ACLA Conference, Brown University, Providence, R.I., March 31, 2012. Conference Presentation.

synonymous with conversion. According to Colleen Colleen Shantz, conflating conversion and ecstasy in Pauline scholarship is a central blind spot. In *Paul's Ecstasy: The Neurobiology of the Apostles Life and Thought,* she applies a neurobiological method to interpreting Paul's ecstatic events as separate from his conversion experience. Shantz's scientific approach to ecstatic experience shall complement the psychoanalytic approach to Paul's text in the pages ahead. Through a textual analysis of Paul's ecstatic experiences, I will follow Shantz's project in distinguishing between the event of ecstasy and the event of conversion and move beyond her research to give reasons for why Paul could not be considered a convert.

The failure to imagine beyond the Christian paradigm to which the panel participants had equally and independently, 'as if by accident', bound their scholarship, highlighted an aporia raised by the question "does conversion exist in other forms?" Can we, for example, see a correlation between conversion and 'interpellation'? In this chapter, I indirectly take up this question by following through on an observation made by the editors of Taubes' *The Political Theology of Paul*: "Taubes differentiates between conversion and calling: Whereas the conversion of Paul constitutes the model of a Christian conversion, his being called puts him in line with Jewish prophets".[157] Once I have addressed the scholarly assumptions about conversion and Paul, and subsequently defined the difference between conversion and the 'call' or interpellation, I will provide proof for Taubes' understanding of Paul and also bring into focus what is significant in Paul's legacy.

CONVERSION

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[157] Wolf-Daniel Hartwich, Aleida Assmann and Jan Assmann in "Afterword", 118.

In her project on Paul's 'ecstatic experience', Colleen Shantz highlights the fact that 'conversion', as used in Pauline scholarship, is 'notoriously imprecise" (46). By imprecise she does not mean to raise issues of the anachronistic use of Henry James' idea of the psychological/sociological term to define a person's move from one religion to another; rather, she highlights that scholarship collapses or conflates Paul's ecstatic experience with his putative conversion, relying primarily on Luke's representation of Paul's "Damascus road experience" (47), an experience which cannot be verified in Paul's letters. The event of 'conversion/call', Shantz asserts, is "safely opaque—and therefore a kind of tabula rasa on which the central Pauline tenets might be written" (55); it allows scholars like Kim to maintain that Paul's "first vision of Jesus was an 'objective external event'"(57); that is say, Jesus was not a revelation of God, but the literal visitation of the dead man, unique and incomparable. This idea of Jesus' unique status maintains the conflation between ecstasy and conversion, which, for my purposes, marks the spot for my investigation into the unconscious persistence of Paul's testimony in secularism.

While Shantz targets Kim's focus on the unique quality of Jesus as a mark of scholarly blindness, she cites Segal's research in *Paul: The Convert* as showing Paul's experience as not unique, but of the tradition in the Judean faith, which would develop into *Merkabah* mysticism (57). It is true that Shantz will go on to problematize Segal's literary methods to understand Paul's experience, but the fact that she does not question Segal's thesis that Paul was a convert also reflects scholarly blindness. Granted, Shantz's project is not to debate what conversion is, "but the way in which the assertion of a conversion experience allows one to lump all sorts of ecstatic experience into a single event…" (56). With respect, I would say that Shantz misses an opportunity to uncover the fact that ecstasy is made invisible by the ideology determining conversion. That ideology motivates Segal in *Paul: The Convert*, in which he

professes that, while his task is to reread Paul as a Judean (xv), in order to put back the Judean content determining Paul's letters, his motivating thesis is to prove that Paul converted to Christianity: "I maintain that Paul is indeed a convert in the modern sense" (21). Despite the confidence here, he admits in his Appendix that to call Paul's experience a conversion 'may not be useful' (285), long after asserting, "Conversion is an appropriate term for discussing Paul's religious experience, although he did not himself use the term" (72) and then affirming, "[v]iewing Paul as a convert is a productive model" (117). This repeated justification signals an unconscious doubt. Segal is fully cognizant of the anachronistic move in using the modern term, 'conversion', to define an ancient event which is known only based on some letters; considering my project could be seen to be arguing to do the same thing, applying a modern idea of trauma to a historical event barely accessible to us now, then I for one should have no problem with Segal's method, and I do not. I am compelled to push at Segal's thesis, however, because a deterministic anachronism is debilitating Segal's 'productive model' and that is Christian ideology.

According to Segal, Paul's experience is reflected in modern psychological ideas of conversion: "Forces of dissonance are always unleashed in a conversion because the convert sees a great distinction between his previous life and the present one" (265). If we owe our modern idea of conversion to the anthropologists, sociologists, and psychologists, it is always forgotten that these modern scientists owe their idea to the Paul who was Christianized through the early period of the Jesus movement[158]. Moreover, I would assert that the vague language used by these modern science disciplines

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[158] Shantz is conscious of resisting seeing the first-century followers of Jesus as already defined under the rubric of Christianity; recall, the term "the Christ' had only just been introduced by Paul in the 50s CE. Shantz resolves the anachronistic impulse to name this community Christianity by erasing the capital 'C' and so calls them, 'christian'. In the same spirit of resisting anachronisms, I prefer to name the community as being followers of Jesus.

about conversion reflects an unconscious effect; almost any circumstance in our modern times that is not religious, experiences like migration, a psychological breakdown, marriage, divorce, or political participation signal the same psychological shift reflected in this definition of conversion. What I want to highlight is the fact that a religious condition of change would apply equally to almost any secular activity, which emphasizes the ubiquity of Pauline thought in contemporary culture, and its ambiguous legacy.

In first-century terms, 'convert' or 'proselyte' were terms used to define gentiles who were not the God-fearers (in Asia Minor, at least) but who, through circumcision, accepted a new life following Judean precepts; conversion reflected a movement from a life without the true God to a life with the true God. Segal recognizes this quality of conversion in Paul's society as being a pagan turning (*epistrophe*) to the true God; he reflects on the putative conversion expressed by Josephus in his time studying with Bannus, the Essene (82), noting the liberal ideas Judeans had at the time about non-Gentiles entering the community, Philo's near allegorizing being an example (90) and that the messianic element of apocalypticism attracted people to spiritual communities (111), the case of the Jesus movement being the most widely known in modern society. In this review, Segal does not highlight an important qualifying issue: our modern idea of conversion is inherited from the first-century conversion of *turning to* an affiliation, culled from Acts 15:3, "conversion of the gentiles" using the Greek *epistrophe*, for 'turn' or a 'turn in direction'. Interestingly, the use of 'turn' in *Acts* to signal conversion, can be seen to have a connection to Paul's use of 'apostrophe', or "turn away", in Romans 11:26, in his quotation from Isaiah, "turn godlessness away from Jacob". Paul's 'godless' can be seen in two ways; it reflects the Gentile who lives without God until his turn to God; or, in Paul's later career as an apostle, it may also have reflected his own increasing trouble with those Judeans who,

preaching God, behaved as if essentially godless. It could be argued that this *double entendre* in his diction, which reflects what I have before described as his conviction in his mission to the Gentiles, combined with his defense of that mission against those who critiqued it, has, interestingly, come to define Christian conversion; that is, the change from a godless to god-centered life as indicated in Paul's gospel, has become christianized as the change from a non-Jesus to a Jesus-centered life.

Segal admits a lack of conversion language in the letters (19), but repeatedly refers to Paul's experience as a conversion to Christianity (12). Segal's use of this term is applied to Paul because of the anachronistic use in Luke's *Acts*: "Luke describes Paul explicitly as a new prophet, but he also portrays Paul's experience as a radical conversion" (11). Written after Paul's mission, or at his death, *Acts* reflects something striking about the first decades of the Jesus moment which I have noted before with respect to the significance of the suffering servant: the term 'conversion', from the Greek *epostrophe* (to turn, to turn about), perhaps adapted from Paul's quotation of Isaiah in Romans, has become a part of the community's discourse, in Foucault's sense of discourse in *Archaeology of Knowledge*. This discourse in *Luke*, as Shantz highlights, had political importance: "It has long been noted that Luke's characterization of Paul… owes a great deal to the evangelist's own redactional purposes… In the final tally, the accounts from Acts agree with Paul's own only in (1) the notion of some apprehension of the divine and (2) the association of this apprehension with a change in Paul's social identity" (48-49). Shantz insists *Luke* is historically unreliable because of its politics: "In the end, the only significant historical information provided by the Lukan accounts is the fact that some sectors of early christianity told a story of Paul's dramatic conversion as a means of validating his role and to address concerns about the nature of the movement" (49). The 'nature of the movement' in Shantz's terms, here, means

that the Jesus followers were beginning to distinguish themselves in opposition to the Judean cult. Their identity as a separate and distinct cult, which we inherit in the named religion, 'christianity'[159], is visible in its formative state in *Acts*, following Paul, and not necessarily including Paul.

Segal admits Paul does not use language of conversion such as *epistrophe* or *apostrophe* to describe his experience; Segal also claims that his project is meant to envision Paul as a Judean. The fact that Segal contradicts his own intention to take a Judeo-centric approach to his experiences, and instead adapts early Christian language to describe Paul's experiences, highlights a series of adumbrated assumptions motivating his use of 'conversion'. Seeing Paul as a convert implies that Paul's message was about a new unique event centered on Jesus' Crucifixion/Resurrection which was separate from the Judean faith; it implies that, the event launched the rupture between Judaism and Christianity, which meant that Paul turned away from his Judean faith, which means that he stopped seeing himself as a Judean or believing in his laws, and so become a Christian. In short, according to Segal, Paul turned to a new faith which preceded its formation as a community, not to mention its naming. Segal's assumption that Christianity existed for Paul to convert to, implies that Jesus not only preceded the formation of the church, and that Paul was equal to a gentile and needed to 'turn to God', but in distinctly secessionist terms represented in Milton's fantasy in *Paradise Lost*, Christianity pre-existed the Judean cult as part of God's great plan of salvation, envisioned before mankind's cataclysmic fall. In short, we see in Segal's thinking the very opacity Shantz highlights in Kim's conviction that Jesus was an objective unique event; we see the ideology of Christo-centricism.

As Segal has noted, Paul's representation of his experiences of visiting the third heaven, encountering the *Doxa/Kavod* of God in Christ, were not

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[159] This is Shantz's term for the early period of Christianity.

unique, but reflected the tradition of mysticism that goes as far back as Moses's experience on Mount Sinai encountering the Glory of God; terms like *metanoia*, meaning change of heart or repentance (2 Cor 7:9), or *metamorphoas*, as in transformation (2 Cor 3:18), are used by Paul about himself, or his community, as caused by the divine message, communication, or 'apocalypse', the revelation. There is little reason to see, as Segal suggests, that Paul rejected his faith, or believed in his Christ as opposed to the Judean cult, as in *epistrophe*. Stendahl argues that Paul did not experience a conversion, but a 'call' (10); this accords with historians (Donaldson and Campbell) who contend that Paul was not rejecting his Judean faith for another 'faith' in being an apostle of the gospel.[160] Terrence Donaldson argues in *Paul and the Gentiles* (1997), that Paul's call was not just about preaching his gospel to the gentiles, but involved the impact of the Christ on himself and his contemporary society (260). The fact that his message was not one of opposition is upheld in my analysis of the Law of Christ as a supplement to, not a dismantling of, the Law of Moses. The fact that this message was for all, emphasizes that any opposition we hear in his letters does not reflect his position to the Judean faith, but to those Judeans who opposed his gospel. Though Paul believed in the turn promoted by his gospel, his experience did not signal that he identified with that gospel; rather, his experience reflected a transformation in ways he considered equal to Moses' impact on the wandering Israelites.

Paul's identification with the prophet Moses (2 Corinthians 3:12-19) sheds light on how he understood his transformation. Moses was called (from his birth) as was Paul (set aside by God); and that his task was to lead the chosen people to the promised land; on receiving the commandments, his face was radiant (Exodus (29-34), requiring that he veil himself except before God;

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[160] See Terence Donaldson's "The Gospel that I Proclaim Among the Gentiles (Galatians 2.2): Universalistic or Israel-Centered?" 93.

Paul identifies himself and his followers with the Mosaic unveiling, "seeing the glory of the Lord as though reflected in a mirror,… being transformed into the same image from one degree of glory to another" (2 Corinthians 3:18). Taubes asserts that Paul did not see himself as a prophet, like Moses, but an apostle 'outbidding Moses' (39). In response to Taubes, I suggest that Paul had no interest in upstaging Moses since the Law of Christ did not reflect a rejection of Moses' laws of Mount Sinai; rather, Paul was called to signal the resolution of a theological dilemma much like Moses confronted his dilemma of the Israelite's enslavement. Moses was leading the chosen people; Paul was speaking to the new members of the 'chosen' community not just about God, but about the future day of judgment when they would rise, saved in Christ. The apostolic nature of his message for Gentiles, therefore, signaled what is unique about his prophetic call; it involved inclusion of the outsiders into the transformation for all believers, indicated in terms like *metamorphoas* or *metanoia*, expressed in his personal experience of new life. This change, integral to the Law of Christ, was a substantive transformation, which Paul promoted as available to both the converted pagan and the Judean as salvation.

While Segal is sensitive to Paul's language as relevant to the movement, he continually erases Paul's authority from his own text: "The language of transformation was evidently used by two evangelists to describe Jesus transfiguration. It is quite possible that the transfiguration itself was supposed to be a model of transformation for the believers as well as a sign of Jesus' own identity as God's principle angelic manifestation" (Segal 111). In Segal's project on Paul, Paul's own transformation, identified often in the text as 'dying in Christ' or 'suffering the thorn', is entirely displaced by the transfiguration of Jesus and references to transformation by evangelists, iterating the erasure of Paul's messianism in *Acts*, previously noted in Chapter 3, but also highlighting the opacity in Pauline scholarship. It remains the bane of historical scholarship

that a Christian ideology occludes seeing Paul as the author of his own experience, as opposed to being the midwife of a religion whose name was not even directly attributed to him when it came to be named. In Freud's terms, what is important is not whether the experience happened or not, but that the person believes it did; that is, what is important is not whether or not Jesus came to him, but that Paul was convinced that he had experienced a substantive transformation in being given new life, because of the Christ, which empowered him to save people from the impending chaos of the end times. Even though Segal writes over Paul's experience with an anachronistic Christo-centric pen, Segal stays true to the fact that Paul experienced a change. That is an important detail because, as I will show in the following pages, the change in Paul was not the conversion promoted in *Acts*, but the idea introduced by Stendahl's 'call', which is central to the ecstatic event.

THE ECSTATIC

Shantz understood that conversion became a cypher for Paul's experiences because enlightenment rationalism could not adequately accommodate ecstasy. The science of ecstasy, Shantz argues, can be traced through anthropological research on shaman practices, pejoratively defined as primitive religion, and then, in psychoanalytic terms, as schizoid abnormality, until it become assimilated in science as Altered States of Consciousness (ASC). The cognicentric thinking of enlightenment valuing of the "objective truth stripped of personal involvement" (26) determining this scientific research is echoed in what Shantz defines as the 'misregard' of Pauline scholarship. Scholarly biases against Paul's experiences were reflected in identifying them as insane hallucinations, as Corley highlights was the norm in nineteenth century thinking

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about Paul (55),[161] or as pagan magic, an issue which led theologians to avoid his ecstatic language, fearing contamination of the divine doctrine. When addressed by scholarship, Shantz argues, Paul's experiences have been framed by the cognicentrically determined literary traditions, which have obscured the experiential significance of his encounter(s) of Christ (59). In the effort to resolve the impasse in scholarship on Paul's thinking by analyzing his ecstatic experiences as ASC events, Shantz is not only in unchartered territory, her injection of religious content into the cognicentric fields of secular research is subversive and I applaud it, even as I resist it. While I too value Paul's ecstatic event as significant, and admittedly am restrained by applying the very cognicentrism she critiques, my aim is to disrupt the hold Christianity has over scholarship by showing that Paul's event did not exist as we have come to know it through the highly formulated terms of contemporary Christianity.

Paul's references to his ecstatic experiences are few. In Galatians he tells the story of his 'call' (1:15); and in 2 Corinthians, he offers an account of ascension in the third person, 'a person who in Christ was caught up to the third heaven" (12:2). Scholars tend to agree that Paul here is speaking about himself, and most find ways to explain the anomaly of his self-erasure by referencing contemporary spiritual traditions. Segal, for example, references rabbinic prohibitions: "Rabbinic rules also forbid public discussion of mystic phenomena. A first-century date for this rule would explain why Paul could not divulge his experience in his own name at that place. It also suggests why Jewish mystics consistently picked pseudepigraphical literary conventions to discuss their religious experience, unlocking the mystery behind the entire phenomenon of pseudepigraphical writing" (Segal 58). Segal's claim that Paul's

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[161] It has been noted by Bruce Corley that a trend in the nineteenth century saw Paul's ecstatic experience as reflecting mental or cognitive disorder: "Nineteenth-century explanations, in fact, commonly delved into mythic projections of guilt, hallucinations and apparitions, epileptic seizures, or the power of thunderstorm" ("Interpreting Paul's Conversion—Then and Now", 14).

experiences are a part of a larger tradition of ascent literature (of Moses and Enoch, etc.,) in the Dead Sea Scrolls (59), explains the significance of the 'unutterable' as a code in the tradition of Talmudic literature (60), an idea very much shared by Tabor's thesis that Paul's inability to say whether he was raised in body or in spirit reflected a censoring of secret knowledge (*Unutterable* 121).

Segal, Tabor[162], and also Morray-Jones[163] contextualize Paul's experience in the tradition of Judean mystical practices otherwise known as *merkabah* mysticism or *hekhalot* literature, which, as far as Shantz is concerned, misrecognizes Paul's experience. Shantz argues that for Segal's thesis of rabbinic influence to work, certain assumptions must be made. For one, Paul's training had to have been limited to the Pharisaic community, and the rabbinic rules on mystical traditions had to have been securely in place in Paul's time (61), neither of which is indicated by the breadth of thinking in Paul's letters; for another, in order to see Paul's silence as following an esoteric prohibition (62), Shantz argues, one would have to suppose that prohibition applied also to his references to it amongst the gentile community he was addressing: Why would this prohibition apply if the audience did not understand to begin with? Her point is that Paul's refusal to share what he heard is not about a conscious effort for secrecy, but about an inability to express himself.

As opposed to left-brain cognition, which is linguistic and narrative-driven (101), ecstatic experience centres on right-brain activity which is neither spatial nor linguistic; in ecstatic experience, the subject looses track of where the body exists in relation to time and space (96), a condition evident in "the phenomenon of 'phantom limbs'… also associated with the persistence (and

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[162] See James Tabor's *Unutterable: Paul's Ascent to Paradise in its Greco-Roman, Judaic, and Early Christian Contexts*. New York, London: University Press of America, 1986.
[163] C. R. A. Morray-Jones wrote two articles on the issue of the relation between ascent literature and Paul: "Paradise Revisited (2 Cor 12:1-12): The Jewish Mystical Background of Paul's Apostolate": Part 1: The Jewish Sources" (HTR, 86:2 (1993): 177-217) and Part 2: Paul's Heavenly Ascent and its Significance" (HTR, 86:3 (1993): 265-92).

plasticity) of somatic neural imprinting, even in the absence of actual bodily parts" (97.) Since ecstatic experience is beyond verbal cognition, it is often re-created to conform to literary conventions. Interestingly, the neurological definition of right-brain cognition in the experience of ecstasy complements Lacan's concept of the subject's experience of the real; that which is ineffable, whose encounter is the trauma, is missed by the subject which leads to the imperative to make sense of it afterwards through the symbolic. This central principle behind fantasy formation in Lacan's theory explains the difference between the mystic and the psychotic. If the mystic can retroactively give shape to her experience through fantasy, the psychic, who is fundamentally limited symbolically, shows incoherence in her/his representation of the crisis; Daniel Paul Schreber's testimony is a prime example of this confusion, according to Lacan (*Seminar III* 78). Bearing in mind that Paul's representation of his experience as limited by his semantic frame is a given, then what is inassimilable of his experience, what cannot be digested by the symbolic, stands out. For this reason, I argue, Segal's and Tabor's analysis of the *merkabah* tradition in Paul's work remains valuable not just to affirm the shared experienced reflected in the tradition, but also to identify his innovations.

To contextualize Judean conversion in Paul's time, Segal notes parallels between Paul's ascension to paradise and elements of the conversion depicted in *Joseph and Aseneth*, (81, 91, 92, 180). *JandA* is a Greek Syrian novel, otherwise defined as a Hellenistic romance, set in ancient Egypt, which develops a conversion narrative around Aseneth, Joseph's Egyptian wife, from the biblical pericope in *Genesis* 41-37-45. The novel tells of her love for Joseph, his rejection of her for being an idolater, her week of fasting and repentance after which she is visited by a heavenly figure (*angelos*) who signals her conversion, leading to her acceptance by Joseph as his bride; the second shorter half tells of political intrigue of the Pharaoh's failed assassination plot against

Aseneth, both aided and hindered by Joseph's brothers. This Greek novel is an interesting selection for Segal because, though drawing connections between Aseneth's conversion and Paul's story have been noted in scholarship for decades (Chesnutt 58-59), there is no obvious reason that it could be proof of Paul's conversion since its Christian origin is disputed.

The earliest text we have is in Syrian and dates to the 5th century CE. Burchard and Philonenko have done the most to categorize the extant manuscripts between four rescensions (A, B, C, D), wherein Burchard favours B[164] and Philonenko favours D as original.[165] Most scholars agree it was originally written in Koine Greek and dates from between 110 BCE to 115 CE.[166] Amongst the majority, there are a few dissenting voices; Ross Shepard Kraemer, favouring Philonenko's translation (D), asserts the romance cannot be dated before the 4th century.[167] Gideon Bohak argues for an Egyptian Judean author, dating to the Onaid period, around middle second century BCE.[168] Some scholars have focused on its generic identity, as a Hellenistic romance (Philonenko, Kee) drawing connections to pagan initiation practices (Kee)[169], or roman novels of transformation such as Apuleius' *Golden Ass* (Burchard), but most focus on its authority. As with the dating game, there is only disagreement amongst scholars about the author's cultic affiliation.

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[164] Burchard offers a thoughtful review of his original thesis that B was the first version of the novel in "The Text of Joseph and Aseneth Reconsidered", and concludes ambiguously that he is not sure of his original conviction, but that B represents a family of texts distinct from A and D, which share an ancestor, and are distinct from B (94-95).

[165] Marc Philonenko's translation of D, (*Joseph et Aséneth: Introduction Texte Critique Traducion et Notes*. Lieden, E. J. Brill, 1968) is used by Kraemer in her work.

[166] Randall Chesnutt, *From Death to Life*, 36-37; Howard Clark Kee, "The Socio-Cultural Setting of Joseph and Aseneth," *New Testament Studies* 29 (1983): 394-413.

[167] Kraemer. *When Aseneth Met Joseph: A Late Antiquity Tale Of the Biblical Patriarch and his Egyptian Wife, Reconsidered*. New York: Oxford U Press, 1998.

[168] See Bohak's *'Joseph and Aseneth' and the Jewish Temple in Heliolpolis*. Atlanta, Georgia: Scholars Press, 1996.

[169] Kee's "The Socio-Cultural Setting of Joseph and Aseneth" primarily argues for seeing an Isis cult practice in the story of Aseneth, drawing parallels to contemporary romances, particular Apuleius' Golden Ass.

The variety of theories about *JandA*'s author is due primarily to the absence of religious particularities in the text. Battifol's theory that the novel was a 'neglected apocryphon' of Christian origin because Christian communities preserved it,[170] was a theory that held until the discovery of the Dead Sea Scrolls. Scholars, noting similarities in the practices of Aseneth to the Essenes who supposedly wrote the sectarian scrolls, argued for seeing the romance as Judean. The majority of scholars today argue for a Judean authority, seeing it either as a propagandic work to entice Gentiles to convert to the Judean faith (Burchard)[171] or as a guide for Judeans accepting converts into the fold (Chesnutt).[172] In this majority, there are a few who adamantly disagree. Kraemer, for example, supports Battifol's theory,[173] addressing the text's putative Judean allusions as indicative of a Judean Christian author; she remains convinced there is no reason to see it as a strictly Judean conversion story, especially with its late dating.[174] Rivka Nir also argues for a Christian origin, not because it was used by Christians, but because it does not reflect the historical record of ritual practices of the Judean cult of the time, pointing to the bad logic

[170] See P. Batiffol's "Le Livre de la Prière de Aseneth" in *Studia patristica: Etudes d'ancienne littérature chrétienne.* Vol ½. Paris: Leroux, 1889-90, 1-115.

[171] Christophe Burchard. "The Text of *Joseph and Aseneth* Reconsidered," *Journal for the Study of the Pseudephigrapha* 14.2 (2005): 83-96.

[172] Chesnutt, *From Death to Life: Conversion in Joseph and Aseneth*, 1995.

[173] Arguing against Kraemer and Battifol's interpretation of this text as Christian, Collins rightly points out that many Judean texts, such as Josephus' opus, were preserved through the centuries by the Church which means that, though *Aseneth* was preserved by the Church, it cannot automatically be considered Christian ("Joseph and Aseneth: Jewish or Christian?" 98).

[174] Contra the early pro-Christian origin scholars, Aptowitzer put forward the thesis that the story, which appears in medieval rabbinic literature, dates to the first century. Kraemer reviews the rabbinic literature of Aptowitzer's research, and claims that his thesis does not hold because of a textual detail. In rabbinic literature, Aseneth's mother was the raped Judean Dinah thus explaining the rabbinic interest in returning to the fold a lost Judean, much like Moses. In the Syriac tradition, there is no mention of Aseneth's mother: "It may be quite significant that the earliest attestation of the Dinah legend appears to be the Syriac tale printed [much later] by Oppenheim, which Aptowitzer assumed to reflect earlier rabbinic traditions but which could quite conceivably itself be formulated in response to the Syriac Aseneth and form the basis of the material found in later midrashic sources" (318). While Kraemer's point does seem to undermine Aptowitzer's thesis, it is not proof that it was originally a Christian story.

in Chesnutt's assertion that the absence of Christian ritual in the text makes it Jewish.[175] Confusion about whether the text is of Christian or Judean origin spills over into historians' work to determine what it can say about conversion of the time. From Lieu's perspective, the text remains ambiguous about the issue of women conversion in the Roman Antiquities period,[176] arguing rather that it reflects a concern about conversion generally by the religious authority, which was composed of men; the feminine gender of the story's convert reflects a double ambivalence to the outsider seeking admittance. As it stands, gender and religious ambiguity in *JandA* make it a useful text to compare to Paul's letters, by isolating the difference between the transformation involved in conversion and that experienced in the ecstatic event.

DOXA

The *doxa* of God represented by Paul as Jesus Christ may be in Shantz' project, a representation of Paul's psychic event equal to other psychic events experienced by Shamans or the cults of Paul's time, yet she sustains a sense of Paul's distinction, and the distinction of his gospel, as originating from the Christian concept of Christ as the risen Jesus.[177] In comparing Paul's letters and the Greek novel, *Joseph and Aseneth*, I aim to dismantle this ideological prejudice that underpins Shantz's analysis, in order to affirm the equality of ecstatic experience(s) and the non-partisan nature of Paul's *doxa*. In preparation

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[175] See Rivka Nir's *Joseph and Aseneth: A Christian Book*, 8.

[176] Lieu argues: "The social context of [women's convert stories] prominence has been much debated, but their role seems best understood not as evidence of a predominantly female readership nor of women's prominence in society but as a projection of male concerns" ("The Attraction of Women" 17).

[177] "Something more than conscious reasoning is at work in Paul's shift in identity, and attention to the nature of religious experience helps to name what that 'something' is. Paul's experience of union with Christ during the peak of neurological tuning, as well as his repeated perception that the divine spirit inhabited or possessed him, created in Paul a knowledge of resources beyond his own. […] The compelling and embodied knowing of ecstatic experience is necessary (though by no means sufficient) to account for Paul's christianity" (Shantz 208).

for making a comparison between the works, certain inequalities between the novel and Paul's letters need to be addressed. While it is true that the texts seem generically incommensurable, since one is a first-person testimony and the other is a third person fiction, and also ideologically, since one is about an actual Judean man and the other is about a fictional pagan woman, two things encourage fruitful analysis; in psychoanalytic terms, the differences in the two texts are inconsequential considering that neither text, Paul's letters or the Greek novel, is anything more than a fantasy of the traumatic event. Moreover, since, as Shantz pointed out, any representation must rely on tradition for a semantic frame, then the fact that both Paul and the author of *JandA* are roughly of the same historical period signifies that they share some of the same tradition. Finally, Aseneth's motivations remain ambiguous with respect to her/the text's religious affiliation, which makes possible interrogating Paul's own experiences as similarly ambiguous: if Aseneth's pagan origin gives us a means of seeing her change as the *epistrophe* of the Gentile convert, then on the matter of her transformation, as *metanoia* or *metamorpho*, what does she share with Paul? It is this shared element that I argue is reflected in the presence of *doxa* in both works, not just as the vision of God, but as the signifier of what Stendahl terms "call", or what I call, "interpellation beyond interpellation".

In the *Septuagint (LXX)*, *doxa* reflects the mundane definition of 'opinion' or 'what one thinks', and Paul uses it that way often; but in certain circumstances, Paul uses the term for its root significance which Shantz defines thus: "*doxa* is nearly a technical term that combines first its root sense of appearance or manifestation and second the superlative connotation connected with its use for the splendor of God" (122). Shantz highlights how Paul's *doxa* reflects the presence of God, the Christ as the image of God, "apprehended as radiance or light" (127). It is a term that signifies the source as God, but in Paul, that source is always related to the Christ. In 2 *Cor* 3-5, Shantz highlights that

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doxa is reflected in Moses' face, visible as 'light and radiance' (123). This idea is then transformed in Paul to incorporate the followers of the Christ, as the source of this light, as noted above (2 Cor 3:18). I want to clarify that, I use 'christ' for its definition of the 'anointed one', or the 'messiah', and not as a synonym for Jesus; in that respect, Shantz's sophisticated reading of Paul's use of *doxa* to define christ leads me to see *doxa* in a causal relation to the 'anointed one'.

Though the term *doxa* is not used in *JandA* in the sequence of chapters devoted to Aseneth's encounter with the heavenly figure (chapters 14-17), detailing her conversion, images of light permeate the narrative, exemplified in the description of the heavenly figure, identified as *angelos*: "…there was a man in every respect similar to Joseph, by the robe and the crown and the royal staff, except that his face was burning like lightening, and his eyes like sunshine, and the hairs of his head like a flame of fire of a burning torch, and hands and feet like iron shining forth from a fire, and sparks shot forth from his hand and feet" (14: 9-11, Burchard translation, 225).[178] Who this *angelos* is, is not immediately clear; Ross Shepard Kraemer notes, he does not identify himself with a name (124);[179] however, he is represented in the radiant light indicative of the traditional literature describing the double of God, Son of God, the heavenly figure, logos of God (127), or the *doxa* in Ezekiel's vision of 'the appearance of the likeness of the glory of God' (34), which links this figure to *merkabah* mysticism.[180] *JandA* draws from the same traditions that informed Paul's visions. Moreover, the fact that Aseneth's visitor remains un-named shows a parallel to

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[178] The following is a somewhat different translation by D. Cook from *The Apocryphal Old Testament*, edited by H. F. D. Spark: "8. And she looked up and saw a man like Joseph in every respect, with a robe and a crown and a royal staff. 9. But his face was like lightning, and his eyes were like the light of the sun, [11] and the hairs of his head like flames [12] of fire, and his hands and feet like iron from the fire" (www.markgoodacre.org).
[179] Kraemer identifies the figure as archangel Michael, adapted from both Philonenko and Burchard's translations, but notes that the figure in Aseneth remains unnamed.
[180] Schäfer most famously counters Scholem's thesis and is supported by Halperin (*Chariots*).

the 'unutterable', that indivisible remainder of the *objet a*, of Paul's ascension narrative.

According to Segal, the human-like figure associated with God's Kavod found in Ezekiel 1:26 LXX, represents, God's Glory: "That the Glory of God refers to the manlike figure... is manifest from the rest of Ezekiel where Kavod YHWH or the God of Israel is described as sitting on the throne or otherwise personified" (52). This Kavod, Segal argues, is evident in the representation of Christ in Paul's 2 Corinthians 3:18-4:6: "For Paul, as for the earliest Jewish mystics, to be privileged to see the Kavod, or Glory (*doxa*) of God is a prologue to transformation into his image (*eikon*)" (60). In Segal's terms, the Christ in Paul's text is an image which only represents and is not an actual risen dead man. Morray-Jones also recognizes the metaphorical significance of the Kavod in Paul's reference to the 'man in Christ' formula: "In the apocalyptic-*merkabah* tradition of ascent into heaven, the vision of the *Kabod* (whom Paul identifies with Christ) involves a transformation of the visionary into an angelic supra-angelic likeness of this glory or divine image, and that this seems to be the background of Paul's concept of 'glorification' (for example Romans 8:29 and 2 Corinthians 3:18)" (Morray-Jones, 273.)[181] While Segal sees 'the *kavod*' was not the living preaching Jesus raised from death, Morray-Jones takes his analysis of this metaphorical figure one step further to say that what Paul thought he saw as the Christ, the "*merkabah* vision of the enthroned and glorified Messiah" could be understood simply as inspiration for his 'gospel to the nations' (292). These assertions substantiate my reading of Shantz's *doxa*, not as the 'christ' of Jesus, but as the literal 'anointed one', which recurs in *JandA* in surprising ways.

As previously noted, Aseneth's visitor who looks like Joseph, the one she loves, is not the human Joseph. While this imaginary figure of God, which

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[181] Segal offers almost the exact same idea of kavod in the Jewish mystical tradition: "For Paul, as for the earliest Jewish mystics, to be privileged to see Kavod or Glory (*doxa*) of God is a prologue to transformation into his image (*eikon*)" (60).

stands as proof of God's presence, reflects a strictly Judean tradition of the 'son of God', a Christian reading of *JandA* is defended by the contemporary tradition that saw Joseph representing Jesus Christ; Burchard highlights that a Syrian manuscript of the *The Book of Joseph*, coupled with *J and A*, and believed to be written by St. Ephrem, tells the story of Joseph as Jesus (9). Kraemer notes, this association of Jesus with Joseph is attested by Origen and Augustine (253); moreover, she adds, that the connection between the novel's inhuman and human Joseph with Jesus Christ, is encouraged by the human Joseph's identification as "son of God" several times in *JandA* (6:3; 18.11; 21.4). Notable is the fact that this identification signals a heavenly aspect of the human Joseph in *JandA* which is attested in Judean mystical texts and *merkabah* literature; thus, far from affirming its Christian origins as Kraemer suggests, this detail actually positions *JandA* within a tradition shared by both Jesus followers and Judeans, if not also other contemporary cultic groups, and so explains how the Roman novel eludes sectarian distinction.

BAPTISM (mortality)

As reviewed, Paul's Gospel defines conversion, or *apostrophe* (*epistrophe*) a turn, as a turning away from pagan life to turning to the one God; in this sense, Paul did not convert, but Aseneth did. If not being able to see or identify the moment of conversion in Paul has distracted scholars because when that conversion happened, or what it looked like, is not explicit to Paul's testimony, the same trouble exists for scholars in studying *JandA* as a conversion text. There are no standard rituals of conversion in the novel to help identify the faith driving its construction. If Kee argues that this text cannot be a Judean one since circumcision is not mentioned (399), Collins correctly points out that "Circumcision is irrelevant since Aseneth is a woman" ("Joseph and Aseneth: Jewish or Christian?" 106). I will come back to this point of circumcision and

gender, after considering the place of the right of baptism in the novel and in Paul's works; that is, if Christianity demands baptism in its rite of conversion, the absence of an explicit baptism in *JandA* makes it impossible to call it categorically a Christian work; but the fact that Paul's text is equally ambiguous, highlights the similarity of their ecstatic experience.

There are two incidences of baptism or 'purity cleansing' in *JandA*. The first incident is when the heavenly figure says to her, 'wash your face and your hands with living water' (15:13); and so she "washed her hands and her face with living water" (15:17). In the second incident, before seeing Joseph, she asked for a bowl of pure water, what Burchard claims would have been considered a bath in a Hellenized environment (note m 232) but when she saw her face in the water 'like the sun', "she was amazed at the sight and rejoiced with great joy, and did not wash her face" (18:10). In seeing herself as brilliant of light, full of *kavod*/glory/*doxa*, so to speak, of the heavenly visitation, she is witness to her transformation, and so any baptism/ritual cleansing here appears to be redundant, almost making it of neither faith.

Collins cautiously navigates the Scylla and Charybdis of the argument for and against seeing *JandA* as having Christian origins, before promoting a Judean author because "there is no explicit Christian reference although Joseph often appears explicitly as a type of Christ in other writings" (100). Despite this putative Christian allusion in *JandA*, Collins asserts, the absence of baptism "which was the ritual of conversion from the beginning," (106) means the novel cannot be considered a Christian text. This claim is over-stated, Chesnutt argues; first-century historical scholarship highlights the fact that immersion in either Judean or early Jesus follower movements (Taylor and Crehan) "arose shortly before 70 CE or even later" (Chesnutt 157); moreover, scholars (Finkelstein) have no way of determining when baptism became the official and widespread Christian rite of conversion, since John the Baptist's influence on

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this rite was likely retroactively determined by a religious authority aiming to formalize a tradition around conversion. Moreover, in Judean communities within Palestine and in the diaspora, the absence of 'immersion' for Judean proselytes is questionable, since there are witnesses to this rite in Josephus, Philo, and the literature of Apocrypha and Pseudepigrapha (160).

Whether or not Paul actually practiced or preached baptism as a Christian rite of conversion is unclear for the same reasons noted above. Dunn makes the point that the 'concertina' of the term 'baptism' in Paul's theology, a stand-in for spirit, justification, faith, etc., is based on the assumption that baptism was a central ritual in the early movement, beginning with John the Baptist (*The Theology of Paul the Apostle* 450), which means that Paul's few references to the Greek verb 'baptism' (to plunge, to submerse, etc.) are read as reflecting that ritual (445). The problem arises with Paul's use of the term, which is done infrequently, and figuratively, as seen in this example: "Are you unaware that all we who were baptized into Christ Jesus were baptized unto his death? So then we were buried with him through baptism into death, in order that as Christ was raised from the dead… so we also should walk in newness of life?" (Romans 6:3-4). Dunn highlights the ambiguity of what Paul means by 'baptized into [Christ's] death", since immersion in death could only be read metaphorically (452), and from the Judean perspective, the expression can be seen to have simply spiritualized the ritual of purity (454). Segal's point that Paul's "dying in the law', as a conversion experience, "closely associated with baptism" (Galatians 2:19-20) (134) substantiates Dunn's reading of 'baptism' in metaphorical as opposed to literal terms. Furthermore, Shantz's idea that dying in Christ, identified above as a baptism, which reflects the ecstatic experience of right-brain cognition in which the mind is unable to perceive spatial reality (141), provides scientific support for Dunn's non-literal interpretation of the term.

The metaphorical nature of Paul's idea of baptism, as considered by Dunn, Segal and Shantz, can be seen echoed in Aseneth's ritual cleansing experience, especially in her radiant reflection in the second though incomplete ritual bath. There is a tradition of the mirror in the first-century period, Segal notes, adapted from Moses' experience of God, by Paul and his contemporaries: "Philo believed that people do not see God directly but through a mirror (On Flight 213)" (90). The pure water in Aseneth's story becomes a mirror in which the *doxa* of God is reflected back in her face as her converted self. This reflection does not signify magic practice, Burchard notes, but a mystical transformation: "She comes close to being an angelic figure" (232), echoing Moses and Paul's experiences with God's *doxa*, and paralleled by 1 Corinthians 3:18. I would add there are parallels to the glory Paul claims can be found in the human face as defined in 2 Corinthians 3:16 to 4:6. While light imagery centered on the 'face' is found in both Paul's letters and *JandA*, the absence of the Pauline term *doxa* in *JandA*, suggests that the latter does not derive from the former, but that both works draw on the same tradition in *merkabah* literature of Moses' experience. Since Paul's letters became a part of the Christian tradition, it would seem that Aseneth's conversion story lends support to the thesis that the novel was written for a Judean audience.

In the effort to determine the origin of *JandA*, scholars centre on features of the text that contextualize the reasons for the author's writing. Philonenko, Aptowitzer and to an extent Burchard, reflect the scholarly consensus that *JandA* was meant as propaganda to enlist Gentile converts to the Judean faith.[182]

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[182] See Philonenko, *Joseph at Aseneth*, 106-107 and Aptowitzer, "Asenath", 305-306. Burchard, notes: "Few doubted that *JandA* is preoccupied with conversion from the pagan idols to the God of the Hebrew", "The Text of Joseph and Aseneth Reconsidered", *Journal for the Study of the Pseudepigrapha* 14.2 (2005), 89. He notes exceptions to this consensus: namely, J.C. O'Neill, "What is *Joseph and Aseneth about?*", *Henoch* 16 (1994), (189-98); Catherine Hezser, "*Joseph and Aseneth* in the Context of Ancient Greek Erotic Novels", *Frankfurter Judaistische Beiträge* 24 (1997), pp. 1-40.

In contrast, Chesnutt emphasizes that the novel does not target a Gentile audience, but addresses the Judean community, and proof of that audience is evident in the fact that the Biblical origin of the story is not explained in the romance (37).[183] Rather, Chesnutt argues, the novel aims to address tensions within the Judean community about admitting new converts and promoting inclusion (32), further indicating Judean-centered concerns: "Thus, the detailed description of Aseneth's self-castigation, asceticism and prayer—though certainly recounted from Aseneth's viewpoint in the sense that she is alone and is the only one whose thoughts, words, and actions are described—seems designed to respond to intramural Jewish questions about the relative status of the convert and the propriety of marriage to a convert" (38). Chesnutt's thesis is supplemented by Lieu's observation that Aseneth's significance as a woman is not a gender issue, but symbolic in the community of the threat of the 'other', to use a term of contemporary Imperialist criticism. Of course, read as a Christian text, the gender of the convert would be irrelevant, making it a politically apt story for representing conversion to Christian communities (Collins 103).

Lieu's thesis of Aseneth's symbolic significance can be seen in a more metaphysical sense through Kraemer's interpretation that Aseneth as the female lover and divine bride, as witnessed in the *Song of Songs* (30), stood for the community as a whole. A corresponding but opposite interpretation is suggested by Daniel Boyarin. The hermeneutic tradition of the 'daughters of Zion" from the *Song of Songs* which anchors the rabbinate response to Paul's circular argument against circumcision in *Galatian*, reflects a "paradoxical gender assignment" (129) of the adept's relation to God; in other words, the rabbis legitimized circumcision as a necessary feminization by the adept in order that

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[183] This point seems less convincing since the same principle applies to a text created for a mixed community of Judean and Gentile followers of Jesus.

he may have a vision of God (126),[184] which, Boyarin notes, shows a complication in the allegorical function of the revelation of the *Song of Songs*: "If the male partner is God, then the female partner must be Israel" (128). Clearly, the feminine logic which Žižek claims as central to Christianity, which Kraemer highlights as expressed by Aseneth's representation of the Christianity community, is iterated by Boyarin in the Jewish feminization of the male adept; it would seem that the feminine logic is not strictly Christian. This feminization of the convert as either a Judean or Christian explains why circumcision is a non-issue (106) and reinforces how the text remains religiously ambivalent.

My point in this review of Aseneth's religious ambiguity is to emphasize her similarity to ambiguities in Paul's letters. Read through Aseneth, the Jesus element of Paul's christ-factor dissolves into the ambiguous *doxa*. Read through Paul's letters, Aseneth's conversion as a pagan turning to the one God, highlights the fact that she and Paul are transformed by their experience in the same way; seeing how that transformation is neither strictly Christian nor strictly Judean is most visible in lining up the two partisan interpretations of *JandA*. In seeing Joseph allegorically as the Christian figure,[185] Aseneth comes to stand for the convert to Christianity, man or woman, leading to her transformation into a 'new life'. In seeing Aseneth as Israel, her 'call' signals the call of the circumcised adept to 'new life'. That is, while one reflects conversion and the other does not, her 'call' is like Paul's 'call', a transformation into eternal life.

PARDES (immortality)

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[184] In *A Radical Jew: Paul and the Politics of Identity*, Boyarin is relying primarily on Elliot Wolfson in this idea that the early rabbinic community was directly responding to and countering Paul's assertion against circumcision (127-128).
[185] As an aside, at this point, Kee does not recognize biblical references in *JandA*; rather, he sees its context in Hellenistic romance offering "apologetics for a cult, or more probably for the cultural minority who are its devotees" (395).

According to some scholars, both the fiction and the testimony of the ecstatic experience share motifs consistent with early renderings of what came to be known as *Merkabah* mysticism, a set of Judean texts and traditions around the mysteries of God, defining meditation practices involving ascending to heaven, or adjuring angels for assistance. Segal, Tabor, Shantz, and others, have recognized a parallel between Paul's ascent to heaven (2 Corinthians 12) and one of the core texts of Jewish mysticism, the *Tannaitic* text of the four rabbis who went to paradise. According to Kraemer, allusions to *Merkabah* mysticism are evident in Aseneth's adjuration of the angel; Chesnutt concedes to some connections to the Judean mystical tradition in *JandA*, such as the chariot with Joseph (5.4), and the angel (17.7-8) (207), but overall does not see a "kinship" between *JandA* and *Merkhabah* literature, and sees no grounds "to justify our interpreting Aseneth's conversion in light of that tradition". He concludes: "The revelation brought by the angel is not about the heavenly order in general but about how to obtain eternal life" (215). I would say Chesnutt is correct to find no corroboration between *Merkabah* and conversion; in fact, I aim to show in this section that Aseneth's and Paul's heavenly experiences are not about 'conversion', but revelation of 'eternal life'.

Gershom Scholem claimed that Paul's ascension story (2 Corinthians 12) shows parallels to the ascension narratives in *Merkabah* literature, depicted in the *Tannaitic* story of "the Four Who Entered Paradise". The story of the four rabbis describes the dangers of heavenly ascent; one rabbi goes to heaven and dies there; one rabbi goes and loses his mind; the third goes and returns 'cutting the stalks', or perverting his adepts; and the fourth, Rabbi Akiva, goes and returns unaffected, emblematic of the perfect journey. Scholem identifies a parallel in Paul's ascent story to both the latter *Tannaitic* story and earlier literature of heavenly ascent, namely the Slavic *Enoch*: "They [i.e. The men] carried me up to the third heaven and set me down in the midst of Paradise"

(Ch. 8)."[186] In light of this tradition, Scholem argues, "Paul's testimony is a link between these older Jewish texts and the Gnosis of the *Tannaitic merkabah* mystics" (18). Peter Schäfer contends Scholem's thesis is weak, since there is no correspondence whatsoever between Paul's heaven and the *Tannaitic* story; the *pardes* in the rabbinic tradition, Schäfer argues, does not mean both orchard and Paradise (*pardes*), the latter being Scholem's only link to Paul's *Pardes* (Paradise): rather, in the rabbinic story, we find the fusion of two distinct earlier traditions not connected to Paul (33).[187] In response, Morray-Jones claims that, what Schäfer diminutively calls Scholem's 'parallelomanic" (34), need not disqualify connections identified by Scholem. On showing a corroboration between *Merkabah* literature, the *Tannaitic* story, and ascent narratives, Morray-Jones argues for seeing Paul's ascent story in 2 Corinthians 12 as well within the Judean mystical practices of ascent into a celestial Holy of Holies (288); however, Morray-Jones asserts that the ascent story must be distinguished from Paul's encounter with God in Galatians 1:15-16 and uses timelines outlined by Acts 22:17-22 to argue that the Road to Damascus was the moment of his 'conversion' and preceded his ascension (289). I argue against Morray-Jones' identification of any 'conversion' in Paul, and iterate my suspicion of *Acts* as a source, especially for timelines, for reasons previously noted; yet, with regard to Morray-Jones conclusion that "The impact of *Merkabah* mysticism upon human history has therefore been considerable, for it was at the very heart of Paul's experience and apostolic claim" (291), I am in full agreement; I do not have the time and space in this project to address how *Merkabah* mysticism, and the figure of the 'throned messiah,' is the legacy we inherit from Paul, but, in the

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[186] See Gershom Scholem's *Jewish Gnosticism. Merkabah Mysticism, and Talmudic Tradition*, 17.
[187] While I defer to Schäfer's knowledge of rabbinic literature, my first response is to question how rabbinic literature which reflects post-70 CE discourse engaging with a missing original story, could be used to sever connections between Paul and *merkabah* mysticism.

following pages, I do provide some proof of the fact that we have misread this tradition as reflecting Christian conversion.

Kraemer not only identifies elusive connections to *Merkabah* literature in the adjuration of angels etc., in *JandA*, she also argues that paradise tropes permeating Aseneth's story encourage interpreting the novel as also ascent literature. She parallels Genesis 2.9, the garden of Eden, with the courtyard in Aseneth's home, populated by trees with fruit; a river runs through each place; and like the cherubim in Eden in *Genesis*, young men guard the four gates in Aseneth's palace (117). Kraemer notes that the symbolic association of Aseneth's world with the Biblical paradise is identified in a temporal immediacy of the honey: "And the bees of the paradise of delight have made this from the dew of the roses of life that are in the paradise of God" (16:8). When the visitor feeds her a piece of the comb, he says: "'Behold, you have eaten of the bread of life, and drunk a cup of immortality, and been anointed with ointment of incorruptibility'" (16:16). This statement iterates his promise earlier: "You will be renewed and formed anew and made alive again, and you will eat blessed bread of life, and drink a blessed cup of immortality, and anoint yourself with blessed ointment of incorruptibility" (15.5-6)[188]. While the visitation reflects adjuration, the image of honey symbolizing paradise points to the same confusion of space as found in Paul's obscure ideas of being 'caught up' in heaven. That is to say, the journey to heaven is not a physical, but metaphysical one.

In both the fiction and the testimony, paradise is registered in temporal disjunctions, which signals how the ineffable of ecstasy is represented in

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[188] Following Kraemer's analysis, I would add that once Aseneth is renamed the City of Refuge, her beatified self becomes almost evocative of a heaven on earth: "and the hair of her head was like a vine in the paradise of God prospering in its fruits… and her breasts like the mountains of the Most High God" (18:9.) The architectural dimension of Aseneth, the convert, has been associated allegorically with the Church; my interest here is only in asserting the paradisal language in associated with Aseneth as a result of her conversion.

symbolic terms. Paul's resurrection through his death in Christ, were determined by God who "had set [him] apart before [he] was born". Paul's temporal present was predetermined by his temporal past, through the intercession of God's eternity; with this God perspective, Paul's eternal life is the future for which he was destined. Time trouble in *JandA* is expressed in the intersection between temporal and eternal time; we see her fasting and praying for seven days wearing black, symbolic of death (Chesnutt 126), after which the visitor arrives and claims her future in the book of life has already been secured: "you name was written in the book of the living in heaven… and it will not be erased forever" (15:4-5). According to Chesnutt, the moment her name was written in the book was the moment of Aseneth's 'conversion' (124). While this is a perceptive interpretation of time disjunction in the text, I respectfully disagree; the time disjunction for Aseneth is equivalent to Paul's 'call' from before his birth. That is, Aseneth's 'call' which places her in the book 'forever', signals the intercession of eternal time in her temporal world.[189] If we take Aseneth's revelation of the moment of transformation from corruptible human to incorruptible ("From today you will be renewed and formed anew and made alive again" [15.5]), as equal to Paul's idea of his own dying and being resurrected as an eternal version of himself in Christ, then we find equally in both works that transformation anticipated by an anterior elsewhere event, indicating a future visible only in the present 'transformation' which itself is not of 'this time', but of eternal life.

While Aseneth's fiction may be equal to Paul's testimony on the matter of the ineffable of the real, it is also equal to Paul's testimony with respect to her transformation. Based on Kraemer's reading, Burchard suggests that Aseneth's transformation "is not about conversion, but the salutary elevation of the body

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[189] Much more could be said about the apparent conflict between the future 'will' and the superlative future in 'forever' in "and it will not be erase forever" (15:5), and the issue of temporal disjunctions in the story.

and soul through mystical experiences" (2005 90). Chesnutt sees no grounds for mystical practice in Aseneth's story, and rather sees her conversion as indicative of social tensions within the Judean community about proselytes (116). The bread, cup and oil, Chesnutt asserts, do not indicate parts of a literal meal of conversion, but are merely symbolic of the transformation; "all three of these terms denote immunity from the death, decay and destruction which, as we have seen, constitute the inevitable lot of those who worship idols rather than God" (143). The mystery of the bees and honey,[190] Chesnutt argues, is not intended to reflect the literal transformation of the new proselytes into eternal beings, but is purely symbolic of the revelation about immortality (137). Chesnutt's interpretation that Aseneth's revelation is not literal seems to overstate the obvious (this is only a fiction), while implying that any real transformation or conversion had to be free of symbolic order. In that light, one could dismiss Paul's testimony for being the ultimate fiction. For example, Paul's revelation about his own transformation reflects impossible conditions like dying and living as someone else: "for through the law I died to the law, so that I might live to God; I have been crucified with Christ; it is no longer I who live, but Christ who lives in me" (Galatians 2:19-20). Note that Paul's identification with 'christ' being in him parallels Aseneth consumption of the honey.[191] Aseneth's symbolic death parallels Paul's death; and Paul's resurrection through the *doxa* is echoed in Aseneth's 'new life' as anointed. In symbolic terms, she becomes "the messiah", much as Paul understood himself to have been 'anointed' messiah. Chesnutt's symbolic/literal dichotomy

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[190] Anathea Portier-Young offers a detailed footnote outlining the various, often conflicting, theories about the meaning of this honey in "Sweet Mercy Metropolis: Interpreting Aseneth's Honeycomb", 141.

[191] Nir claims that the honey is further proof of the novel's Christian origin; since manna in the desert was identified as honey, it prefigured the Eucharist, thus explaining the apparent mystery of the honey (40). Since the Eucharist is the embodiment of Christ himself, her thesis is sound; but then again, the Judean would have had a cultural relation to honey as manna, thus troubling seeing honey as proof of the tale's Christian origins. The issue remains irresolvable, so far.

misrecognizes the fundamental nature of the symbolic in any text, whether fiction, non-fiction (testimony) or *merkabah* literature; the text is inspired by the real, even as it fails to reflect the real. While scholarship continues to argue about whether or not *merkabah* literature is a source for either the novel or Paul's testimony, what cannot be disputed is that both "protagonists" have been transformed into the same thing; the *doxa* has anointed them with eternal life of *pardes*.

APOCALYPTICISM

The time-trouble found in Antiquities indicates the anxiety with the future known as, "apocalyptic thinking". It is this thinking, Blanton argues, which explains why secular atheist philosophers are now turning to Paul. In "Disturbing Politics: Neo-Paulinism and the Scrambling for Religious and Secular Identities" (2007), Blanton argues that Paul's reinvention by the secular left (8) is symptomatic of the collapse of the dichotomy between religion and secularism. This is an interesting interpretation since, in light of secularism's Christian foundation, secularism's crumbling points to a deconstruction from within, something like what happens in Ridley Scott's *Alien*; Christianity is erupting with all its teeth from secularism through Paul, and this eruption is neither birth or rebirth, but an escape from the worn out veil of neutrality. This description may be melodramatic, but does iterate the apocalyptic theme Blanton highlights. What is most salient of Blanton's argument is his iteration of the place of the universal in contemporary thought with respect to Christianity. Contra Agamben's and Žižek's interest in Paul's importance for identifying the not-all of political exception and its ethical demand of redefining inclusion, Blanton support's Badiou's reading of Paul's universalism, but from a religious perspective: "I want to make the perverse claim that we are absolutely correct

today to look at Christianity as the exemplar for a thinking of the universal"
(10). Unlike Badiou, who uses the psychoanalytic method of traversing the
fantasy of difference through love to approach the universal, Blanton takes a
decidedly structural approach to the issue through deconstruction; if the
literature, even in secular-based biblical studies research, affirms "Jesus was
unique among the Judeans of his day" (10), then liberating universalism extant
in Christianity involves "desublimat[ing] the valorized 'universalism' and the
'ungrounded' political force of 'Paul' in these texts" (10). In Blanton's terms, if
Jesus were read through the historical materialist, as a political activist vying for
equality and not a transcendent figure who, as Paul's legacy has it, defines
salvation as conditional, then the conditions of universalism would disappear.
This deconstructionist impulse in Blanton, to cut the conditions that exist and so
liberate us, inspires my revision of Paul's 'apocalypses'; yet, whereas Blanton
wants to cut at Paul's political force, I aim to liberate his politics from the Jesus
fantasy.

In Koine Greek, 'apocalypse' is the word for revelation. Paul uses it
often, sometimes in aural terms as a message, but also in visual terms as
manifestation and appearance; Paul's confusion of sensibilities in the term
emphasizes what Shantz argues is paradigmatic of ecstatic experiences. Yet,
while Shantz's science explains the incomprehensible or ineffable of Paul's
ecstasy, it cannot explain how Paul knows what he knows. How does he know
he is in the third heaven?[192] How did he know the Christ was Jesus? How does
he know there is a Law of Christ? The only indirect answer we have to any of
these questions is Paul's proclamation that his gospel, "is not of human origin"
(Galatians 1:11); 'called' by God (Galatians 1:15), he is not relieved of his
suffering, but is assured divine support: "My grace is sufficient for you, for

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[192] Tabor explore through textual analysis of contemporary works, how paradigmatic Paul's
experience was of ascent literature (57-97).

power is made perfect in weakness" (2 Corinthians 12:9). This quotation, one of few direct quotations of the Lord in Paul's letters, points to Paul's inhuman source for the 'apocalypses': what is this source? In Galatians, it seems to be the Lord, as God, who revealed "his Son" to Paul (Galatians 1:16), but when Paul references Jesus Christ as Lord, then the omniscient God becomes confused with a Christian messiah. What Paul means is not clear since he reveals very little about his source; more importantly, he does not tell the story of how the figure of his revelation introduced himself as the risen Jesus.

In comparison to Paul's 'unutterable' of his encounter, reflected in explicit and implicit ways throughout his letters, Aseneth's encounter with the flaming radiant *angelos*, the *doxa*, is significantly symbolic. The *angelos* is quoted as making intelligible comments, and is represented not as Joseph, but in the most self-consciously symbolic terms, as 'like' Joseph. When the *angelos* calls her name twice, and two times (14:5-8), we read a representation of the 'call' evident in the *OT* literature tradition, from which its symbolic nature has been generated. This same tradition generated *Acts* 9:4 story of Paul who was called by Jesus three times, a fact totally absent from Paul's letters except implicit in 2 Corinthians 2 as not from Jesus but from God, indicative of what is inexplicable in the 'call' of the real. Everything we read in the novel exists in the symbolic register except for the namelessness of the heavenly Joseph; this absent name, I argue, is the stain in Lacanian terms, the inexplicable detail which points to the ecstatic event.

Paul lived in a time with an eye on the imminence of the end time, while *JandA* reflects a world decidedly unburdened by this eschatological anxiety. In *the Apocalypse of the Imagination*, Collins highlights the scope of apocalyptic thinking in Paul's Letter to the Thessalonians[193] as reflecting the early interest in

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[193] "For the Lord himself will descend from heaven with a cry of command, with the archangel's call, and with the sound of the trumpet of God. And the dead in Christ will rise first; then we

the movement and Jesus' *perousia* as the longed-for end of suffering (268). This anticipation of man's imminent salvation, coming 'like a thief in the night', dramatically drops away from Paul's language in subsequent letters. The temporal proximity between the first letter we have from him to the Thessalonians, and his ecstatic experiences indicates that there was some connection between Paul's experience and his eschatological expectations. Paul was a zealot, and shared with his fellow zealots an eschatological vision of the future; in that future, evident in biblical texts such as Isaiah and especially Ezekiel's dry bones (37:12-14) the motif of final judgment was the day of the resurrection of the dead. In psychic terms, Paul's transformation into an eternal being may be seen, much as Blanchot's revelation was after surviving a death squad; the deferral of his death, created a new relation to the future that manifested in a momentary sense of immortality.

Though Collins recognizes that the "Son of Man" is "well attested in Jewish literature of the Second Temple period, especially in an eschatological context" (106), he cannot explain how this figure would appear in *JandA* which is clearly not about apocalyptic anxiety. Kee addresses this issue, arguing that apocalypticism of the first century was transformed over time into the personal eschatology present in *Merkabah* mysticism (407).[194] This supports the theses that the writing of *JandA* preceded or followed from the first century and its apocalyptic anxiety;[195] on the issue of the representation of the real of death, how Paul's letters and *JandA* differ signals an important distinction between them. In Paul's testimony, the significance of his eternal life, though framed by the symbolic concepts of spirit versus flesh, and obviously ordered around

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who are alive, who are left, shall be caught up together with them in the clouds to meet the Lord in the air; and so we shall always be with the Lord" (4:15-17).

[194] See my article, "Spivak's Fantasy of Silence: A Secular Look at Suicide".

[195] A recent article by George Brooke argues for an earlier construction of *J and A* using as proof the novel's parallel to Qumran materials: "Men and Women as Angels in Joseph and Aseneth."

rhetorical tropes, operates in a different register from Aseneth's eternal life. Very much along the order of Chesnutt's assertion that Aseneth's transformation is only imaginary, Aseneth's story has the same relation to reality as the expression that a certain film is 'to die for''; it does not mean anyone would be compelled to see the film in order to die. In contrast, Paul's words were meant literally. Paul's promise that eternal life is in Christ had its impact on his audience and those who came to his teachings long after his death, because it reflected the real of his experience; his conviction that he had become immortal was reflected in what he identified as Jesus' immortal status. His words attracted believers as literal, and he accepted martyrdom to prove it. And others followed. That literalness adds a psychological dimension to Paul's symbolic revision of the trauma not evident in *JandA*.

Aseneth knew and loved the human Joseph; his heavenly double visited her and graced her with conversion. Note that the human Joseph is not connected to the heavenly one, except indirectly as 'Son of Man', signaling the heavenly figure's metaphorical significance for Aseneth; moreover, the primary detail that signals what is ineffable of this element of the real of his namelessness. In contrast, Paul's figure was apparently named, though the circumstances of that naming are not confessed. According to Acts 9:4, the figure revealed himself as Jesus Christ, full of the questions of why his followers were being persecuted. This narrative does not exist in Paul's testimony, through it may be evident implicitly, only if we extrapolate in a particular way from the cryptic reference in *Gal* 1:13. On a structural level, comparing Aseneth's coherent narrative to Paul's testimony reveals clues for seeing that Paul's encounter had no name. For one, Paul never knew Jesus, so could not have had the encounter Aseneth did with someone 'like Joseph', by seeing someone, 'like' Jesus. In the literary tradition, *doxa* is represented generically as "Son of Man," and Shantz's science explains that the narrative/semantic centre

of the brain is inactive during ecstatic events. These anomalies suggest reasons for why Paul did not go to Jerusalem until three years after his vision, as he said; this 'delay' points to a time lapse between the event and its retroactive fantasy formation indicative of the cycle of a subject's trauma known as *Nachträglichkeit*, sometimes translated as 'deferred action'. So, why did he wait to spread the gospel? The single detail of the ineffable in Aseneth's trauma supports seeing that the *doxa*, which Paul encountered, did not self-identify. Paul did not go to Jerusalem immediately because he did not know immediately his encounter was with Jesus, if it was Jesus.

Reading Paul's testimony against Aseneth's story raises one more critical aporia that contributes to the thesis that Paul's *doxa* was not Jesus, and it is centered on the matter of love. Aseneth's apparition arrived in the shape of love familiar to her. That detail in Aseneth's story suggests that Paul's emphasis on the law of love in his teachings reflected the love emanating from his encounter with the *doxa*. Since Paul did not love Jesus, and at the most may have detested him as a heretic who inspired heretics that he persecuted, it is inexplicable that the love of his encounter came to be associated with this figure. This incongruity signals that the trauma of his encounter took three years to 'organize' in a retroactive narrative. In order to determine how Paul's *doxa* of love came to be dressed in the narrative of Jesus, I first need to review two psychoanalytic terms: literalness and inversion.

According to Lacan, literal thinking is the primary symptom of psychosis; without the master signifier, that device for operating the chain of signification in the symbolic order, the subject is unable to discern that what rises up from the 'encounter with the real', the hallucinations of the imaginary order, are not real; the psychotic takes things literally. Daniel Paul Schreber, the first diagnosed schizophrenic, believed he experienced the 'end of the world' in hallucinatory events from 1893 to his incarceration in a mental instituation in

1895; when he realized the world had not ended, he understood he was chosen as the messiah and God's wife. Logically, he understood that, since he was a man, his role as wife meant that he was being changed into a woman by the two Gods. Freud interpreted Schreber's gender reversal as a sign of repressed homosexuality justified by delusions of "Redeemer Fantasy".[196] Freud's homosexuality thesis has been generally abandoned by more sophisticated theories. For example, in *My Own Private Germany*,[197] Santner interprets Schreber's feminization as reflecting the social issues of contemporary Germany; in Schreber's sexuation, he identifies the association of the feminized Jew as the circumcised adept, referencing Boyarin's understanding of the rabbinic interpretation of the mystical significance of the *Song of Songs*; as already noted, the circumcised man must be feminized in order to receive God's revelations (117). The same feminized relation to the divine in *JandA* and in Schreber's memoirs, is also evident in St. John of the Cross's recreation of the *Song of Songs* in his *Spiritual Canticle*: the Christian "I" of St. John's poem, was identified as the 'bride' of Christ; the gender assignment evident in Schreber and St. Paul is also evident in Paul's identification of his followers as virgin brides for Christ (2 Corinthians 11:3). The parallel between St. John and Schreber may have foregrounded Lacan's comparison of the mystic and the psychotic in *Seminar III*, which explains how it returns through the feminine logic as the mediated and partial access to divine truth in *Seminar XX*. A consensus across disciplines, religions, and time about feminization as a privileged position to God, is what is expressed literally by Schreber's putative sex change; the 'encounter with the real', or *doxa*, as ecstasy, reflects the erotic quality of divine

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[196] Freud, "Psychoanalytic Notes on An Autobiographical Account of a Case of Paranoia (Dementia Paranoides) (1911), 28.

[197] Santner. *My Own Private German: Daniel Paul Schreber's Secret History of Modernity*. Princeton, NY: Princeton University Press, 1996. Quotes shall be cited parenthetically in the pages ahead.

love. Paul's experience of love for the figure of his revelation has a ground in tradition and psychoanalysis; the question is: how did this objet of love come to be identified as the one he hated?

Reversal signals repression, Freud argued; it was an idea most explicitly described in his theory on dream analysis, wherein the manifest content of a dream as wish or fear, is always in conflict with the latent, unconscious, message of lack in the waking subject's life.[198] The repression of the murder of Moses became organized symbolically around the inversion of election; instead of escaping slavery, the Israelites were being led to the promised land; instead of murdering their follower, they believed they were chosen by God. While it goes without saying that this interpretation is particular to Freud, and not widely shared, it signals my claim in Chapter 1, that the event of the Exodus for the Israelites need not be murder to have psychic impact; in fact, what was fundamentally unknowable, became evident in the remainder of the vocal *objet a* of interpellation; in other terms, election as the 'call'. The significance of the *objet a* and its part of the trauma, identifies Lacan's articulation of Freud's inversion as evident in the scopic drive.

The trauma of oedipalization, what Lacan identifies as the "sanctification of the organ (circumcision)" (*Écrits* 697), which, I note, relies heavily on Paul's idea of the relation between the letter, as death, and desire, as life,[199] wherein the desire for the mother is given up in order to accept the law of the NOF,

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[198] Freud's research explored various examples of inversion from Da Vinci's painting of St. Anne, in "Leonardo Da Vinci and A Memory of His Childhood" (1910), to the literary trope of the choice of three caskets in Shakespeare plays, in "The Theme of the Three Caskets" (1913), to name a few.

[199] Lacan's debt to Paul's dichotomy of law and spirit on the matter of sin in his seminar on ethics (*Seminar VII,*) draws on Freud's meditation on the matter of love in *Civilization*, which unsurprisingly links to Paul's law and sin (*VII* 106). Integral to the cycle of desire and law in the subject is the subordination of the subject's need to the demands of the collective; the individual good is antinomic to the social good, thus explaining the dominance of law over the subject's desire.

reflecting the subject's sacrifice of autonomy for sociality. The sacrifice divides the self between the law, and the unconscious desire which returns as the *objet a*. The *objet a* is of the imaginary register, and is fundamentally manipulative, in that it lures the subject to keep going, despite loss. It is an illusion that the subject cannot live without. In that respect, any symbolic fantasy is formulated around the imaginary remainder [*objet a*] of the cut of the real to make possible living after the trauma: "This *a* is presented precisely, in the field of the mirage of the narcissistic function of desire, as the object that cannot be swallowed, as it were, which remains stuck in the gullet of the signifier. It is at this point of lack that the subject has to recognize himself" (*Seminar XI* 270). In psychoanalytic terms, the *objet a* is the substitute for the desire that the subject cannot fulfill except in dying physically, or dying to the symbolic order, this latter being a matter of psychosis. I advance the idea that psychosis, or foreclosure of the NOF, which is equal to a dying to the symbolic, is integral to terms like 'unplugging' or the severing of the Gordian knot, or in Paul's sense, dying in Christ.

The *objet a* manifests in different registers, including the scopic drive, what Lacan calls the gaze. The illusion caused by gaze is exemplified by the trope of the mirror; this reflective device which grips the subject in the gaze of himself through the Other, which obscures as it inserts him and his surroundings behind him into the surroundings in front of him, is an optical illusion of occlusions and insertions that place the subject in relation to the *objet a*, like a carrot stick leading him on, behind which hides the loss (*Seminar XI* 159). In first-century Judean culture God was accessible only through the mirror; Paul knew God was visible only indirectly; Aseneth's transformation was visible after the fact, indirectly in her transformed countenance in the mirror. The scopic drive integral to Paul's experience encourages seeing Jesus as the insertion, that carrot-stick of the *objet a* which attracts the subject to go forward

and which does not fit its landscape; that is, Jesus is the inadequate symbolic covering over of the real rupture, ecstatic event.

Prior to the crisis, Paul was busy persecuting the Jesus followers for breaking the Judean law, motivated by his zealotry in anticipation of the imminent last judgment. In the aftermath of the crisis, he claimed he died and was resurrected; the law, which was death, became spirit, which was the new life of immortality. What changed Paul, according to Paul, was Jesus' love. That story goes that Jesus came to him, much as it is represented in Acts; however, nothing in Paul's letters support this was actually the case. The manifest content of Paul's message of love, which comes from *Leviticus*, points not to love, but the latent inverse affect of hate.[200] Was there guilt for having hated; was there shame? That is not knowable to a modern audience, but understanding that the source of love is visible in a reading of the latent content through the manifest content is knowable. The manifest content reflected in Paul's eternal life, points to the latent anxiety of the final judgment, and the latent wish promised in Ezekiel's resurrection as eternal life. The most striking quality of Paul's message is its effect on his thinking, equal to Schreber's solipsistic and psychotic rendering which, "…set off a cascade of reworkings of the signifier from which the growing disaster of the imaginary proceed[ed]".[201] Paul's inversion spread through the chain of signification not in haphazard terms, like Schreber's, but systematically anchored to the NOF, in symbolically inverting only one law, the law of mortality. From this inversion, a cascade of inversions was set off; the cursed, doomed for death, became blessed with eternal life; sinning man (Paul) was made immortal and forgiven; the end was the beginning; hate became love; and since love manifested as eternal life, and since mortality as the prohibition

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[200] To keep things simple, I use the word hate in a binary relation to love, and to stand in for Paul's term about his treatment of the Jesus followers, namely, persecution; persecution includes the variety of affect, such as hate, and also disgust, rejection, revulsion, disdain, etc., etc..
[201] Lacan, "On a Question Prior to Any Possible Treatment of Psychosis" (1958) (*Écrits* 481).

for sinning meant that his forgiveness came in the shape of eternal life for all, then all were saved, and all were loved, even the most abject, cursed, and hated: Jesus. Jesus came to stand as the radical element of his 'all'.

THE SYMPTOM OF SECULARISM

In his introduction to *The Sublime Object of Ideology*, Žižek claims that ideology's weakness is centered on its universal claims: "Every ideological Universal—for example freedom, equality—is 'false' in so far as it necessarily includes a specific case which breaks its unity, lays open its falsity" (16). The 'case' that lays bare the falsity of ideology's universal is the 'exception': it is the inconsistency that ideological fantasies intend to mask. (142). The inconsistencies, which reflect the return of the real as that which has been excluded from the symbolic (143), point to the symptom. By going 'through the fantasy', or inverting the link of causality of the symptom, Žižek argues, we expose ideology's 'real kernel', the traumatic source of the universal fantasy. In this chapter, I have attempted to go 'through the fantasy' of Paul's ecstatic event to expose the 'real kernel' being masked by his message to the Gentiles. Now I will explore, through the uncanny echoes between Paul's Christianity and Žižek's notion of ideology, the 'real' kernel of secularism.

Paul's trauma of the doxa is distinguished from the trauma of the Oedipal event in being a 'call' from Lacan's 'heaven' or the real. If oedipalization interpellates the subject into social laws, as per Althusser, Paul's doxa may be seen as the 'call' that interpellates the subject to a divine law: it is a second interpellation. It is the 'interpellation beyond interpellation', the 'real' 'call', which caught Paul with the ethical imperative inherited from his culture. God had spoken to Moses and Isaiah, and Paul believed he was also graced with the same call. In encountering the 'doxa', Paul's faith was affirmed and his

responsibility to his faith was articulated as the imperative to draw the Gentile to his monotheistic tradition. As Antigone followed the law of the gods against the human laws, and acted ethically by answering her desire, so too did Paul. Yet, Paul's doxa did not end with his sacrifice and death as Antigone's did, and it is the putative 'endlessness' of the return of his message in the principle of the exception of secular politics that recalls Caruth's concept of trauma as the recurring crisis of survival driving history (*Unclaimed Experience* 64). It would seem that Paul's message seeped into the foundations of western thought, especially evident in his influence on philosophy and history. As this evidence testifies, the issue with Paul's return in contemporary thought is not about his own history, but about our relation to his history as our own. That is, the impulse to return to Paul now indicate an effort to work through his influence on secular ideology, perhaps not as the single 'cause', but at least a significant anterior *tuché* that identifies the dynamic highlighted by Žižek as the rule of ideology: the bind between the exception and the universal.

In the Christian tradition, Paul's experience is known as 'ecstasy'. His ecstatic event was an experience of new life, eternity, immortality, love and a call to fulfill God's plan. Paul organized this 'call' from the real through the symbolic structure of his 'good news' exploiting the power of the 'real' of his encounter. The fact that Paul's mission and its importance to believers helped to set the stage for a movement that would change the cultish geography of the first century does not necessarily make his contribution unique: Moses had a similarly great influence on the Israelites, as well as the prophets on the faithful in exile. What is unique about Paul's message was its effect: he passed on to his community and to the Gentiles a message that had a wide and devastating impact. If Paul's fantasy had the desired effect of inspiring and introducing Gentiles to the 'call' to convert in the name of Jesus Christ and participate in the Judean cult, it also participated, if it did not in fact initiate, a trauma on the

social fantasy for the Judean community, exacerbated by the destruction of the Second Temple and the diaspora. Understanding Paul's part in the historical conditions of Judea in the Roman Empire requires research beyond my jurisdiction. Another question that this project raises but cannot address: was Paul's trauma his own or the return of a trauma that preceded him by centuries back to Moses? The fact Paul's fantasy reflected a tradition around revelation and ecstasy in the Judean faith implies his trauma was probably shared by others, those contemporary to him and before him; understanding if Paul was experiencing a recurring trauma from deep history would involve analysis of more extant texts of the first century as well as older biblical material and is beyond the scope of this project. All that this analysis can say is that it is probable that the effect of Paul's messiah fantasy returned in secularism: the question is how? The complexities of the links between then and now are multiple; I have isolated one dialogue between then and now linking Christianity with secularism.

Žižek singles out a rhetorical move in analyzing ideology's reason for being: "The crucial step in the analysis of an ideological edifice is thus to detect, behind the dazzling splendor of the element which holds its together, ('God', 'Country', 'Party', 'Class'…) this self-referential, tautological, performative operation" (109). Christianity's tautology is the least noticed and no less ironic, naming of the believer as 'chosen', which, in translation, is 'messiah'. The literalness of this 'anointing' persists sublimated in the 'universal' that Badiou and Blanton uphold: for the atheist, love or for the believer, Christianity, will allow us to transcend all exceptions by creating universal equality through the 'chosen'. The inconsistency of the exception, however, proves how the universal does not exist, and cannot, no matter how hard scholars may try to deconstruct and or reconstruct Christianity. Tellingly, this failure is unconsciously articulated in Žižek's promotion of Christianity to

reconcile the exception to the universal. Žižek does not bother to 'go through the fantasy' of the 'dazzling splendour' of Christianity's equality; rather, he digests the symptom of Jesus's reconciliation whole. Jesus is not the solution, but the 'stain' of Paul's revelation; he is what sticks in the craw of Christianity, the remainder of the 'real' which we inherit as a solution for the universal of equality; Paul is the inconsistency that Žižek uses as an argument in favour of Christianity. As the agent of Paul's 'good news', Jesus functions as the lure of the symbolic order of desire, and rather than giving life, it barely seals and lies over the trauma caused by Paul's call, and so, in the symbolic sense, kills. Jesus, as the founding sovereign principle of the all, is the cause of the exception and its engine.

If Jesus was to be the light on the future as inclusion, his effect was sinister because it went into hiding; as the factor that defined the terms of exclusion, initiating the exclusiveness of the universality of Christ, Jesus became sublimated in the ideological fantasy of secularism as the force of universal rights. The contradiction of secular ideology has been poetically articulated by Freud's assertion that the Jew who does not accept Christ is a criminal. This explains in real terms Žižek's aphorism that "what is excluded in the Symbolic… returns in the Real" (143): i.e., the Jewish person is the symptom of the Christian failure to be a universal force, which initiates the cycle of exclusion as the exception in identifying the symptom of that failure as the Jew even into secular society. What is shocking is to consider the philosophical work that has focused on the exception, from Schmitt's concept to Santner's observation that the 'exception' is an obsession of secularism to Žižek's and Agamben's struggle with Paul's message because of the hook of the exception. One might say that the fantasy of Christ as history is the trauma, in Caruth's sense, which returns in the real as the exception: it is the "case", which "lays

open [secularism's] falsity" even as it props up Christianity's "dazzling splendor".

Paul's impulse to include the excluded of the Judean communities in Rome's dominion, returns in our modern politics in the ethical imperative driving human rights discourse. It is through human rights that anti-Semitism has come to be recognized as a crime, that women have the right to vote, gay people the right to marry, the atheist the right to reject God. Human rights promises universal equality and does so in the field of justice; but justice requires crimes to be possible, which points to the secularism's culpability in manufacturing the exception. Human rights discourse hides the traces of the Christian paradigm that secularism attempted to obscure: the consent to the exceptional status of Christ.

Žižek's notion that ideologies need the exception in order to sustain the universal seems to miss the opportunity to go further into the symptom of ideological fantasy. The fact is, Paul's good news is a legacy inherited by secularism affirms Anidjar's assertion that modern, western secularism is Christian: where the medieval subject was saved on the condition of believing in Christ, now the secular citizen is saved by the state that demands she erase her own difference. The cycle of this double demand in secularism describes how the symptom of the exception is the engine for secular ideology. While I recognize the value of human rights discourse as being motivated by an ethical impulse, I would not identify it with the beneficence of Christianity's contribution to the world, as Žižek claims; rather, the pessimistic view that it reflects Christianity's responsibility for correcting its impact on the world is, in my opinion, more appropriate.

CONCLUSION

Barbara Johnson identifies the responsibility for correction in Lacan's self-defined distinction as the true inheritor of Freud's project. In Christianizing Freud's work in order to critique Christianity with Christian writings, Lacan aimed to fulfill Freud's psychoanalysis as "a reading of the damage Christianity had done, and the repressions and delusions on which it is based" (70). I inherit Freud's and Lacan's ethical obligation, identifying in the impulse for correction the aura of a trauma. By aura I mean that a series of traumas are apparent in rough outline: there is Paul's personal trauma of the call; there is the trauma for the Gentile in being called to salvation on condition of the Christ; there is the trauma of the Judean community in historical terms; then there is the trauma of being called to equality on the condition of state authority. This pattern encourages me to take up Taubes' concept of a "messianic logic" to ask the following: what of this ancient trauma is returning in the messiah and then also the *Muselmann*?[202] That question drives the focus of Chapters 6 and 7.

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[202] In a two-page footnote, Hent de Vries explores the significance of Taubes' lectures on Paul and argues that Taubes' research exists in a tradition shared with Benjamin, Scholem, Levinas and Derrida on the concept of the messianic in philosophy as a "messianic logic". He goes on to consider seeing "messianic logic" as "a model in the psychoanalytic understanding of trauma" where the origin of monotheism, as envisioned through Freud, reflects a "certain repetitive force" (*Philosophy and the Turn to Religion*. Baltimore, Maryland: The Johns' Hopkins University Press, 1999. 187-188). In the "Afterward" to *The Political Theology of Paul*, editors Wolf-Daniel Hartwich, Aleida Assmann, and Jan Assmann highlight Taubes' interest in seeing a repetition of certain semantic signifiers as expressing 'messianic logic' (122); specifically, the 'suspension of the law' and the 'love command' (123-131). I would suggest that, in the same way that the messiah returns with the same discourse of law and love, the return of the messiah, in its different forms, is the return of the same historically specific trauma.

CHAPTER 6: THE MESSIAH AND THE *MUSELMANN* IN PHILOSOPHY

INTRODUCTION

Since the exception is the symptom of the ideological fantasy of secularism, and since Jesus Christ is the first exception indicative of Paul's trauma, then the symptom of the return of the messiah in secularism is not the return of the real of Paul's Jesus, but the return of the exception in the real: it is what was excluded by Christianity and what was excluded was the one who did not convert because he was the one who ruined the dream of equality. This thesis of a "messianic logic" is complemented by this second part: the *Muselmann* is the exception, as defined by Agamben's research, and reflects the failed convert or, the one yet to be converted by secularism. Thus the messiah and the *Muselmann*, two terms that had at the start of this project been identified as disparate *objets a* in secular fantasies, are now shown to be connected as a symptom of a failed equality returning in the real throughout western history. This return, which signals the secular subject's unconscious desire, points to an ethical injunction. What that ethical message is shall be the focus of both this chapter and the next.

In the analysis of this chapter, I shall approach the limit of Frye's claim that the Christian Bible more properly belonged to the literary arts over other forms of expression, such as philosophy. At this point, I have made some in-roads into showing how Frye's claim can be contested; specifically, I have reviewed the influence of biblical paradigms in Benjamin's concept of the messianic, from the Puppet's utilization of theological tropes to the promise of

revolution for equality as a Christian principle, implicit in the Pauline notion of 'weak'. In other words, we have seen at least one case in which philosophy has harvested biblical tropes in the same way literature does. Analyzing other texts for a trauma at the core of secular ideology will provide a better understanding of how some tendencies evident in Benjamin's work show the return of a first-century trauma in the symptom of the exception.

While I have outlined how the exception determines secular ideology as a double demand of conversion that fails even as it serves its cause, what needs to be considered now is how this ideological fantasy reflects on the symptomatic use of the religious terms, messiah and *Muselmann*, in the twentieth century. The double demand in secularism arises in Benjamin as an unstable binding of Marxism and Kabbalistic mysticism. While critics for and against Benjamin's work have focused on his use of Marxist (Christian) and Jewish thought, I would argue that this focus misrecognizes what I have described as his unconscious exposure of the double demand within secularism through the use of the messianic. What is seen obscurely in Benjamin's work is vividly articulated by Freud's assertion that the Jew who does not convert to Christianity is a criminal. In Freud's representation of the dilemma, the Jew, unlike the Christian, is without ethics. What is false about this statement points to the hidden contradiction in secularism. Freud's logic in his assertion implies a discomfort with the call to 'equality' in Christianity because it described how the choice offered him was riddled with an ethical dilemma. Freud's concern was not with equality as a universal ideal, but with the terms by which equality would be possible. Those terms were assimilation: in other words, convert or be punished. Freud understood that, in order to be a good secular atheist, he had to give up on his desire for his Jewish identity. The dilemma reflected his unease with the ultimatum: he did not want not to give up on secularism and the promises afforded by atheism, and yet he did he want to give ground to his

Jewishness.. This unease shall be the focus of the two case studies in this chapter.

In the first case study, I shall attend to two representations of messiahs in twentieth-century philosophy for their notable unease; specifically, I shall read Rosenzweig's *The Star of Redemption*, written in response to WWI, with Derrida's works, primarily *Specters of Marx* written in response to the collapse of the USSR.[203] Though reflective of two very different political traumas, their engagement with the dichotomy of the exception and the universal through a reinvention of the messiah identifies a common ground for comparison with respect to the ethical terms of equality, and the double bind of 'exceptionality'. Regarding the *Muselmann*, I take as my lead Agamben's work adapting Primo Levi's claim that the figure is the 'the complete witness" (*Survival in Auschwitz* 150). Agamben interprets this significance as conveying the ethical injunction to bear witness for the one who cannot (Agamben 161). How this figure's demand plays out in Sarah Kofman's S*mothered Words*, her personal meditation on Auschwitz as a survivor of the holocaust, because the figure does not exist in her work, shall be the focus of unease in the second case study.

CASE STUDY #1: EXEMPLARITY

According to Dana Hollander, Derrida's effort to exist with the paradox of Jewish exemplarity and universalism reflects 'his unease'.[204] In *Exemplarity and*

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[203] The collapse of the USSR was obviously a trauma for the citizens of the Republic; yet, as an event that changed the dynamics of global politics, namely the Cold War, that trauma had an effect around the world. Moreover, since the event appeared to reflect the failure of the first communist state, its traumatic impact on communists, both card-carrying and sympathizers, was felt around the world, including by Derrida.

[204] See Hollander, "Is Deconstruction a Jewish Science? Reflections on "Jewish Philosophy" in Light of Jacques Derrida's Judeite", 135.

Chosenness, she reframes that unease in the question: "how is the elevation of a particular people reconcilable with a universal God?" (2), and aims to answer it by reading Derrida's paradox of particularity and universalism through Rosenzweig's meditation on Jewish election. Her question remains bound to the same assumption reflected in Derrida's and Rosenzweig's thinking, and which is shared by secularists; the assumption is that the universal in our secular world is a neutral transcendent benign paradigm. The figure of the exception, Jesus Christ, signals the root of this failure of secularism to be neutral, leading us to see an unease reflected in Rosenzweig's and Derrida's engagements, consciously and unconsciously. Despite the fact these scholars are separated politically by the horrors of WWII, writing within two distinctly different intellectual periods, modernist and postmodernist, and are distinguished from each other religiously, wherein Rosenzweig reclaimed his Jewish faith, while Derrida remained a devout atheist all his life, even during what scholars have identified as his nod to the religious turn,[205] their works touch on very similar themes. Both, in their very different ways, engage consciously with the idea of conversion as a Christian paradigm; alongside this attention to conversion, both engage with the 'messiah' in conscious and unconscious ways. As I will show, their engagement with both concepts reflects a discomfort with secularism.

CONVERSION

In *Circumfessions*, Derrida draws an inverted correlation between circumcision and conversion, by referencing an image of St. Paul's Letter to the Galatians (29) in the context of defining how Christian terms have 'circumscribed' his Jewish rites of passage: "… in my family and among the Algerian Jews, one scarcely ever said, 'circumcision' but baptism', not Bar Mitzvah but 'communion' with the consequences of softening, dulling, through fearful

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[205] John D. Caputo. *The Prayers and Tears of Jacques Derrida: Religion without Religion* (1997).

acculturation, that I've always suffered from more or less consciously… (12-20-76.)" (72-73.)[206] What Derrida calls 'acculturation', which may be seen as the completion of the Portuguese demand for conversion begun four hundred years ago, which led his Sephardic family to flee for Algeria, reflects a passivity of the unconscious effect of Christian culture on his sense of self, leading to his conscious struggle with his Jewish identity. When he declares, "I am the end of Judaism" (1981 p 122), he means to emphasize that, as a secular Jew, his conversion is complete, to the extent that not even his first cut of the flesh, his circumcision, can protect him from corruption: "I am a sort of *marrane* of French Catholic culture… I am one of those *marranes* who no longer say they are Jews even in the secret of their own hearts" (170). French culture has not only erased his difference, it has erased the significance of his exemplarity, leaving Derrida feeling 'unrecognizable' when faced by a young audience member's question: "you are unrecognizable, as you were to that young imbecile who asks you, after you talk on the Final Solution, what you had done to save the Jews during the war… perhaps you didn't do enough to save Jews, he might be right…" (312). Derrida is unrecognizable to himself as a Jew because he does not fight for Jewish rights, but for the secular fight for equality; and as an adult with public acclaim, he does not recognize his childhood self, a victim of persecution and selection by Occupied France for being a Jew.

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[206] On the matter of circumcision, *Circumfessions* is linked to "Shibboleth for Paul Celan" in many ways, most notably in the following Pauline reference: "Celan elsewhere… calls words circumcised, as one speaks of the circumcised heart" (*Word Traces* 24). Apart from this moment of a Christian reference, Derrida's "Shibboleth for Paul Celan" does not engage in Christian markers as he does in *Circumfessions*. Derrida begins "Shibboleth" with the declaration, "One time alone: circumcision takes place but once" (3) and goes on to contextualize how Shibboleth, the password used to identify the stranger based on her/his mispronunciation of the password, is a cut in the same way language and cultural identity are 'cuts', or circumcision. "Shibboleth" complements *Circumfessions* because, if Shibboleth identifies the collapse of cultural differences within history from the perspective of language as circumcision, *Circumfessions* explores that collapse through the fusion of Christian and Jewish cultural markers.

What is described in Derrida's 'confession' is the unconscious effect of language/culture in recreating his Jewish distinction as something to justify persecution, which led to his need to be saved from persecution through secularization. This dynamic is made explicit by Rosenzweig's decision to become Christian. As opposed to what Derrida represents as the threat of Christian culture on his Jewish self in a secular life, Rosenzweig's desire to convert to Christianity was a conscious choice against secularism. He believed Christianity was the true religion; in making his choice 'for Christianity', he unconsciously expressed the dominant discourse driving philosophical thinking in Hegel and Kant, and cloaked in secularism's seeming neutrality; the Christian faith is the supreme faith. Unlike Derrida's engagement with the bind of language and identity through deconstructionist practices, Rosenzweig unearthed the Christian demand to accept Jesus and answered it. At the 11th hour, Rosenzweig decided not to convert to Christianity. In a critical night reviewing his decision, he realized his destiny was what he called his 'dark drive', his Jewish faith. This decision led to many changes in his personal life, but also, led to the revelations in his opus, *Star of Redemption* (1921). This work can be read as an apology and a justification for Judaism, defining the role of Jewish people in history and in the future of mankind, alongside Christianity; but on a philosophical level, it is a moving and inspired meditation on the place of faith in the individual and in society in a secular world.

In *Star*, Rosenzweig claims that what differentiates the Jew from the Christian is his/her relationship to the eternal. According to Rosenzweig, the Jew by birth has a direct relationship with the eternal, born into his/her inheritance of eternal life; the Christian, on the other hand, has a conditional relation to the eternal because, born separated from Jesus Christ, he/she needs to accept Christ to enter this eternal dimension. Rosenzweig paraphrases Goethe's claim that the true Christian is the pagan who comes to Christianity as

a convert: "Christianity demands sacrifice of the self" (298). The Jew, on the other hand, has no need to convert: "[Christians] themselves, each for himself, had to become Christian. Being-Christian has been removed from them before they were born through Christ's birth, just as on the contrary, the Jew possesses in him and carries with him his being-Jewish before his own birth, because his becoming-Jewish was removed from him in the olden times and in the revelatory history of the people" (419). Through these differences, Judaism and Christianity are equally eligible for the promises of the universal God, because both are considered true religions, unlike Islam, which, he agues, is not a true religion. Anidjar highlights that Islam, for Rosenzweig, was, as the "political enemy" (97), distinguished from Judaism. Anidjar cites Shlomo Pines's suggestion that the exclusion of Islam in Rosenzweig's work reflects a reaction to Hegel's denigration of Judaism with Islam (303).[207] Jean Cahan follows Pine's assessment, noting that Islam's inferiority to the two other monotheistic faiths reflects "a remnant of Hegel's own theo-anthropology, a method of making invidious comparisons between different religious cultures and of maintaining the superiority of one culture over all the others..." (19).[208] Rosenzweig's

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[207] In *The Jew, The Arab*, Anidjar references Pines' "Islam according to *The Star of Redemption*: Toward a Study of Franz Rosenzweig's Sources and Biases" 303) 98.

[208] According to Emil Fackenheim, considering Hegel's philosophy is centered on Christianity, he nonetheless "does greater justice to Judaism than any other modern philosopher of the first rank" (*To Mend the World* p. 107). That is, he saw Judaism as "an indispensable aspect of the total religious Truth", even though it "is now as such an anachronism" (*Encounters Between Judaism and Modern Philosophy: A Preface to Future Jewish Thought* 95). Fackenheim credits Hegel with seeing Judaism as a genuine religion because it is an expression of the relationship between God and mankind: "[Judaism] has a role within the total realm of religious truth that is unique and indispensable. The Jewish fear of the Lord is not one wisdom beside others. It is the beginning of all religious wisdom" (*Encounters* 90-95.) Interestingly, Rosenzweig seems to develop Hegel's criteria of 'religious truth' in his concept of revelation, a factor that excludes Islam from being defined as a true religion, as is Judaism and Christianity, because its revelation is a book: "For Judaism, older and holier than the written word is the oral teaching, and Jesus did not leave a single written word for his followers; Islam is religion of the Book from the first moment. The Book sent down from heaven—can there be any greater distortion of the notion of God himself 'descending', giving himself to man, of surrendering to him? He is enthroned in his highest heaven and gives to man—a Book" (180). The ground for Rosenzweig's disparaging of

prejudice against Islam prefigures a prejudice that would recur in Auschwitz, in naming the abject inmate, *Muselmann*, an issue I will return to later in this chapter.

Hollander asserts that Rosenzweig's acceptance of his relation to his election as a Jew, as one living in a constant relation to the eternal, resolved the paradox of election and universalism: "This is the essence of Jewish election: their claim to being at once individual (*Einzelnes*) and universal ('all', *Alles*)— indeed, being universal *by virtue of* being absolutely singular" (Hollander 178). In that respect, Rosenzweig did not convert because he rejected Christianity, but because he had qualified how election fit into the Christian paradigm of the universal. He did not need to convert. Implicit in this lack of necessity is that the conversion demand in secularism is, clearly, not 'for all', which indirectly suggests that what remains a constant in Rosenzweig's work is a conviction of the value of universal. Rosenzweig's revelations served his philosophical and religious convictions, which, as I will show, manifested in *Star* as a dialogue with Pauline thinking.

In the following passage, which precedes the books concluding image of the 'gate' which opens "into Life" (447), a particular incoherence of the ecstatic event encourages reading the *Star* as a product of an ecstatic experience, similar to Paul's experience of *doxa*:

> In the innermost sanctuary of divine truth where he would expect that all
> the world and he himself would have to be relegated to the metaphor for
> that which he will behold there, man beholds nothing other than a
> countenance like his own. The Star of Redemption has become
> countenance that looks upon me and from out of which I look. Not God,
> but God's truth, became the mirror for me. God, who is the Last and the

Islam is ironic considering that the laws given to Moses were words engraved on tablets, and that this story is known through Moses five books, the *Pentateuch*.

First, opened the doors of the sanctuary for me that is built in the innermost centre. He let himself be seen. He led me to the border of life where the sight is allowed. For no man who sees Him remains alive. So that sanctuary wherein he allowed me to see had to be a piece of the supraworld within the world itself, a life beyond life. But what he gave me to see in this beyond of life is—nothing different than what I was permitted to perceive already in the centre of life; the difference is only that I see it, no longer merely hear. For the sight on the height of the redeemed supraworld shows me nothing other than what already the word of Revelation bade me in the midst of life…" (446)

Note the lost article of 'countenance' in the second sentence signaling a slippage of spatial differentiation created by a moving subjective position. The countenance of the Star that looks on him is pure 'countenance', the form by which he looks out, reflecting the same bodily confusion apparent in Paul's 2 Cor 11. In ambiguous terms, though God is present, the divine countenance is invisible, as is the "I"; the passive construction in "God let himself be seen" entirely erases the writer's place as the seeing subject. God, demarcated as God's truth, is witnessed indirectly through the mirror, echoing Paul's "all of us, unveiled faces, seeing the glory of the lord as though reflected in a mirror" (2 Cor 3:18), and Aseneth's revelation of herself in the 'living waters'. The other most repeated trope is the shifting between the micro and the macro spatial perspectives; the subject has been brought to 'the innermost centre', which is 'within the world' even as he is shown from the 'height of the redeemed supraworld' things. This location signals the border of life, which suggests not just space, but the mortal limit of existence. If there is something beyond life, is that the eternity in scripture that he not only hears but sees? Clearly, this

testimony in which God's glory is represented as radiating in the Star, reflects tropes of the *merkabah* literary tradition evident in Paul's letters.

I would contend that, not only can we hear allusions to Pauline ecstasy in the *Star*, we can even hear a dialogue with Paul's message, most significantly in the work's structure: *The Star* begins literally with death and ends 'into life' (447), which is homologous to Paul's death and new life in Christ. Death, or the fear of it, Rosenzweig begins, is the factor that leads to mankind's coming to consciousness, to reaching out beyond the self into the world, and beyond the world, to the abstract concept of creator, God. Clearly, Rosenzweig is repeating Philo's recognition that mortality, or death, is a universal principle. Since the *Star* ends with exiting the gates 'into life', the structural conceit encourages retroactively determining that the 446 pages of philosophy occurred in *pardes*, or the elsewhere from which revelation comes. When Rosenzweig references 'life beyond life," the source for Santner's 'interpellation beyond interpellation", we understand that he has been called, much as Paul had been called; that is, we can read in Rosenzweig's testimony that his call which came from beyond life, which until his revelation was only heard, has manifested as a vision of the star. The radiant source of God's truth in Rosenzweig's revelation, or apocalypse, like Paul's *doxa*, anoints the subject with itself, which implies the subject's transformation.

There is no question that the spatial incoherence in Rosenzweig's representation of his encounter is homologous with Paul's encounter in heaven, as well as Aseneth's encounter with the visitor, which suggests that Rosenzweig's transformation, in keeping with the literary tradition, is of the eternal. Moreover, as these historical protagonists experienced that supreme conviction of forgiveness, Rosenzweig's experience is equivalent; Rosenzweig has been anointed with the light of redemption. In short, the star, as the *objet a* of the encounter, is an image of redemption that parallels the figure of Jesus in

Paul's experience. In comparison to Paul's encounter with the resurrected Jesus become 'christ', Rosenzweig's *objet a* is the star which is notably not human, and not Jesus; that reconfiguration has significance in seeing a discomfort expressed in his reinvention of the 'mesiach'.

Integral to Rosenzweig's thesis of mankind in *Star* is the conceit that God's redemption is universal; the implication here is that the redemption offered by the star has no condition, nor exception, but demands an affirmative response. As we see in Rosenzweig's experience, the *doxa* is not Jesus Christ. Rosenzweig's version of the eternal divine as inhuman and unconditional reflects either an inversion of Paul's retroactive naming of his *doxa* as Jesus who came to define the terms for exclusion, or simply a different naming; in that respect, Rosenzweig's *objet a* of the star can be interpreted as a criticism of Christianity, if we could see it as conscious an effort as critique suggests. For several reasons, I would argue that what we may see as critique is not so conscious, the primary reason being that Rosenzweig even-handedly accounts for the importance of the Christian faith in bringing 'pagans' to God. Moreover, Christianity's equality to the Jewish faith is reflected in his reference to the modern paradox of two messiahs: "the eternally irreconcilable expectations of the Messiah: the one to come and the one to come again—it cannot lead beyond the And of these two final commitments on behalf of the truth. Only with God himself does the verification reside, only before him is the truth One" (*New Thinking* 99). The mystery of which messiah sustains the *Star of Redemption* is God's truth only, a fact which reflects Rosenzweig's essential reticence to interfere with the messianic paradox and take sides in the ongoing conflict between two faiths.

Rosenzweig's silence on messianic expectation reflects a disinterest or disinclination to engage it in his work, which scholars have identified as 'wariness'. Bielek-Robson notes that Rosenzweig was conscious that the

promise of salvation in messianic thinking had an equal and equally volatile energy of destruction, which is why he promoted love as a means of postponing that volatility.[209] This tendency to avoid suggests that his star was not intended as a figurative competition with the Jesus Christ factor. Rather, in identifying his own *objet a* as the figuration of a 'call' to eternal life, whose ethical demand led to a change in his life, Rosenzweig understood that the call to Christianity as conversion was not meant for him. That is, in Rosenzweig's meditation in the Star we can see a kind of correction of secularism's conflation of Paul's legacy: if, to answer the call to equality was conditional on the conversion to Christ, Rosenzweig proved the conditional was limited to some people and not 'all' people. To rephrase a question raised in the introduction, how did Paul's 'trauma', the 'call' to eternal life, change into the call for equality as a condition of Christ? I would answer by suggesting that the sliding of signification in Paul's experience-cum-message signals the trauma that we are living with today. Moreover, this sliding makes visible the cut referenced by Blumenberg and Žižek in Chapter 1. The 'cut' was not a singular event of time and place but a process wherein Christianity used Jewish election for its power-grab, articulated profoundly by Benjamin's recognition of the fascist use of messianic discourse for its anti-Semitic propaganda.

The trauma of election that had originated in Judaism through Moses returned inversely in Paul's message of the condition of Christ. The replacement of exceptionality of the Jew with the exception of Jesus, where the former singled out a group of people, and the latter singled out a man, was not as simple as shifting the site of 'election' from one place to another, but, paradoxically and therefore more traumatically, associating 'election' with the universal principle. What is striking is that Rosenzweig, in stepping away from

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[209] See Agata Bielek-Robson's "Tarrying with the Apocalypse: The Wary Messianism of Rosenzweig and Levinas" 262.

secularism, was able to untwist this binary of election and the universal within secularism, identifying the universal as his birthright, and so distinguished the call to eternal life as distinct from the call to convert to Christ. This wrestling with the demands of secularism in Rosenzweig's work articulates the same unease that troubles Derrida; yet, whereas Rosenzweig appears to have resolved that conflict by internalizing universal redemption within him by externalizing the Christian exception that demands conversion, Derrida embodies a consciously ambivalent relation to the same demand(s) through his messiah.

MESSIAH

In order to contextualize Derrida's engagement with the messianic, Hollander quotes from Rosenzweig's translation of a poem by Jehuda Halevi "The Joyous Message". In this short piece, we read of the Jewish messianic expectation as constantly confronted by the 'fake messiah', that which signals the danger of messianic expectation for those with hope and those with faith, where the faithful are more vulnerable to corruption (Hollander 190.) It is intriguing to see evidence of the Bar Kokhba legacy of the false messiah move through the medieval philosophers, to Rosenzweig in the modern age and, as Hollander understands it, to Derrida's 'messianicity' also: "When Derrida speaks of the messianic as an opening to the future-to-come, I think he means an opening to something beyond what can be hoped for (beyond, as he repeatedly notes, a telos or a regulative ideal), and thus an opening that also risks utter disappointment or failure" (190). This beyond hope, as Hollander defines it in Derrida's messianicity in *Specters of Marx*, manifests as the expectation of justice demanded by crimes in the past, lifting a motif from Marx of the past haunting the present. Through this haunting, Derrida intends to bring to bear an ethical turn to deconstructionism's contribution to the 'spirit of Marx' as "an emancipatory promise" (74).

Unlike Rosenzweig's *Star*, whose structure follows a teleology of the Christian logic of resurrection by beginning with death and ending with new life, one might say appropriating the Christian narrative for a new universalism, Derrida's structure in *Specters of Marx* arrests the energy of eschatological narrative by beginning where it ends, not with death but with what Derrida claims precedes death: "namely with haunting, before life *as such*, before death *as such*…" (220). Derrida uses a quotation from Shakespeare's *Hamlet,* specifically a fragment of Hamlet's dialogue with his dead father, the Ghost, in Act 1 to introduce that haunting as the interference of the present with the past in relation to an indeterminate future, "The future-to-come announces itself as such and in its purity only on the basis of a past end" (45), a future which reflects Benjamin's radical notion of messianic time as the event that is not predetermined.[210] To signal the unknowable source of the emancipation and its universal quality, Derrida erases the human agency and affiliation of messianism: "it is perhaps even the formality of a structural messianism: it is a messianism without religion, even a messianic (adj.) without messianism (noun), an idea of justice" (*Specters of Marx* 74). In this cycle of the past's relation to the future as an injunction for justice in the present, the messianic is "a waiting without horizon" (211), and "without failing the future in the name of old frontiers" (213), thus stripped of partisan affiliations, national and mystical ideologies, and reduced to its essential form as the 'desert-like messianism' (33). Hollander notes that, though the abstraction of messianicity as 'desert-like' is just another metaphor (200), it engages the question of the particular and universal in philosophical terms as including both the remains of 'desertification', as well as what has been taken out as "abstracted or subtracted" (200). Reading through the psychoanalytic lens, I would argue that

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[210] "This would be the opening to the future or to the coming of the other as the advent of justice, but without horizon of expectation and without prophetic configuration" (Derrida "Faith and Knowledge" 56).

Derrida's messianicity, as the impossible anticipation of justice, is an *objet a* that points to its traumatic launch, which I argue is also visible in Rosenzweig's star, in personal and in historical terms.

Derrida's meditation on the messianic reflects a faith in justice expressed as "a universalizable culture of singularities a culture in which the abstract possibility of the impossible translation could nevertheless announce itself" (Hollander 201).[211] This quotation is not mine, but Hollander's, who uses it to end her analysis of exemplarity and Derrida's unease. I quote from her to emphasize that her use repeats, and so is emblematic of the trauma I am reviewing in Derrida. Notice the effort to accommodate difference through 'singularities' as a universalizing principle, much as Badiou's 'indifference to difference'; notice the conditional terms for defining the announcement, or the call; notice the disjunction between the original call, which goes unheard, and the received translation of it, when it may arrive. The link between the 'here' of culture and the 'elsewhere' of what is to be translated, are based on a factor of 'not now' which inverts Benjamin's 'now time', or at least the Pauline influence as the 'now' of Jesus' salvation. This deferral of the messianic as an effect on some undefined future, which we hear echoed in Rosenzweig about the messianic paradox proper and not about the 'mystical' star experience; it is a strategy harnessed by the Hasidim, and first-century writers, Josephus and Philo, but also Augustine in his effort to establish a 'this world' relation to the 'other' world, the condition which Blumenberg highlighted established the meaning of modern secularism. I think it is useful to be sensitive to secularism's etymological foundation, and to question to what extent Derrida is influenced by the Christian paradigms, as opposed to Jewish paradigms, or to what extent Jewish paradigms have adapted Christian ideas, seeing as secularism feeds off

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[211] "This justice, which I distinguish from right, alone allows the hope, beyond all 'messianism', of a universalizable culture of singularities, a culture in which the abstract possibility of the impossible translation could nevertheless be announced." ("Faith and Knowledge" 56.)

the Christian system that is incredibly resistant to destruction, because it is rooted on a teleology disguised as emancipation.

The fact that Rosenzweig and Derrida were writing in such different historical moments of the twentieth-century, wherein one confronted the loss of political innocence in WWI, while the other, responding to the end of a political promise in national communism, was determined by the extreme horrors of man's nature in WWII, serves to explain the fundamental stylistic differences in their work; and in that difference, what stands out is their treatment of the semantic significance of 'anointing' in their representation of the messianic. While Rosenzweig accounted for the doubled paradox of the messiah in society, the 'star' experience clearly identifies the 'anointing' for redemption as accessible in the now, and emanates from the eternal within the world, as 'interpellation beyond interpellation'. The 'star's' appearance in the purely imaginary register, which signals the *objet a* of Rosenzweig's own anointing, or messianic call, reflects the antithesis of Jesus Christ; because this *objet a* is an unconscious critique of Jesus Christ and therefore emblematic of our trauma, in some very profound ways, it has exposed and fulfilled the *doxa* of Paul's message buried for so many centuries. In comparison to Rosenzweig's figure, Derrida's work is apparently void of anointing, yet it persists in a way emblematic of our post-WII trauma, and leaves traces through his procedure. Considering my historical review in chapter three, Derrida's deconstruction of the 'messiah' as something that "belongs properly to no Abrahamic religion" (56), seems more a wish for a universal source of an original politics, an abstraction based on theoretical extrapolation, as opposed to a reduction based on historical evidence; in fact, as Hollander notes, his desert-like' messianism is bound to "a sacred topology of religious texts" (200), and therefore symbolically bound, if obscurely, to the semantic 'anointing'.

In psychoanalytic terms, the 'desert-like messianism" is Derrida's *object a*, whose attributes are justice and emancipation. What is striking about this image is that its aridity is the antithesis of the oil used in 'anointing'. In the imaginary register, desertification is a biblical trope of the narrative of the Exodus, and the geographical relation to the sky which defines the sun's supreme place; this topos signals another kind of anointing. The impact of the sun in this messianism is light, both in its positive and negative sense; on the one hand, one has been illuminated, chosen, by the light; on the other hand, one has been ejected into the wilderness, unprotected and doomed to expire, as the *homo sacer*. Translated into Derrida's spirit of justice, the one singled out, otherwise defined as the exception, is the anointed; that is, the exception is exceptional for being the unjustified victim of exclusion, or, as Hamlet's case suggests, is called to address the inherited debt for justice of a crime. Those anointed in Derrida's philosophy are not, like Rosenzweig, survivors of the ecstasy of God's glory, but survivors of grief and tragedy, like the figure Agamben defines in *homo sacer*. Derrida's injunction to Marx's spirit of equality and emancipation is bound to all kinds of exceptions which populate the courts, there for any number of reasons which Derrida does not list, or does not want to list, or cannot, or, to keep things in the spirit of openness to the future in a very Kafkaesque way, will not. If Derrida's desertified messianism includes what has been excluded, it is a strategy that reveals the trauma motivating his work. Derrida's abject anointed exceptions are inadvertent constructs, refuse or byproducts, of an invented universalism, the ideal benevolent inclusivity which makes visible the exception of Jesus Christ.

There is a consistency in how Rosenzweig's and Derrida's engagement with conversion and messiah have inverted the terms of the *objet a* of Jesus Christ. In Rosenzweig's articulation of the silent demand for conversion in secularism, a method homologous to Benjamin's effort to put back into play the

religious paradigms that have gone underground in secular neutrality, Rosenzweig identified the Christ-factor of secularism as the false bar; secularism demands a conversion by all, but only those without God hear the call to convert, because those who already have God, like Rosenzweig, hear exclusion. Rosenzweig's inversion of secular neutrality for religious ideology, which made this articulation possible, pointed to the unconscious trauma in secularism of the division created by Paul's effort to create new terms of Gentile inclusion into the Judean faith: its effect was the opposite of inclusion, and led to a trauma the Judean faith has been living with since, returning in anti-Semitic persecution. In Rosenzweig's work, the star stood to cover imperfectly over this trauma of secularism, and also, to signal his response to the injunction of the 'interpellation'; that is, the doubled messiah of two monotheistic religions remains undisturbed, while his identification with redemption, much like the Pauline experience of being 'anointed' by *doxa*, hides the transgressive critique of the Jesus factor. This critique of Paul, if we can read it to be as consciously devised as that verb suggests, returns us to the effect of Paul's *objet a* as a dividing force which Derrida approaches more obliquely, and more forcefully in his version of the messianic.

If, as Hollander implies, Derrida's notion of messianicity handles the disjunction between Jewish election and universal equality by creating broader terms of inclusivity, another way to look at Derrida's 'handling' is that he internalizes the paradox, much as Rosenzweig does, holding the self as the example of both the exception and the universal. In this move, Derrida follows Rosenzweig, as do Žižek and Agamben, who both focus on the exception as the solution of the universal. Yet, in thinking of Žižek's promotion of the Christian paradigm as the solution to universalism in his conclusion to *Puppet*, Derrida's 'universal' stands out as full of unease and therefore as a critique of the putative solution. Derrida's 'chosen', or 'anointed' are inversions of the ideal exception

of Jesus; they are the *homo sacer*, inversions of the Jewish distinction key to Nazi selection. In the effort to recreate the new terms of exception, he adapts Benjamin's fracturing of the messiah along the lines of Isaiah's commands for the nation of Israel, by unbinding messianism from national and ethnic politics, and transposing it into 'splinters' of messianic time. Once messianism has been erased of humanity and its sins, and along with it, the hope of its imminent arrival, the injunction for justice 'for all' becomes inverted in the particular of singularities, proliferating into the future, universalizing messianism by multiplying terms of the exception. Yet, no matter how sophisticated the variables of the mathematical equation can be, no result adds up to the universal, whose infinity, like the eternal, is as impossible to grasp as the mediated version of messianism's translation. If the universal is projected on a future equality because equality is a factor of the infinite, the fact that this unknown future is the repressed past of a haunting of injustice, binds us to retroactive work that proves postponement to be necessary. For Derrida, this thing we call justice iterates the failure for secular society to reconcile its promise for equality, and I would say, that is not just because of the logic of the Apelles' cut, but because the cut is ideologically, Jesus Christ.

In secular society, the only way to reconcile the exception with the universal is through the original exception, Jesus Christ. This claim may initially seem to grant this figure an exclusive authority that is unfounded, except the texts reviewed show a pattern along these lines. The atheist scholars such as Žižek, Agamben, and Badiou, who are reaching back through Hegel, Kant, to the incipient efforts by Spinoza, are as comfortable as the religious scholars, such as Blanton, with the power of the exception to fulfill the universal; expressed in this comfort is a trust in the Christian paradigm to resolve what is incommensurable. Their comfort is in stark contrast to efforts by Derrida and Rosenzweig to reconcile the exception and the universal, especially on the

issue of exemplarity. In trying to devise terms for universal equality so central to secular politics, they offer different messianic solutions that, I have shown, engage to one extent or another with excluding or rewriting the Christian exception, Jesus Christ. The various ways with which Rosenzweig, Derrida, as well as Benjamin, have tried to resolve the universal with messianic ideas that are alternatives to Jesus describe the monopoly Jesus Christ has in secular thought on the issue of universal equality; this monopoly indicates the source of their unease. That is, the unease expressed by both Derrida and Rosenzweig reflect personal engagements with a systemic issue, symptomatic of the original exception whose instability rises from the fusion of the trauma initiated by Paul's message: Jesus Christ may signal the call to equality, but that call is conditional on accepting him as Christ, i.e., converting.

Both Rosenzweig's and Derrida's engagement with conversion and messiah point to what historical events repeat, that Christianity's condition is antithetical to its promises: read exclusion and not inclusion, persecution and not emancipation. In comparison, Žižek's thesis that the future involves the fulfillment of Christianity by destroying it, recycles the tired Christian resurrection which Badiou could not shake either. Clearly, there is more of Lacan's 'carrot' lure in Žižek's notion of the future, while there is more of Freud's inversion in both Rosenzweig's and Derrida's erasure of the Christ factor. Do these different approaches to repressed trauma reflect different cultural subjectivities? Or do they reflect different conditions? By way of partially addressing these questions, I offer the following, the implications of which I cannot at this point determine: whereas Lacan identifies the *objet a* as the seal over the wound, its inverted status as a kind of optical trick, less an illusion than a pastiche effect on consciousness obscuring the future, Freud's fundamental argument was that people experienced life semantically, which is why inversion as evidence of repression always appeared hidden in

metaphorical paradigms, substitutions, or even erasures. An interest in lexical markers could add a dimension to Hollander's consideration of Derrida's deconstruction as a Jewish philosophy[212] but only if we limit our understanding of Freud's concept of inversion as being determined by the same logic motivating Derrida's attempt to destabilize the power dynamic in binaries.

With respect to limitations, which are always good for seeing patterns, the next pattern intriguingly explains a particular cultural influence in the work reviewed in this case study. In crossing the Lacanian approach with the Freudian act of inversion over Rosenzweig and Derrida, a very interesting operation becomes visible; if the *objet a* stands as the lure that obscures the coming future, Derrida's and Rosenzweig's inversions seem to be pulling away at the image of Jesus Christ, as if it hung before them, obscuring what is at stake in the future. That is, if the exception is an integral aspect of secularism and our modern political ethics is limited to the symbolic of the universal, then doing as Derrida and Rosenzweig did, internalizing the paradox by clearing the *objet a* of its incommensurability with the self, seems the only ethical path to the impossible.

CASE STUDY #2: THE PARADOX OF THE MUSELMANN'S ABSENCE
Žižek rewrites the imaginary significance of The *Muselmann* in Auschwitz as the Thing—that which was so close to the trauma that it represents the *Nachträglichkeit*, or, deferred action, in all its ambiguity. In Primo Levi's eyes, the *Muselmann* was the husk man empty of life, inspiring dread because, in Elie Wiesel's terms, "he was doomed for the crematorium" (*Night* 70). The *Muselmann* was so void of consciousness that Jean Améry mentions the figure

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[212] See Hollander's "Is Deconstruction a Jewish Science?" 135-136.

in his memoir only to dismiss him, regretfully (*At Mind's Limits* 9). In Sarah Kofman's autobiographical essay on Auschwitz, *Smothered Words*, there is no *Muselmann*. Since Kofman was never at Auschwitz, the absence of the term technically is not an issue.[213] Yet, how can her text about Auschwitz be autobiographical, even if 'in part,' if she was never at Auschwitz? In this case study, I address this question by arguing that there is a *Muselmann* in Kofman's putative autobiography, played out *in absentia* as the paradox of her testimony of Auschwitz, and the unease it inspires.

What ground of desire Kofman is being asked to give up in confronting this ghosted figure, requires a preface about death and survival. As Kofman's testimony attests, the Holocaust was not limited to the camps. Moreover, not all those who died at the camps were Jews, but included prisoners of war, resistance fighters, identified 'deviants', such as homosexuals, Roma, black people, and the mentally disabled. And of those who lived and died at the camps, not all died as a *Muselmann*. This short list of the variety of people rounded up by the Nazi project does not include the millions who, on arriving at Auschwitz, were sent directly to the showers; nor the countless others who never made it to Auschwitz but were shot, individually, or in mass executions and buried in unmarked graves in the territories occupied by the Nazis. It is the plurality of these murders by the Nazis, inside and outside the camps, that is the grave reality beyond my focus on "The Thing" of the *Muselmann* as representative of those who, subjected to his fate, either died in Auschwitz, or

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[213] Whether or not *Muselmann* was used only by men, or both men and women is a contested issue. For one, scholars have tended to consider the use of the term by the memoirs by men, suggesting it is only by men. For example, Agamben cites the various names used to name this most abject inmate in the other camps quoting from Sofsky (44); words such as 'donkeys', 'camels', 'swimmers', in various camps, and in Ravensbrück, the noun for a female Muslim, *Muselweiber*, was used. Yet, as pointed out to me by Doris Bergen recently at a conference at which I presented a version of this paper, memoirs by women also use the term, *Muselmann*. I.e. Isabella Leitner *Fragments of Isabella: A Memoir of Auschwitz*, and Gisella Perl, *I was a Doctor In Auschwitz*. The scholarship, though indeterminate on this point, does not change either my thesis, or the conclusions of this project.

survived it. This case study aims to identify the singularity of this figure and its limit, through its ghosted form in Kofman's uneasy testimony.

The term *Muselmann* was used in Auschwitz to define the most abject of the inmates: the one who was so diminished by hunger that he could barely walk. If he did not die from dysentery or starvation, he was destined to be chosen for the gas chambers: "Their life is short, but their number is endless; they, the *Muselmänner*, the drowned, form the backbone of the camp, an anonymous mass, continually renewed and always identical, of non-men who march and labour in silence, the divine spark dead within them" (Levi, 90). Their death cannot even be described as death, Levi asserts, since they are not even living enough to fear death. In their sociological research with survivors, Ryn and Klodzinsky[214] contextualize the religious connotation of this naming: "When you saw them from afar, you would think they were Arabs praying. Hence the name of the hunger- stricken in the camp, "Muslims" — Muselmänner".[215] When Agamben notes that the Jewish inmate did "not die a Jew in Auschwitz" (45), we are alerted to yet another religious dimension to this naming, a dimension mainly overlooked by Agamben.

In *Remnants of Auschwitz*, Agamben's focus on the *Muselmann* aims to exemplify the exception as previously explored in *homo sacer*. He is the one not represented by the State, but present as excluded (24); the one who is relegated to the camps where she/he lives out a life reduced to mere existence, or 'bare life' (66). In this respect, the *Muselmann* is the 'final limit' (*Remnants* 85) in that he is excluded not just from society for being in the camp, but excluded from participating in the camp because of his 'inhumanness'. Drawing

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[214] Ryn, Zdislaw and Stanslaw Klodzinski. *An der Grenze zwischen Leben und Tod. Eine Studie uber die Erscheinung des "Muselmanns" im Konsenstrazionslager, Auschwitz-Hefte,* vol 1 (Weinheim and Basel: Beltz 1987): 89-154.
[215] This translation is from Anidjar's footnote on page 226; see a slightly different translation in Agamben *Remnants* 43.

on the title of Levi's memoir, *If this is a Man*, Agamben theorizes that the *Muselmann* is reduced to organic functioning, whose muteness is a sign to the other inmates of the "wound of non-spirit, non-human chaos" (77). The one having looked upon the Gorgon, he arouses fear amongst inmates as the faceless vortex painted in the 'true likeness of man' (52).

Buch makes the salient point that the monstrosity of the *Muselmann* is operative as a sacred figure of redemption.[216] The sacred quality of this figure, O'Connor argues, indicates a contradiction in Agamben's messianism. Though Agamben's messiah is a human-based figure, O'Connor argues, the anthropocentric approach to the redemptive promise in this figure is undermined by the transcendent concept of "a form of divine spark of immortality".[217] That is, in Agamben's treatment of the future redemption, the humanization of that sacred expectation is bound to a transcendent interference, something like Benjamin's eternal of messianic time. Agamben's use of the *Muselmann* to underscore a historical example of the *homo sacer* and thus provide a critique of Schmitt's indifference to the ethical responsibility of the state to the exception, is essentially exploitive. This figure indirectly and problematically legitimizes the suffering of all those at Auscwhitz as sacred. This is especially evident in his adaptation of the remnant.

Central to the figure of the *Muselmann* in Agamben's project is its part in the redeeming power of the remnant. Having witnessed the unspeakable, the *Muselmann* has been made senseless and inhuman; his 'desubjectification' invites the 'ethical subject' to "bear witness' (151): "The authority of the witness consists in the capacity to speak solely in the name of an incapacity to speak" (158). In that respect, the relation between the *Muselmann* and the witness

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[216] Robert Buch. "Seeing the Impossibility of Seeing or the Visibility of the Undead: Giorgio Agamben's Gorgon". *The Germanic Review*, 2007. Pp 179-196. P 185.
[217] Patrick O'Connor. "Redemptive Remnants: Agamben's Human Messianism". *Journal for Cultural Research*. Vol 13, No 3-4. (July-October 2009) p. 349.

speaks the unspeakable of Auschwitz and so manifests the messianic power of the remnant; "the remnants of Auschwitz—the witnesses—are neither the dead nor the survivors, neither the drowned nor the saved. They are what remains between them" (163). The remnant of the redemptive future is the answer to the demand for justice created in the relation between the *Muselmann* and the survivor. While this remnant is ostensibly of the human order, it is bound through the *Muselmann* to that which is not just the inverse of the human as the inhuman but, signified by the image of "like a man," is the superhuman element. The *Muselmann* may be seen as equivalent to the *doxa* in the mystical tradition or, in psychoanalytic terms, he is the Thing, partly of the unspeakable 'real' and signaling the call of the ineffable divine to bear witness. What O'Connor does not consider in his critique is the ideological source of Agamben's messianism. Since Agamben's representation of the *Muselmann* inspires an ethical demand to witness, which involves a becoming of the Other of the *Muselmann* and so redeeming mankind in the future, the figure does not embody a generic messianism but the Christian one. In that respect, Agamben's *Muselmann* has rehabilitated the 'horror' of the undead represented in Levi's memoir by writing the religious signifier out of it at the same time that it instantiates the Christian 'exception'.[218]

While Agamben seems to be consciously secular, which explains how the Christian motif nestles unconsciously within his paradigms, he is, at the same time, obtuse to the religious significance of the name. Though he recognizes the 'ferocious irony' that the Jew does not die a Jew in Auschwitz, he seems indifferent to the fact that for a Jew, the connotation of this religious naming represents not only imminent death, but also the horror of that death as an unwilling 'conversion'. This conversion is an important element that further

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[218] The Christianization of the *Muselmann* is noticed by Geoffrey Hartman and then is bypassed as not being his "main concern" ("Testimony and Authenticity", 7).

develops Anidjar's recognition of the 'theological threshold' reflected in the naming (145), and modifies his conviction that the Jew and the Muslim are represented in this naming as equally exceptional in a secular world because they are not Christian. The modification to his assessment is this: the demand for conversion in this naming is meant only for the Jew. Agamben's secular belief makes him blind to the fact that his representation of the *Muselmann* as messiah reflects an unconscious Christo-centricism, indicating a secularist's denial of religion's effect on modern cultural and historical events. Agamben is not alone in this blindness. Gil Anidjar is one of the few scholars who have asked why the Jew comes to be named a Muslim in the camps.[219] As I will show, Anidjar's analysis of the *Muselmann* points to the unconscious historical crises returning in the *Muselmann*, which in turn explains Agamben's unconscious revision.

In *The Jew, The Arab*, Anidjar's intention is to show that there is what can be identified as a Semitic affinity between the Arab and the Jew in the eyes of Christo-centric Europe, assisted by centuries of literature (Shakespeare) and philosophy (Montaigne, Kant, and Hegel). He compares the literary Arab (moor) in *Othello*, and the Jew in *the Merchant of Venice*, noting they are intermixed as the 'dangerous neighbour figure' (103). This relation comes to be a centre-piece of Anidjar's review of Freud's *Psychopathology of Everyday Life*, as evidence of a kind of exchange between Abrahamic phantoms: "that a 'blessed Jew' could turn Moor, and that such a 'Blackmoor' could, in turn, turn 'white'" (137). Anidjar's use of the term 'turn' could qualify as an expression of conversion; it is this detail in Anidjar's review of the *Muselmann* that I isolate in what follows.

The *Muselmann*, Anidjar asserts, traces a "theologico-political history of absolute subjection" (140). He is "a cypher for the exception" so that the

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[219] This is noted in an unpublished presentation paper (2) by Professor Doris Bergen which she shared with me on the matter of the *Muselmann*.

naming of the Jews in Auschwitz is a 'ferocious irony' since the Jew becomes a Muslim. Anidjar's focus on seeing the exchange of Jewish identity traced through politics and represented in Auschwitz leads to identifying a messianic connection between the *Muselmann* and seventeenth-century diaspora Jews. What Primo Levi identifies as the 'divine spark' (f.n. 111, 228), Anidjar notes, iterates the Kabbalistic mystical practice of the gathering in of the 'divine sparks' as the ethical responsibility to the messianic future through *tikkun*, or healing or repair. This concept of repair was used to justify the conversion of seventeenth-century Jewish Polish messianic-claimant, Sabbatai Zevi. At the height of his popularity, Sabbatai Zevi was given a choice by the Ottoman Sultan, Mehmed IV, between dying as a messiah or living as a convert to Islam. Zevi chose conversion and hundreds of families followed his example (Scholem 147). In order to justify his conversion, Kabbalistic principles were adapted to explain that his apostasy was the descent into the darkness of the Gentiles (*kelipot,* Scholem 99) from which he would rescue the divine sparks (*nitzotzot*), and so redeem mankind. As Anidjar's reference suggests, whether Levi was conscious of it or not, a link existed between the *Muselmänner* and the apostate messiah aimed to fulfilling *tikkun* in "his descent into the Inferno of Auschwitz" (Anidjar 161).

Scholem tries to make sense of the rise of power of the Sabbatian movement in modern Judaism considering Zevi's apostasy and argues it reflected the momentum of the political and spiritual aspects of contemporary European Jewish culture. Politically, the movement supported the growing population of *murranos* who saw in the messiah's conversion the "highest justification of the apostasy of the Spanish *Murranos* in 1391and 1492."[220] Spiritually, it fulfilled a growing interest in Kabbalistic practices and mystical

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[220] Gershom Scholem. *The Messianic in Judaism: And Other Essays on Jewish Spiritualit (*1995) 64.

experiences, which seemed triggered by the devastating massacre of the Jewish community in Poland in 1648-49.[221] Both of these conditions inspired a growing following of Sabbatai Zevi, identified as the Messianic Revival in 1665-6. Prior to this period, Zevi was known by few as a laughing-stock, a false messiah, torn between deep depressions and fits of ecstasy. Nathan of Gaza, taking on the role of the prophet to the messiah, was able to change opinion against Zevi by claiming this suffering affirmed Zevi's messianic status (Scholem, 1995, 60).[222] Much like the work done by followers of Jesus in the first century, Scholem notes, Zevi's handlers worked hard to prove he was who he claimed to be: "Endless biblical verses were cited to prove that the Messiah was fated to be contemned as an outcast and criminal by his own people" (Scholem, 1995, 98.) Parallels between the Sabbatian movement and early Christianity "obtrude," as do parallels between Zevi and Paul: "The Sabbatian notion of pure faith, unaccompanied by the specific works and requiring the sign or miracle, has its predecessor in Paul's doctrine of faith" (Scholem, 1992, 322).[223] Zevi was the "holy sinner" whose iconoclastic antinomianism, Scholem suggests, was similar in form to Pauline theology (Scholem, 1995, 58), but more radical: he promoted abrogation of sexual taboos and the incest prohibition (Scholem, 1995, 74) and initiated orgiastic ritual practices that continued amongst followers of the movement until about 1900.

Scholem argues against theories that blame the orgiastic activities in the radical branches of the Sabbatian movement on the corrupt influence of ancient

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[221] Scholem. "The Mystical Messiah" (289-334) in *Essential Papers On Messianic Movements and Personalities in Jewish History (*1992) 290.

[222] In "Sabbatai Zevi: The Mystical Messiah", Scholem reflects on the personal mental disorder: "… his inner life was autistically centered upon himself, a paranoid streak in his psychosis" (321).

[223] Howard Caygill considers the links between Zevi and Christianity as proposed by Scholem as well as Taubes, by highlighting Taubes' conviction that Zevi ruined Judiasm and so made possible Jewish Enlightenment, and that "believers of Messiahs" are to blame for leading "the way into the abyss" (205) in "The Apostate Messiah: Scholem, Taubes and the Occlusions of Sabbatai Zevi" (205).

Kabbalistic literature. Rather, he contends, the movement reflected the devastating effect of messianic frenzy on the Jewish faith: "In actual fact we are dealing with developments within Judaism that show how very acute and radical Messianism that is taken seriously tears open an abyss in which by inner necessity, antinomian tendencies, and libertine moral conceptions gain strength" (Scholem 1995, 164). What Scholem identifies as the violence of the formation of the abyss, whose effect was the fracturing of Judaism into factions reconsidering the laws and the fundamentals of the faith, clearly indicates a trauma. What that trauma is can be garnered from Anidjar's reviews of research on the significance of the *Muselmann* and his summation that this Islamic signifier remains obscure: "an unreadable cypher or a sign for--Christianity. Or, simply, for Religion" (161). According to Harris Lenowitz in *The Jewish Messiahs*, Anidjar notes, the *Muselmann* figure "echoed the conversions of Jews of Iberia to Catholicism" (161). This is an interesting series of points that Anidjar runs through, which I would like to consider through the condition of trauma.

If the naming of the *Muselmann* in Auschwitz as the unwilling conversion indicates the disguised return of Zevi's willing conversion, and Zevi's act was the disguised return of the forced conversions of the Jews in Spain and Portugal, we find an iteration of the first-century conflation of the call in Jesus Christ as an ambivalence towards conversion. The conflation issue I raised in the introduction to this chapter signals, here evident as ambivalence, reflects a trauma experienced by those followers of Jesus who were of the Judean cult. In accepting the 'call' of the new way through Jesus, these individuals were forced to break with their community but eventually were also forced to break with the laws of their own faith. That is, the Judean faction of the new community around Jesus was forced to see 'resurrection' as a cancellation of what distinguished them as Judeans: their election. It is this aporia of election that returns in all its ambivalence and stress in Derrida's

exception which he tries to rehabilitate by erasing the partisan nature of the messiah, because within that partisan figure hides the coerced conversion which his family escaped four hundred years ago, and which returns with all its malevolent irony as the *Muselmann*.

KOFMAN'S *Paroles suffoquées*

In honour of Maurice Blanchot's deconstructive project on writing of the disaster of the Holocaust,[224] Kofman wrote *Smothered Words (Smothered)*.[225] It was ostensibly a philosophical meditation on Auschwitz, the place which is "neither a concept nor a pure name, but a name beyond naming" (7), but it was also her personal testimony, "as a Jewish woman intellectual who survived the Holocaust" (7.) Madeleine Dobie interprets Kofman's work as serving an ethical imperative through the testimonial structure of autobiography.[226] Eilene Hoft-March notes about *Smothered* that "Kofman's description of the work as, in part 'autobiographical' strikes me as peculiar considering how little of it represents her life."[227] The aporia signaled by Hoft-March's observation demarcates how Kofman's work is obliquely encoded with her personal story, which reflects how the ethical imperative she responds to is associated with her role as a survivor, especially conflicted since, as Steven Jaron notes, she is neither a first nor a second generation survivor, but a "member of a liminal generation", those who survived the Holocaust by avoiding being sent to the death camps.[228] Decoding what Kofman means by surviving would be aided by a

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[224] *The Writing of the Disaster*, 1995.

[225] In her introduction to the English translation of *Smothered Words*, Madeleine Dobie explains that Kofman's "*Smothered Words* was initially conceived in 1985 for a volume of *Les Cahiers de l'Herne* to be devoted to the politics of the writer and philosopher, Maurice Blanchot" (vii). The project never came to fruition and so Kofman published her text on its own in 1987.

[226] Madeleine Dobie, "Sarah Kofman's Paroles suffoquées: Autobiography, History, and Writing 'After Auschwitz'", 320.

[227] Eilene Hoft-March. "Still Breathing: Sarah Kofman's Memoires of Holocaust Survival", 110.

[228] Steven Jaron, "Autobiography and the Holocaust: An Examination of the Liminal Generation in France", 209.

psychoanalytic approach, an approach encouraged by her personal engagement with Freud in her work and expressed in one brief autobiographical text, "'My Life' and Psychoanalysis": "I always wanted to tell the story of my life. The entire beginning of my analysis was me telling a story." (*Selected Writings* 250). Taking this at face value, I will read *Smothered* as an autobiographical work, adapting Kofman's interpretation of Freud's method as my own: "… For every text is tissue that masks at the same time that it reveals. It invites us also to distinguish in it, as in a dream, a manifest and a latent content" (*Selected Writings* 44).

The only explicit autobiographical material reflected in *Smothered Words* is her claim to having "survived the holocaust" (7), indicating so little especially in comparison to her *Rue Ordinaire, Rue Labatt* (*RORL*) written some seven years after *Smothered*, in which she explains that she survived the Holocaust by pretending to be Christian, hidden with her mother by a French woman, Mémé, during the war years in Paris.[229] The only autobiographical element in *Smothered* which connects her to Auschwitz is her father: "My father, a rabbi, was killed because he tried to observe the Sabbath in the death camps: buried alive with a shovel for having—or so the witnesses report— refused to work on that day in order to celebrate the Sabbath, to pray to God for them all, victims and executioners… And they could not bear that a Jew, that vermin, even in the camps, did not lose faith in God" (34). It is noteworthy that

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[229] For an analysis of Kofman's ambivalent relationship to the mother figure, as a dichotomy between her birth mother and the mother she finds in Mémé see Sara Horowitz's article, "Sarah Kofman et l'ambiguïté des mères" (*Témoignages de l'après-Asuchwitz dans la littérature juive-française d'aujourd'hui: Enfants de survivants et survivants-enfants*. Ed. Annelise Schulte Nordholt. Amsterdam and New York: Editions Rodopi B. V., 2008). In one section, Horowitz compares Kofman's work on Freud's analysis of Da Vinci's double mothers in a painting of Jesus with St. Anne and the Madonna, and Kofman's analysis of her two mothers in her own childhood (109), where Da Vinci's Jesus and Kofman's childhood are ironically paralleled. Horowitz's analysis contributes to my argument that Kofman's self-telling is permeated with an ambivalent relation to the Christian paradigms dominating western European culture.

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Kofman highlights the witnesses' report[230] as the source of this representation of her father's death. In psychoanalytic terms, the fact she missed her father's death, in the physical temporal sense, exemplifies its traumatic impact for her; his death was a trauma because she came to know about it long after the fact, a literal *Nachträglichkeit*. The afterwardsness of the event becomes in Lacanian terms, the 'fantasy', courtesy of the witnesses. The problem with the fantasy is that no evidence is available to substantiate the witnesses' claim. In fact, the ephemeral quality of the testimony is emphasized by a single document recreated in the body of the book about rabbi Kofman's deportation to Auschwitz: his name listed as one of a thousand Jews rounded up on July 16, 1942. This document affirms that he died not anywhere but at Auschwitz; yet it cannot verify that he died as the witnesses' testimony implied, still believing in God. The fact that her father made it to Auschwitz and lived and worked there, raises questions about the narrative of his deportation which the document opens, like a window onto the unknown: of those deported, how many made it to Auscwhitz; of those who made it, how many were sent immediately to the gas chambers; of those who lived, how many survived; who became a *Muselmann*? The absence of proof of how her father died adds stress to the testimony which serves a kind of restless energy behind Kofman's responsibility to witness.

In *RORL*, we are given an account of the day he was taken away to Auschwitz. Her father did not resist. He waited at home for the police to come, knowing his resistance would only endanger his family. On the day he was taken, she recalls, "the memory of the sacrifice of Isaac (whose depiction in an illustrated Bible, my Hebrew textbook from early childhood, had often worried me) fluttered through my mind" (5-6). Whether that memory is true of that time,

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[230] In comparison to the plural witness in *Smothered*, Kofman mentions only one witness in *RORL*; this raises the question about whether the plural in *Smothered* reflects a fact or is rhetorical.

or an insertion after the fact, is irrelevant to the symbolic function of this image; it speaks of his docile acceptance of his fate, which contrasts his act of resistance at Auschwitz. His apparent submissiveness in being apprehended by the French police as a self-sacrifice in giving himself up to the Nazis so as to save his children is inconsistent with the grotesqueness of the meaningless and obscene sacrifice at the hands of the "Jewish-butcher-turned Kapo" who killed him with a shovel (*RORL* 10). Her father's death is the trauma that returns in the text, obscured by time and by the impossibility of Auschwitz.

This brief testimony of rabbi Kofman's death in *Smothered* is contrasted by Kofman's intellectual focus on Auschwitz, which makes up the body of the project. Through quotations from Robert Antelme's memoir *The Human Race* and Blanchot's fascist-period short stories, Kofman creates a representation of Auschwitz through her own impossible testimony. Her use of these works to represent the impossible reflects a studied and thoughtful irony since, Antelme, who was a French resistance fighter interned in Gandersheim, passed through Auschwitz only briefly and Blanchot, a French intellectual who converted to the French resistance from his fascist affiliations, was never at Auschwitz. These French secular intellectuals are the voices she uses to give meaning retroactively to what happened while she was a mere child. Implicated in what these voices articulate is that there is no witness to tell the truth of Auschwitz. In fact, the only witnesses to Auschwitz are the dead who cannot speak. In Kofman's text, the dead witness is her father. His silent presence in her work is a strategy of the limit of testimony which can be understood through Geoffrey Hartman's understanding of the dynamic between testimony as a non-fiction genre and the 'authenticity' of literature that "create[s] forms of representation that open a blocked channel of transmission" ("Truth and Testimony" 11). In this sense, the authenticity of her father's testimony as silence is enabled

through her use of Blanchot's literature and Antelme's memoir.[231] Hartman also observes that the *Muselmann* is a 'limit experience' (7); this point grounds the homology I will shortly argue for seeing between Rabbi Kofman and the *Muselmann*.

In starting her meditation, Kofman reformulates Adorno's assertion that "to write a poem after Auschwitz is barbaric" (citation) in the following statement: "About Auschwitz and after Auschwitz no story is possible" (14). Emphasizing the impossibility of fiction, she selects particular elements of Blanchot's short story, "The Idyll," written during his fascist period, about a stranger entering the close community of a small village. This story ironically represents her father arriving at Auschwitz. In parentheses, she quotes from a scene when the inhabitants order the Stranger about behaviour: "('Wash well: we're very concerned about hygiene here')… A forced 'baptism', a veritable rite of passage intended to cleanse this repulsive stranger of the mud of the outside which clings to his skin, which marks as if with a branding iron, his non-belonging to the country of light…" (19). This bathing reference and the "vast row of showers" identified as an ironic Christian ritual must to be read through the knowledge of Auschwitz and its showers where Jews were gassed to death. Blanchot's fiction points to the manifest content of Kofman's limited experience of Auschwitz; she is only able to apprehend this place "beyond naming" through the mediation of others' testimonials, or in the case of Blanchot's work, fiction. And since to read this story after Auschwitz means that a shower is not without ideological significance, Kofman forces us to see that Auschwitz caused a conversion whose ideology is lethal and "emanates from a region with no representable horizon". If Kofman's access to Auschwitz is based on the limit of what is 'true', what is true is that Auschwitz has no limit to its persistence,

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[231] Hartman focuses primarily on the trouble with 'authenticity' of testimony, and cites issues of "forgeries" and "imitation" (13). I think that perspective remains limited to privileging the kind of objectivity promised by the non-fiction of testimony.

geographically, affecting every corner of Europe by deporting millions of Jews, and temporally, recreating the terms for reading fiction written before Auschwitz.

Her father died for refusing to work on the Sabbath, thus, labour in Blanchot's fiction becomes Kofman's means of dramatizing how, after Auschwitz, the meaning of work is different: "Its goal is not to destroy the object of revulsion outright, but to make him renounce his foreignness, even if this act of reappropriation also signifies the loss of the Incommensurable and the infinite distance" (*Smothered* 33). If labour before Auschwitz was socialization, in Auschwitz, the meaning of work was transformed into enabling death, which in turn, changed her father: "Work is the exact equivalent of death", an impossible claim equivalent to "the impossibility of death"[232] (34). It is against this impossibility that she identifies a parallel between Blanchot's change and her father's resistance. It is against this 'disaster' that Blanchot writes after Auschwitz as a man having been changed by what the SS wanted to do at Auschwitz: divide the race into those who can live, and those who must not. It is against this divide that rabbi Kofman is remembered by the witnesses as resisting the SS, drawing on a power beyond the SS.

While Blanchot's fiction is used to express the unknowability of her father's life at Auschwitz, Antelme's memoir becomes for Kofman the source for the impossible act of the survivor's witnessing the ways in which Auschwitz killed. It killed with language, with food, with shovels, by suffocating people's humanity: "a strange *double bind*: an infinite claim to speak, *a duty to speak infinitely*, imposing itself with irrepressible force, and at the same time, an almost physical impossibility to speak, a *choking* feeling" (39). Kofman does not relent in describing the agony caused by words, "which stick in your throat and

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[232] I cannot help but wonder if she wants to suggest these two work ethics, the one in the Village and the one in Auschwitz, are different and independent of each other, or if the former work ethic is the precursor of the latter: perhaps my question must remain un-resolved.

cause you to suffocate" (39), but, as if enacting the compulsive return of the trauma, she repeats herself in the next sentence: "To have to speak without being able to speak or be understood, to have to choke, such is the ethical exigency that Robert Antelme obeys in *The Human Race*" (39). Through Antelme, "choking" stands as the impossibility of witnessing, its physicality gesturing to Kofman's father who, beaten with a shovel and buried alive, choked to death. As a shadow of this significance, a personal experience that echoes Kofman's father's suffocation is expressed in *RORL*. During the war, she was waiting in the parlor while her mother and Mémé were speaking to Father Devaux about her becoming baptized a Christian: "I was overcome by a strange malaise. I vaguely felt that this time something more was at stake than a separation from my mother. The door was open, I flee" (37). Note the tense shift within the last sentence, replicating in a crisis of grammar, the return of the past crisis as the present desire to escape. The fact that escape would offset the 'strange malaise', suggests a sense of claustrophobia, or suffocation. This small scene which, in temporal terms, may have happened at the same time that her father died in Auschwitz, reflects Kofman's inability to witness her betrayal in replacing her mother with Mémé, and her Jewish life with the Catholic home of her salvation, except as a *Nachträglichkeit*. This scene of a past trauma returns in her autobiographical investment in the project on Auschwitz as 'smothered' testimony, amplifying the ethical imperative to witness her father's death as the coincidental conditions of her survival.

Kofman relies on Antelme to show the SS strategy to kill men by erasing their humanity. Prisoners were made "unmen," and "treated without dignity, as garbage, undermen, slaves, "Jews," animals, horses, cows, oxen, as the beasts of burden…" (*Smothered* 42). Through language, the SS tried to change men into beasts and to exalt themselves as gods. The prisoners, rendered speechless, inhuman, animals or inanimate, were subject to the SS and their divine

authority to rule. The 'gods' shared no language in common with the prisoners, literally in that they spoke German and hardly any prisoner did; but also, metaphorically, the Germans shared no humanity with the inmates. Yet the strategy to recreate mankind through language was not foolproof, Antelme stressed, since prisoners could resist dehumanization: "against the glances and handshakes that shared in the power of powerlessness, nothing could prevail, "neither the barking of the thousands of SS troops, nor… barbed wire, nor famine, nor lice" (*Smothered* 55). The inmates' acts of resistance are shadowed by Kofman's father's act of resistance, which was so great it led to his being killed. Through Antelme's text, Kofman shows that the SS god collapses against this resistance inspired by a higher order, whether it is the divine, or the ethical order of humanity. Antelme is our witness to the fact that the Nazis were not gods with the power to change humans into something inhuman, but were human with the power merely to kill: "We are all nothing more or less than men, and there is nothing inhuman or superhuman in man" (*Smothered* 61). What Antelme acknowledges in the end, which Kofman relies on for her conclusion, is that the camps changed the enlightenment ideal of humanity. Antelme, having lost the idealism of the resistance fighter, was left with the sinister recognition that all humans are equal and equally capable of evil. This realization leads to Kofman's double vision with which she ends: the indestructability of the human being exists with the limitless ability of the human to destroy (73).

Taking into account the changes endured by both Antelme, having survived the camps, and by Blanchot, who changed his political affiliation from fascist to resistance fighter as a result of the war, iterated by the metaphorical 'baptism' in the fictional village, and the false 'gods' of the SS, we see that the underlying theme driving Kofman's meditation is that Auschwitz changes people. In that respect, Kofman's 'survival' shares something in common with

these men; she survived the Holocaust because she was 'changed' by living as a Christian, even though that change was conditional and uncomfortable because a part of her never changed, epitomized in the one feature to which Mémé repeatedly drew her attention: her Jewish nose (*RORL* 47/ *Selected Writings* (*"*Damned Food*") 247). If Blanchot and Antelme's works gave Kofman the means to represent Auschwitz as the manifest content of the change within her, then the latent aspect of that ambivalence of her conditional conversion is the effect Auschwitz had on her father. Did he die as the witness said he did, still devoted to his God? Or, did he change, as she and so many others did. And if he did change, how did he?

SHYLOCK AND THE UNWILLING CONVERT

Published the same year as *Smothered Words*, Kofman's article "*Conversions: Le Marchand de Venice sous le signe de Saturne*" (1988), provides the key to unveiling the latent content of her Auschwitz project. This article was written in response to Freud's "The Theme of the Three Caskets". In his analysis, Freud argues that the literary theme of the choice of three caskets containing either gold, silver, or lead, representing a choice between three women ("Theme" 515) was a love theme which, on closer inspection points to the latent content of death (520). In Freud's summation, death comes to be represented inversely as love. The tragedy of *King Lear,* Freud argued, is that, in rejecting his youngest and third daughter Cordelia, whose words of love may have sounded dull (lead) in comparison to those of her elder sisters' but were in fact honest, compared to her sisters', King Lear makes a mistake leading to the tragedy of his death. In *The Merchant of Venice*, the comedic nature of change means that, in comparison to the suitors who chose gold and silver, Bassanio's choice of lead made him the winning suitor of Portia's hand. In "Conversions", Kofman critiques Freud's analysis of two omissions: his idea of the sublimation of death

for love ignores the ambivalent symbolic significance of the metals, and the *Merchant of Venice* is entirely absent from his conclusion.

The fact that Bassanio's choice of the box full of lead in *The Merchant* makes him the winner of Portia's hand, signals that the conversion from lead, as mean and base, to its opposite, gold, is success. The change implicit in the metallic symbolism of transformation, Kofman asserts, is made possible not because of metallurgy, but because of a factor Freud does not take into account: time. That is, Kofman argues, the ambivalence implicit in the field of choice between the metals is in their inversion. Since gold and silver are derived from lead, they each contain the possibility of their own reversal.[233] This ambivalence manifests because of time: "with and because of time, which is thoroughly ambivalent, all conversions remain possible": (*avec et par le temps, foncièrement ambivalent, toutes les conversions restent possibles*" 54). It is no coincidence that for Kofman, time is represented not as the chance or opportunity for a comedic happy ending, but in fact, as will be clear, the chance for the tragic crisis of conversion.

In her article, Kofman finishes Freud's analysis by returning to *The Merchant* and, in place of Freud's 'trilogy' of the three suitors, she focuses on what she calls the "protagonists": Antonio, the melancholic, Bassanio, the happy suitor who wins Portia's heart, and Shylock, the Jewish merchant. If Shylock can argue that interest paid on loaned money reflects growth in time, then, Kofman argues, integral to time's effect is also loss. In Kofman's analysis, her emphasis on the nature of change is epitomized in Shylock who, associated with silver, undergoes such enormous transformation that he becomes

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[233] Kofman's interest in the significance of change as a principle of metallurgic transformation is expressed in her autobiographical works, where a reference to her name as 'caca' in "Tomb for a Proper Name" (*Selected Writings* 248), returns in "'My Life' and Psychoanalysis" as "Not in order that [my words] be given meaning, interpreted. But to establish an exchange that might transform 'caca' into gold" (*Selected Writings* 251).

degraded: "The lesson which his change allows us to draw about the Jew Shylock, contrary to all expectation, is that while he has a visceral hatred for Christians, he in the end converts to Christianity though against his will, it is true." ("*Cette leçon le juif Shylock a son tour permet de la tirer, lui qui en dépit de toute attente, alors qu'il possède pour les chretiens un haine viscérale, finit par se convertir au christianisme (contraint et forcé, il est vrai*" (47)) The change Shylock in the end endures is loss: he loses his silver, his daughter to a Christian man, and even his own faith by 'unwillingly' converting to Christianity to stay close to his daughter. Thus, Kofman's thesis of time is proven: "to stress only the ambivalence of love [as Freud does], is therefore to misrecognize the more general 'theme' of ambivalence, of the double face of time, the condition of all conversions, all reversals" (my translation, 68). In this respect, Kofman has politicized Shylock's loss in the comedic play as a tragedy, a move laced with the latent content of her own biography.

In dedicating *Smothered* to her father, Antelme, and Blanchot we see Kofman iterating the trilogy evident in her "Conversions" article. As in *The Merchant of Venice*, one of the three 'protagonists' of her memoir, is Jewish. Unlike Shylock, however, rabbi Berek Kofman died a Jew, resisting the laws of the SS camps to honour the laws of his God. Like Shylock's daughter, Sarah Kofman converted. If her conversion was necessary, though unwilling, and therefore incomplete, does Kofman represent Shylock's daughter or Shylock, or both? That slippage is an important aporia that signals the double bind of her relation to her father. Kofman's stress on the role of time in conversion raises the latent aspect of time's effect on her father, leading to the question: how did Auschwitz change him because, as she expresses, in time "all conversions are possible"? If rabbi Kofman entered the camps as a believing holy man, did he die that way? Or, can we see that rabbi Kofman died in terms inverse to that described by the witnesses? If the witness claims he died praying, could rabbi

Kofman have, in fact, died, 'as if in prayer', like the *Muselmann*? This image, I argue, signals the *Nachträglichkeit* of the Kofman's representation of Auschwitz as the presence of the *Muselmann* in the shadow, adding another dimension to the 'suffocation' of her own testimony as her discomfort with the shadow of unwilling conversion. That is, in the real of Auschwitz, those who died there, including her father, were gripped by the threat of apostasy as the 'ferocious irony' of being called *Muselmänner*.

In one sense, we can say that the autobiography in *Smothered Words* is in how Auschwitz represents the trauma of her father's death in her. It is her relationship to his death as a survivor of the Holocaust, and her survival by pretending to be a good little Christian girl, that Shylock's 'conversion' in the tragic sense becomes visible as an uncomfortable possibility in her representation of her father there. Yet, in place of her father, her own testimony rises up in a guilt for what she had done. What she works through alongside this trauma of surviving in *Smothered Words*, is the guilt reflective of melancholia.[234] In his research on depression, "Mourning and Melancholia", Freud takes as his premise the symptoms of loss and sorrow found in people who are mourning loved ones who have died, and argues that the condition of depression reflects a death which is not actual but imaginary. The 'death' of a subject's loved object is a self-inflicted separation from the object of love, usually done so out of necessity. The fact the loved one has not died only exacerbates the condition of mourning: there is no proper mourning which can be worked through and resolved because there is no proper death. Identifying who the subject has made dead inside her is indicated in how the subject speaks of the ejected loved-one. Freud notes that, "we perceive that the [subject's] self-reproaches are reproaches against a loved object which have

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[234] Kofman's depression is clearly reflected in the narrative of *RORL* describing her rejection of her biological mother in place of a French 'saviour' kind of mother; I would argue a complementary depression is expressed in *Smothered* with respect to her father and her faith.

been shifted away from it on to the patient's own ego" (586). That is, the death has happened only within the subject, and being the cause of that death contributes to a sense of guilt.

In inadvertently causing her father's death, and the death of her religion emotionally within her by taking Mémé as her mother and pretending to be a Christian girl, Kofman inflicted a kind of death of her father and her faith in her. Thus, her survival is riddled by the guilt of what she had done to her father's legacy, tracing her adult life with a melancholic depression, which she tried to work through, through her work with Freud. If she is more Shylock than her father, then the unspeakable of the death camps, that *Muselmann* as the Christian exception who demands both conversion and an answer to the call to bear witness, leaves her choking. It is in that web of associations of which Kofman's intellectual sensibility is famous, that her Auschwitz echoes with the unspoken name of the *Muselmann*. In that respect, what is consciously latent in Kofman's personal trauma of her ambivalent survival and her father's restless death, reflects an authentic representation of those who were, against their will, changed into *Muselmänner,* inside and outside Auschwitz.

CONCLUSION

The philosophical texts of this chapter exemplify how the messiah and the *Muselman* return in secular thought to problematize the universal of equality, and so explain, to an extent, the tendencies introduced by my review of Benjamin's and Freud's works. While Rosenzweig sees the messiah as a contested figure that leads to his unconscious redefinition of redemption as non-partisan in the ethical call of *The Star*, Derrida takes a different approach. The messiah, the figure, is a partisan subject that is unable to address the

anticipated equality and salvation of all the singularities of the exception. In order to establish terms for the promise for justice for 'all', the partisan figure is essentialized as 'desert-like messianism'. Visible in these two messianic returns is a particularly striking ambivalence to the Christian figure: that ambivalence is caused not because the Christian figure is hated, I would say, but because the Christian figure exemplifies the impossibility of equality. A different ambivalence is expressed in the *Muselmann*. His ghosted presence in Kofman's memoir as signaling the nightmare of her father's death, and her nightmare of surviving the holocaust, reflecting in a narrow sense how surviving was equal both inside and outside the camps, stands as the fulfillment of the Christian call to convert, which for the Jew is a betrayal both in life and death. You might say that the return of the messiah 'without' a face in Derrida, Benjamin and even Rosenzweig, is complemented by the grotesque guise of the *Muselmann*.

Where Derrida loosely associated assimilation to western secular life as using, if not believing in, Christian culture, Kofman may be said to have philosophized conversion, as did Rosenzweig. Unlike Rosenzweig, Kofman did not embrace Judaism against secularism but in fact explored every avenue made available by secularism to find some resolution: in feminisms, psychoanalysis, and existentialist philosophy. What remains latent in her meditation on what is inexplicable about Auschwitz is her unconscious conversion to the secular culture represented by the human rights politics of Blanchot and Antelme. Perhaps she does not notice that the fight for the liberation of the exception in human rights discourse is a Christian project, though one could not say she did not recognize its perverse irony in Mémé's efforts to save her. Thus, Kofman and Derrida, having chosen secular conversion, engaged with the exception in a state of unease, while Rosenzweig, perhaps privileged, as Paul was, to be 'anointed' by an ecstatic event, his "interpellation beyond interpellation" to eternal life, answered by discarding the condition of conversion. Perhaps

Rosenzweig's assertion that eternal life was the promise for 'all' people was a regression to Paul's first-century position. I cannot be the judge of that, but I will say this: his personal and intellectual life resolved what Freud identified as the dilemma of a crime by answering the call intended for him, as a Jew.

The exception points to the trauma which transformed Paul's call for eternal life into a new call, that of equality on condition of the Christ. If human rights identifies the terms of the universal by including what has been excluded, returning as the endless deferral of the universal in Derrida's sense of the messianic, then we may see the 'exception' as the correction integral to Paul's trauma in his time. If the exception of human rights discourse is the return of the *objet a* of Jesus Christ in different terms, we see the long vision of the recurring pattern identified by Žižek in ideology: that which is excluded from the symbolic, returns in the real of history, *ad infinitum*. This cycle of secularism describes the cycle Žižek identifies as integral to ideology, which may or may not start with Paul. What is clear by this pattern is that Paul's exception is found today in human rights discourse: it is the Thing, a piece of the real that not only has already returned differently, but will return again in a new guise.

CHAPTER 7: THE MESSIAH AND THE *MUSELMANN* IN CONTEMPORARY
CULTURE

INTRODUCTION

Lacan makes the case that trauma never returns the same way; yet, its return as
"unveiled" or invisible, is a consistent feature. The impossibility of looking for
the repetition of what has no distinguishing features is a paradox explains why
the remainder of the first-century trauma of the doxa, or the *objet a*, is the
exception. The exceptional man, Jesus, returns through secularism in the guise
of the political exception, the messianic as Rosenzweig's 'star' or Derrida's
inhuman 'messianism', as well as the counter to the messianic in the
Muselmann, the Jewish exception to the rule of the Nazi state that takes on a
ghosted presence in Kofman's memoir and a special figure of justice in
Agamben's revision. The differences amongst these *objets a* revolve around the
binary of the exception: the one whose distinction makes him/her superior to
the rule and the one whose distinction makes him/her inferior to the rule. This is
the same binary that is at the root of the secular corrective project of human
rights discourse. To say that this binary dates to Paul's time, because of Paul or
because of early Christianity, is a proposition based on the logic of Chapter 5,
but is also a small part of a larger picture I have only been able to access in
part. In this provisional sense, the logic that the first-century trauma is manifest
as the 'unveiled' of the exception that returns in one of its forms explains my
choice of the cultural examples of the *objets a* of my project.

As with my focus on the *objets a* in philosophical projects in the
previous chapter, I shall consider cultural works in this chapter which appear to

have a connection with a traumatic event, but shall focus on the post-WWII cultural movement known as postmodernism. Cultural production during this time has been defined by Jameson in *Postmodernism* as being determined by the demands of late capitalism, where the aesthetic interest in "depthlessness" (9), a "waning of affect" (10), the breakdown in temporality reflected in the schizophrenic (30), must be seen as strategies for a 'global cognitive mapping' of the profusion of political ideological concerns "on a social as well as a spatial scale" (54). The social and political concerns paralleling Jameson's vision of cultural production include: in the humanities and social sciences, a return to the Holocaust through the flurry of memoirs, coinciding with court cases and testimonial projects; on the scientific level, a growing concern with the threat of nuclear technology, cyborg dominance and global warming; and in Human Rights discourse, spearheaded by the Second- wave feminism, a fight for equality exemplified in identity politics, gay liberation, animal rights, and most recently, mental health survivor discourse. These concerns loosely define the social and political background of cultural material from which I have chosen two works as exemplary of the *objets a* for analysis in this chapter.

Science fiction is a secular cultural project wherein anxiety with the future bears out in ethical questions about science, the right of life, and the impact of the machine on life. It is not surprising, considering this tension, that the messianic figure is so prominent in this genre during the postmodern period. Ruppersburg observes that since the seventies, there has been a noted increase of messiah figures in science-fiction films, which are "reactionary in their rejection of science and their advocacy of the supernatural," ("Alien Messiah in Recent Science Fiction Films" 160). The anticipation of the 'one', the exception as saviour, capable of defeating the cyborgs in *The Matrix* (1999) is a case in point. It is possible that the messianic figure in that film inspired Žižek to title his meditation on the attack of the World Trade Centre (WTC) on September 11,

2001, *Welcome to the Desert of the Real*, especially since, as Žižek argues, Benjamin's messianic expectation associated with the future redemption returns in the aftermath of 9/11.

The relation between film and philosophy is at the centre of Žižek's text in which he argues that the event made real the crises of Hollywood disaster films, such as *Independence Day*, signifying the attack as the return of a past trauma. Taking Žižek's implicit invitation to look for an anterior trauma of 9/11 in film, I would suggest that, of the films that would be useful for this analysis, neither *Independence Day* nor *The Matrix* quite compares to Stanley Kubrick's science-fiction film, *2001: A Space Odyssey* (1968). This film stands out because of two compelling associations: for one, there is a messianic-like figure at the end of Kubrick's film which promises at least a formalistic dialogue with Žižek's post-9/11 messianic hope; for another, the resonance of the annum, 2001, points to the future anterior structure of Freud's idea of the unconscious in *Where it was, there will I be*. In imaginary terms, the film seems to be proof of Žižek's theory that an American film did anticipate the return of the real in 9/11. For the purposes of determining to what extent the exception of Paul's real returns in secularism, I shall read Žižek's event of 9/11 with Kubrick's *2001* as the first of two cultural analyses in this chapter.

With respect to my choice for the second cultural case study, my focus is on the protagonist of a postmodern text that is analogous to the singularity of the Jewish exception in Auschwitz. Bettelheim's observation that the *Muselmann* behaved like his autistic patients is a strategy of analogy that inspired Santner retroactively to identify Schreber as "a sort of *Muselmann*" (*Psychotheology* 54). Catherine Malabou associates victims of brain lesions with psychotics like the *Muselmann,* whose inability to speak elicits from her a kind of Agambenian injunction to witness: "To gather the other's pain is not to take his place, but to restore it to him" (*The New Wounded* 215). In his somewhat

flippant way, Žižek suggests that the *Muselmann*'s state of psychosis reflects "the new form of subjectivity (autistic, indifferent, deprived of affective engagement)… [which] is less a form of life than a form of death" (*Living in End Times* 296). Žižek's predicate of 'new' to describe the autistic subject is somewhat misleading since the autist has been a part of psychoanalytic discourse for as long as schizophrenia has been.

What is shared by Santner, Malabou and Žižek, is a recognition that autism is a psychosis. The psychotic subjectivity is expressed in the formalistic experiments of the postmodern movement known as language poetry,[235] which draws on the experiments of the modernist period, such as Gertrude Stein's *Tender Buttons* (1911) and James Joyce's *Finnegans Wake* (1939). Whereas Lacan focused on Joyce's psychosis and his disabled relation to the NOF in *Seminar XXIII*, I aim to follow the avant-garde tradition inspired by Stein's language games of homosexual love through to North American (Canadian and U.S.) postmodernism. Anne Carson's *Autobiography of Red* is avowedly of Stein's tradition and promises to give focus to the "new" subjectivity Žižek names, in that its protagonist, Geryon, is an autist. Yet Geryon is an autist in the postmodern aesthetic, being a pastiche of other identities of the exception. As a being resurrected from the ancient Greek winged beast, which killed Herakles, Geryon is the exception both of life (being un-dead) and humanity (being beast). His 'bestiality' is ironically paired with his homosexuality, otherwise expressing the exception of hetersoexual normativity. In Case Study #4, I shall analyse how Carson's *Red* represents a new hybrid of the exception, which promises to offer interesting insights into the return of Paul's real.

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[235] A larger project would consider the variety of experiments in this tradition including work by Lyn Hejinian, Ron Silliman, and Christian Bök, as well as the more performance-based work by the Four Horsemen poets, bp Nichol, Paul Dutton, and Steve McCaffery, and to name a few.

CASE STUDY #3: *2001*

INTRODUCTION

As Žižek points out in *Welcome to the Desert of the Real*, the attack of the World Trade Center on September 11, 2001, the event otherwise known as 9/11, was more than a breach of security by religious fundamentalists; the 'real' of the event collided with the cinematic fantasy of Hollywood disaster films like *Escape to New York*, and *Independence Day*: "It is not that reality entered our image; the image entered and shattered reality (i.e. the symbolic coordinates which determine what we experience as reality)" (16). Evident in Hollywood disaster films, Žižek argues, is the fact that "we are haunted by nightmarish visions of catastrophes" (17) reflecting an anterior trauma that was missed: "… the true choice apropos of historical traumas is not the one between remembering or forgetting them: traumas we are not ready or able to remember haunt us all the more forcefully" (22). In Žižek's terms, what haunts us is the unconscious recognition that what was missed was the "crucial ethical opportunity" to take action. If, as Žižek argues, the fantasy of catastrophe in America's cinema can be seen as expressing a historical failure to act ethically, prefiguring the return of that original trauma in the breach of the "real" of 9/11, then I aim to make my way to the missed trauma by reading the event through a film.

Before September 11, the year '2001' had currency in American culture as the future conceived by Stanley Kubrick in his 1968 science fiction film, *2001: A Space Odyssey;* the film ended with an inexplicable image of a fetus looking down on earth. In Arthur C. Clarke's novel, this 'star child' figure saved mankind from imminent destruction by detonating the nuclear weapons surrounding earth, giving the figure a messianic status; the open-ended quality

of this image in the last minutes of *2001* is ambiguous. As a result of 9/11, according to Slavoj Žižek, time stopped in America: "in the expectation of a Messianic Event, life comes to a standstill" (*Welcome* 7). Though Kubrick's *2001* is not ostensibly a film of catastrophe, in Žižek's terms, I aim to explore to what extent we can read the future anterior of the event of 9/11 as prefigured in Kubrick's science fiction film, and then consider whether or not the messianic tension in post-9/11 America is homologous with the ending of *2001*. While I am using Žižek to establish the equality between film and the philosophical engagements with 9/11 through a trauma, I keep in mind Sinnerbrink's concept of "film as philosophy" (134), paying attention to the relation between the aesthetic and affective elements that inspire "*cinematic thinking—a* non-conceptual or affective thinking in images that resists cognitive closure or theoretical subsumption" (139). In looking at *2001* through the terms of film as philosophy, my approach is distinguished from the imaginary-based focus of the early psychoanalytic film scholarship as found in work by Christian Metz[236] and Laura Mulvey,[237] in that it adapts the more 'real' focused psychoanalytic approach to cinema as exemplified in work by Žižek[238] and also Joan Copjec.[239] Taking the approach forged by these two latter scholars in seeing film as ideologically driven, my ulterior motive is to consider the phenomenological aspect of Žižek's and Kubrick's saviours; what do these saviours say of Paul's real and do they say the same thing or not?

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[236] See Metz's *The Imaginary Signifier: Psychoanalysis and Cinema,* 1982.

[237] Mulvey argues that cinema is determined by the male gaze on the feminine subject in "Visual Pleasure and Narrative Cinema." *Screen* 16:3 (1975): 6-18.

[238] Žižek's projects include one on Hitchock's films, *Looking Awry: An Introduction to Jacques Lacan Through Popular Culture* (1992) and a project on Kieślowski's films, *Fright of Real Tears: Krzysztof Kieślowski Between Theory and Post-theory* (1998).

[239] Copjec critiques the historicist approach in cultural analysis in *Read My Desire: Lacan against the Historicists* (1996).

DAWN OF TIME

2001: A Space Odyssey was produced during the height of the Cold War and
America's space race with Russia. When it was released in 1968, a year before
the Apollo 11 moon landing would be witnessed by the world on television,
traditional film audiences complained about the film's length and weak plot
and negligible character development. Movie critic Renata Adler, writing for the
New York Times, found the pacing unbearably slow: "almost a half hour passes
before the first man appears and the first word is spoken, and an entire hour
goes before the plot reveals itself."[240] In her review, she complained that only
science fiction buffs could understand the film, concluding: "By the end, three
irreconcilable plot lines—the slab, Dullea's aging, the period bedroom—are
simply left there like a Rorschach with murky implications of theology." As if
reflecting a generational divide, the difficulties Adler identified, which were
shared by a mature audience, were not an issue for the younger crowd that
found those ambiguities refreshing; the film became a cult classic.[241]

  According to Philip Kuberski, Kubrick "extended the modernist tradition
initiated by Joyce and Pound" (10) in his adaptation of Homer's *Odyssey* to
mankind's journey of Darwinian evolution, from hunter-gatherer ape-men to
scientists exploring the universe. The half-hour introduction which Adler
complains about is decidedly slow: its vistas of idyllic planes and large skies
reinforce the aimless pace of prehistoric man passively waiting for food to
appear, until the sudden appearance one dawn of the monolith initiates an
evolutionary shift: mankind invents the tool to kill animals for food and other
sapiens for territory. From the bone-wielding prehistoric man we leap thousands
of years into the future to mankind's space exploration in 2001. America has
colonized the moon and in the process, has excavated another monolith. Its

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[240] Renata Adler. "The Screen: '2001' is Up, Up and Away." *New York Times*, April 2, 1968. 58.
[241] Barton Palmer reviews the difference in reception of *2001* in his article, "2001: The Critical
Reception and the Generation Gap" in Robert Philip Kolker's *Stanley Kubrick's 2001* (2006).

mysterious origins lead the scientists to follow a signal it is emitting to Jupiter, initiating the Discovery mission manned by pilots, Dave Bowman and Frank Poole, assisted by Discovery's artificial intelligence, HAL 9000. HAL's unexpected move to seize control of the Jupiter mission by killing the scientists who are on board in hibernation tanks, and Frank, as well, leads Dave to 'disconnect' HAL and take back the mission. Dave passes through the Star-Gate to arrive on Jupiter, living out his last days in a hotel room alone until an inexplicable event leads to the appearance of the "Star Child" with which the film ends.

The trouble audiences have had with the incommensurable narrative lines in *2001* situates the film in the postmodern tradition. In *Postmodernism: Or, the Cultural Logic of Late Capitalism*, Frederic Jameson argues that science fiction is the postmodern version of the historical novel; it projects the conditions of the present as the past of a distant future: "For if the historical novel 'corresponded' to the emergence of historicity… science fiction equally corresponds to the waning or the blockage of that historicity, and, particularly, in our own time [in the postmodern era] to its crisis and paralysis, its enfeeblement and repression" (284). Jameson identifies that crisis of history is an amnesia created by and in the cultural logic of late capitalism; engrossed in participating in the commodification of culture, the bourgeoisie can conveniently forget they were once just working class.[242]

An enfeeblement of history, and even an ironic historical amnesia, can be seen played out in the film's representation of prehistoric man in connection to the future space race, suggesting the film's usefulness for Jameson's research; even so, Jameson does not include *2001* in his chapter on science fiction, but in his chapter on architecture (116). Why does Jameson relegate *2001* to Kubrick's

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[242] This sentiment is exemplified in his introductory definition of the postmodern: "It is safest to grasp the concept of the postmodern as an attempt to think the present historically in an age that has forgotten how to think historically in the first place" (Jameson *Postmodernism* ix.)

cinematic treatment of outer space reflecting a radical shift in gravity also played out by architects such as Frank Gehry, and sidestep its contribution to science fiction, utopia or other fictions? Perhaps *2001* was less effective than Philip K. Dick's work because it did not directly prove his theory of the late capitalist culture since it is, as Adler noted, riddled with structural problems such as hardly any dialogue, over-long silences, narrative disruptions and 'irreconcilable plot lines'. The fact is, Kubrick's work troubles Jameson's Marxist postmodern reading. That is, *2001* may reflect a blockage of the past in terrifying anticipation of the future, but the tension that drives *2001* is not about suppressed class politics but the violence of race politics. The issue in *2001* is not historical amnesia but the return of the repressed.

Susan Sontag critiqued *2001* because its cinematographic style emulated fascist conventions of art, suggesting its sympathy to Nazi totalitarian ideology: "Fascist aesthetics… flow from (and justify) a preoccupation with situations of control, submissive behaviour, and extravagant effort… The fascist dramaturgy centers on the orgiastic; choreography alternates between ceaseless motion and congealed, static, "virile" posing. Fascist art glorifies surrender, it exalts mindlessness; it glamorizes death."[243] Sontag's sentiments about *2001* were framed by her critical response to a recent publication by Leni Riefenstahl, which, for Sontag, expressed the return of a fascist aesthetic in contemporary American culture.[244] Film scholar, Robert Kolker concedes to Sontag's assessment: "Yet, undeniably, the film points toward surrender to a hypnotic

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[243] Robert Phllip Kolker, *A Cinema of Loneliness: Pen, Kubrick, Scorsese, Spielberg, Altman*, 127.

[244] Sontag's sensitivity to the fascist aesthetic in 1970's America is explained in her critical review of Leni Riefenstahl's *The Last of the Nuba,* "Fascinating Fascism" (*The New York Review of Books,* (Feb 6, 1975). Sontag argues that "Riefenstahl's films are still effective because, among other reasons, their longings are still felt, because their content is a romantic ideal to which many continue to be attached, and which is expressed in such diverse modes of cultural dissidence and propaganda for new forms of community as the youth/rock culture, primal therapy, Laing's antipsychiatry, Third World camp-following, and belief in gurus and the occult" (part 1, second last paragraph).

force and suggests that this surrender is inevitable" (*Cinema of Loneliness* 127). Some scholars have disputed whether a fascist aesthetic can even be defined, since, as Linda Schulte-Sasse points out, fascist projects draw from several genres, movements and images; even so, Schulte-Sasse re-contextualizes Benjamin's interpretation of how National Socialism used art for ideological purposes,[245] affirming a certain tendency in this aesthetic: "National Socialism turns the 'kitsch of death' experience into something real, inspiring and organizing people to march intoxicated to their own deaths" (142). As I will show, expressions such as "intoxication", "orgiastic", "hypnotic force", and especially the prominence of death define what can be understood as a fascist sensibility in Kubrick's film, but, contrary to Sontag's and Kolker's assessment, this aesthetic should not be seen as a liability.

The distant future of this film is framed by its origin in the distant past, the idyllic landscape of prehistoric man. This initial scene would signal what Schulte-Sasse identifies as National Socialism's "nostalgia to 'colonize the fantasy of life'" (142): in *2001*, the evolution of mankind justifies America's technological development in space colonization. What Kolker identifies as 'inevitable surrender to a hypnotic force' is indicated in the impact of the monolith on both prehistoric and modern man. Not only does this artifact connect prehistoric man to future man through the technology it inspires, its recurrence signals a destiny, which man blindly accepts. Kubrick's film may start with "The Dawn of Man," in which apes lived in caves and squabbled over who could drink from the water pool, but when that mysterious block of finished stone, the monolith, brings on Richard Strauss's *Thus Spoke*

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[245] As a complement to Schulte-Sasse's work, I here quote from Benjamin's "The Work of Art in the Age of Mechanical Reproduction", which defines how fascism manipulated art to promote war: "War is beautiful because it establishes man's dominion over the subjugated machinery by means of gas masks, terrifying megaphones, flame throwers, and small tanks. War is beautiful because it initiates the dreamt-of metallization of the human body. War is beautiful because it enriches a flowering meadow with the fiery orchids of machine guns", (241).

Zarathustra, the distant future contracts into the prehistoric as present, initiating a fusion between the beauty of the music and the violence of the image as if they had been predetermined by the monolith. As Strauss's "Zarathustra" is used to choreograph the ape-man's pulverizing of animal bones inter-cut with the death of a live bull in slow motion, mankind's first animal killing is signified, followed by the killing of a member of the other tribe which signifies mankind's first murder. As scholars have noted, this music signals how Kubrick has recreated the Darwinian narrative of evolution through the Nietzschean narrative of the Overman.[246] Moreover, though the fusion of the pulverizing of the bones with the music expresses a fascist aesthetic of orgiastic 'mindlessness' in Sontag's terms, or the "intoxication" identified by Schulte-Sasse, this scene does not promote fascistic ideology. Filmed from a low-angle shot, similar to Leni Riefenstahl's framing of athletes in *Olympia* to emphasize classical representations of the human body, the ape-man's hairy arms obscure muscles or any of the details associated with classical Greek beauty. In fact, his ecstatic performance of Strauss's music indicative of the hope of the Overman can only be seen as ironic even as it critiques the fascist fusion of art and war. The fact these bones become tools of war, which through centuries, are transformed into tools for space colonization, highlights that Kubrick's representation of the American space race through a fascist aesthetic reflects a criticism of the historical continuum of totalitarianism, and as I will shortly argue, that criticism is tied to a critique of Nazi fascism.

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[246] In the final section, I will discuss how the Nietzschean-centered analyses by Jerold Abrams and Leonard Wheat falter in light of the fact that the monolith functions in the film as the "God concept", to use Kubrick's words in interviews with Eric Nordern for *Playboy*, (1968) 49 and Joseph Gelmis (1970) 93, in Gene D. Philip's *Stanely Kubrick: Interviews*.

According to Geoffrey Cocks, Kubrick was obsessed with the Holocaust and Nazi race supremacy,[247] an obsession that was expressed in most of his films, and is evident in *2001* in his choice of German-Habsburg music.[248] Specifically, Cocks points out that Kubrick chose a recording of the Berlin Philharmonic's performance of *Thus Spoke Zarathustra* that had been directed by Herbert von Karajan, a conductor whose work Kubrick would use again in *The Shining*. Cocks draws attention to the fact that Karajan was a card-carrying Nazi who conducted orchestras for Nazi functions, including Hitler's birthday (*Wolf at the Door* 119). He also criticizes Kubrick's use of Strauss's *Zarathustra* for reflecting "a desire to embrace cosmic evolution as a way out of the literal dead end of the machinations of Nazis" (117), which led to ignoring the pessimism of Nietzsche's eternal return. This criticism presupposes Kubrick was promoting enlightenment progress in line with Clarke's approach in the novel.[249] Whether or not Clarke's faith in mankind's future determined Kubrick's conscious choices in *2001*, there is too much ambiguity and even ambivalence in the film, in conjunction with an oppressive determinism inspired by the monolith, not to see at least an unconscious expression of Nietzsche's pessimism, reflected ironically and unsentimentally in Kubrick's fascist aesthetic and his choice of music. Identifying a Nazi connection to Kubrick's choice of Karajan's version of Strauss's "Zarathustra" seems to be observed only by

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[247] In his analysis *The Wolf At the Door: Stanley Kubrick, History & The Holocaust*, Cocks makes the point that scholarship has yet to do full justice to the evidence of Kubrick's indirect engagement with the Holocaust in his work (Cocks 2004 17).

[248] It can be seen explicitly in his planned but never actualized Holocaust project, *The Aryan Papers*, based on Louis Begley's *Wartime Lies*, and found implicit in imagery in *The Shining*, (Cocks 2004 2), and in the use of Habsburgian music.

[249] Clarke's short story, "The Sentinel" (1948), inspired the script he and Kubrick wrote for the film, *2001*, while Clarke's novel of the same title was being written during the filming of *2001* and was published after the film's release.

Cocks.[250] Even though one could argue that Kubrick chose Karajan's interpretation of Strauss because it was widely recognized as brilliant, it is noteworthy that Strauss's music, much like Nietzsche's philosophy, has another connection to the Nazi party. Strauss was appointed president of the *Reichsmusikkamer* (RMK) by Goebbels to promote German music for the nation and worldwide as an example of Germanic superiority.[251] Though Strauss was not a party member, he took advantage of the regime's investment in his work.[252] What is evident is that these historical associations with Strauss's "Zarathustra" happen to support the fascistic aesthetic with which Kubrick represents the monolith. In that respect, Strauss's "Zarathustra" could be seen to exemplify the threat of the eternal return of totalitarianism in the imperial determinism of the space race in *2001*. In short, the fascistic aesthetic permeating Kubrick's choices come together as critical of America's technological dominance, compelling future astronauts "to march to their deaths" at the limits of space and so become pawns for a dominant force from 'beyond the infinite'.[253]

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[250] "Kubrick probably knew something about [Karajan's association with Hitler], if for no reason than in the 1950s Jewish groups in America had loudly protested engagements by former Nazi party members such as von Karajan and soprano Elizabeth Schwarzkopf" (Cocks 119.)

[251] In *Composers of the Nazi Era: Eight Portraits* (New York, Oxford U Press, 2000) Michael Kater outlines in detail the rise and fall of Richard Strauss in Nazi-ruled Germany, and the tension that was created between his self-interest in promoting his work for financial gain, and the Nazi regime's interest in using his artistic reputation to promote German culture internationally (237).

[252] In *The Twisted Muse*, (2001) Kater defines the music industry under the Third Reich, its cultural investment in the nation's musicians and their cultural and artistic productivity. Strauss did well under the Nazi regime until his associations with Jews and other issues lead to his weakening reputation: in 1936, Strauss earned 80,000 marks for royalties on his music (10).

[253] What I see as Kubrick's critique of totalitarianism in *2001* is expressed in somewhat different terms by film critic, J. Hoberman who argues the film represents "a dim view of human nature", as does *Cockwork Orange*, and both are similar in principle to the war films of *Paths of Glory, Dr. Strangelove*, and *Full Metal Jacket*, three films which focus on 'state-sanctioned murder'. The question is, which of Kubrick's films do not represent authority as sinister? "The Shining is about What? Room 237 Uses exegesis to uncover whether Kubrick's film is about Indians, the Holocaust, or Bears". *The Tablet: A New Read on Jewish Life. www.tablemag.com*. March 28, 2013: 2. Web. July 26, 2013.

Kubrick's reference to the Nietzschean super-man overlaid on the Darwinian narrative of the origins of man in *2001*, draws us into the Nazi *Zeitgeist* as described by Hannah Arendt in *The Origins of Totalitarianism*. The trajectory of the Nazi rise to power, she argues, evolved from Darwinian evolutionary science as the 'dawn of racism' in combination with strategies of nineteenth-century imperialist expansion. Nazis adapted colonial methods of rule, wherein the proxy agents who maintained governance of imperialist colonies forced a separation between the lawmakers and the law enforcers, thus absolving the lawmakers of moral responsibility. In the sphere of science, Darwin's secularization of the Biblical narrative, replacing Adam and Eve with ape as mankind's ancestor, led to theories of racial superiority that were central to Nazi thinking: "Thanks to race an 'elite' would be formed […] the acceptance of a race, the race ideology as such, would become conclusive proof that an individual was well bred, that 'true blood' ran through his veins and that a superior origin implied superior rights." (Arendt 1968 180). Race supremacy, Arendt highlights, was the blueprint for the Nazi revision of the "rights of man", justifying the murder of millions of Jewish people under the guise of lawful execution (160).

The determinism described by Arendt's narrative of the rise of Nazi totalitarianism can be seen in the diegetic influence of the monolith on the space race in *2001*. While scholars have interpreted the monolith as representing the aggressive alien identified in Arthur C. Clarke's novel, Kubrick's abstract notion of the "God concept"[254] have led scholars such as Kuberski to associate the monolith with Jung's principle of the "First Cause," wherein "God would thus be not only the essence of spiritual light… but also

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[254] Kubrick's words in interviews with Eric Nordern for Playboy, (1968) 49 and Joseph Gelmis (1970) 93, in Gene D. Philip's *Stanely Kubrick: Interviews*.

the darkest, nethermost cause of Nature's blackest deeps".[255] As a supernatural force, the monolith may stand as the promise of the monotheistic concept of an ethical God, but its association with weapons of war makes it equal to the divine authority that served Nazi's race-based ideology. This signals a threatening aspect of the artifact. It not only seems to inspire the apes to use the bone as a weapon for murder, it is connected to the relentlessness of the Jupiter mission evident in the struggle between HAL and Dave. Through Kubrick's manipulation of the fascist aesthetic, this monolith emanates a silent supra-human lethal energy through its causal role in technological developments used to secure territory and power; in effect, the space race is a sublimation of fascist totalitarianism. Manifested in the dual forces of transcendence and technology, the artifact's anonymity embodies a question, which I argue is never resolved in the film: did the alien artifact inspire man to aggression? Or did man, on reflecting on the artifact's surface, smooth and shiny like a mirror, find an aggression within himself/herself? This is one of several instances in which the film refuses interpretation or reductionism, in Sinnerbrink's terms of film-philosophy (137).

The traumatic content of technology is shown in the transition from the prehistoric "past" to the "present" of the film in the cut of two technological devices: the air-borne bone-weapon and the floating spaceship. The implication of the children apes throwing the bone in the air, is that the space race is similarly motivated by naiveté. Between the bone of the Darwinian narrative and the spaceship of Kubrick's future, thousands of years of ongoing naiveté have been excised. Between the bone and the spaceship, advances in weapon technology have served to change the conditions of war and murder. The question is: what do weapons have to do with the space race? The Cuban Missile crisis in 1963 epitomized the intensification of America's relations with

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[255] Kuberski 166 quoting from *Jung's Collected Works*, Vol 8, 103

its nuclear adversary, the USSR, and influenced Kubrick's *Dr. Strangelove* (1964). Since the USSR was also America's only adversary in the space-race, I would argue that America's anxiety in the 1960s about world nuclear disaster informs the space race in *2001*. Taking this historical detail into account, the film-cut between the bone and the space ship reeks like a newly sutured wound barely concealing what remains extraneous: nuclear disaster. Taking into account Jameson's analysis of postmodernism, we see that, while history has been repressed in Kubrick's *2001*, the images have not been enfeebled, but rather, are charged with an overwhelming nihilism inspired by America's nuclear technology.

Considering that the technology of 9/11 is rudimentary, there is no obvious connection between the event and Kubrick's film with respect to a shared trauma. Moreover, the ostensible trauma of 9/11, as understood from Bin Laden's large-scale efforts to expose and undermine America's imperial status in world politics, is centered on America's role in the Middle East: "... the idea of attacking the Towers in New York came to [Bin Laden] when he saw Israelis and Americans attacking the tower blocks of Beirut in 1982."[256] That Bin Laden's fantasy of the WTC aimed to punish America for brokering a one-sided kind of peace in the Middle East is less interesting than considering how his attack speaks to America's fantasy of catastrophe in disaster films. That is, *Independence Day* may reflect an anxiety of alien invasion, but implicit in this anxiety, as Žižek points out, is an unconscious guilt in being an invasive world power. This implicit guilt seems to agree with Bin Laden's judgment against America that justified the alleged attacks. Yet, since trauma only returns in disguise, as has been stressed by Freud and Lacan, then what Bin Laden accuses America of doing is probably not the trauma that returns in the event of 9/11.

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[256] Michael Mann *Incoherent Empire* 23.

The Twin Towers signified America's place of superiority in the world economy; the fact that the WTC, with its global significance, was the target, would suggest that the guilt which American films seem to represent is not simply, or even not at all, about its involvement in the Middle East. As I will explain shortly, the doubled quality of the towers leads to a suggestive interpretation of the trauma that returns in 9/11.

In *Simulations*, published just after the completion of the WTC, Baudrillard asks: "Why are there two towers at New York's World Trade Center?" and answers himself: "The fact that there are two of them signifies the end of all competition, the end of all original reference... The two towers of the WTC are the visible sign of the closure of the system in a vertigo of duplication…" (136). While this is a fanciful statement, it is also suggestive. In ending competition, the towers could be seen as consolidating America's superior worldwide status; ironically, its double nature could be seen to reflect America's duplication around the world in its political, cultural and economic dominance. In that respect, the towers represent America's worldwide authority. If, as Žižek suggests, the destruction of the Twin Towers cut the *real* of the symbolic of America's dominant role in world economies and politics, what is referenced in this act is not contemporary historical conditions, but the return of a moment in history. Notably, America's rise to dominance coincided with the two events that imitated the Cold War, the use of atomic weapons on Japan to end WWII in August 1945. Baudrillard asks, "Why two towers?" I cannot answer that, but there is an uncanny parallel between the implosion of two towers in an American city and the nuclear bombing of two Japanese cities in 1945. The fact America never witnessed the atomic bombings could signal what Žižek identifies as the haunting power of a historical event on the American psyche that was missed.

Can we see that the tools of war repressed by Kubrick's suture erupt in the future of our temporal present of 9/11? It is a provocative idea, which is suggestive of how American Imperialism targeted by the 9/11 event appears equivalent to the Imperialism painted by Kubrick with his fascist brush in the Discovery mission heading to Jupiter. We can also propose that the guilt Žižek claims is represented in America's catastrophe films, or in this case, *2001*, is not about America's policies in the Middle East, but about the nation's naïve solution to a political problem wherein the government's 'crucial ethical opportunity' to end WWII with nuclear experiments, implicated all American citizens. This is the place in which the philosophical representation and the film representation meet in an equivocal interpretation, especially since what is missed remains unknown. This interpretation is not meant to ignore the fact that the event and the film remain very different entities; one is real involving actual deaths, the other is imaginary, involving staged deaths. These significant qualitative differences only highlight how America's trauma returned so 'forcefully'. If the associations I alluded to cannot be fully plumbed, the question that is raised is: is there a phenomenological similarity between the salvationary figures that appear after 9/11 and at the end of *2001*?

MESSIAH

The structure of world capitalism, WTC, on the American psyche affirmed America's supreme role in global economies, and therefore, politics. It is this symbolic function that leads Baudrillard to write in the aftermath of the WTC's destruction, that the Twin Towers elicit "a contradictory feeling of attraction and repulsion, and hence, somewhere, a secret desire to see them disappear" (*Spirit of Terrorism* 42). The attraction/repulsion dynamic is echoed in Spivak's article responding to 9/11, in seeing the towers as the sacred site of America's

imperialist power: "I will do no more now than represent the confrontation in September as the destruction of a temple—world trade and military power—with which a state is associated" ("Terror: A Speech after 9/11" 91). Thus their destruction, or we might say, desecration, was inevitable. The fusion of sacredness and the inevitability of destruction presupposes Žižek's theory of the trauma that leads to the messianic. Notable is the fact that the sacred energy of the monolith's impact on the future *2001* is similarly fulfilled in the 'star child' figure with which the film ends. To what extent these figures share the same phenomenological significance shall be addressed now.

As a single object from a low-angle shot reflective of the fascist aesthetic, the monolith stands as monstrous as a New York skyscraper. Like the Twin Towers, the monolith has a sacred value, indicated in the atonal chanting soundtrack we hear on the first few viewings. Unlike the towers whose attraction was rooted in its symbolic value as a totem of capitalism, inspiring repulsion and so destruction, the monolith is so unknowable its attraction inspires awe and fear. The apes feel its surface, tentatively; Dr. Hayward Floyd has that same hesitant touch when he faces it excavated on the moon. The monolith is so charismatic it even attracts the attention of the sentient computer, HAL, inspiring HAL's error in diagnosing a potential breakdown of AE35. What HAL had hoped to achieve with this 'error' is never explained, but based on the precedent of ape-man's aggression after seeing the monolith, we suppose but are never sure that the monolith had inspired HAL to commit this error as part of a ploy to take over the mission to Jupiter.

HAL's attraction to the monolith, inspiring the killing of Frank Poole and the three scientists, leads to the critical and disturbing scene in which Dave lobotomizes HAL. In this operation we witness a struggle for control of the Discovery mission. We trust that Dave is doing the right thing by shutting down HAL for having murdered four people and threatening the mission; moreover,

we assume that HAL, as a machine, feels no pain in the operation. Despite this logic, this scene plays out in entirely different and unexpected terms. As we listen to HAL beg Dave to give him another chance, Dave's silent relentless operation on HAL's mind seems cruel and heartless. HAL's expressions are audibly emotional which stands out in this film in which hardly any emotion is expressed; in fact, Dave's silent persistent operation takes on a sadistic quality against HAL's pleas. As we watch Dave's human body, his hands, in the innermost sanctuary of HAL's consciousness we feel an uncanny empathy for HAL's inhumanity, his physical inability to resist, as an almost human vulnerability: "I'm afraid. I'm afraid, Dave. Dave, my mind is going. I can feel it. I can feel, it Dave". This scene literalizes a visual representation of a psychiatric lobotomy, concluding with HAL's pathetic singing of "Daisy", slowly sinking into incoherent base tones, creating an incongruous experience of hearing humanity leaking from something living, while signaling a perverse representation of psychological violence; perverse because, if one replaced HAL with a human, the illegal implications of what Dave did would be evident. Experiments with the mentally disabled would, interestingly enough, become the theme of Kubrick's subsequent film, *Clockwork Orange*.

Scholars have debated how to interpret the monolith in the film because of HAL's apparent attraction to it (does the monolith not discriminate between man and machine, or does the monolith prefer machine?), though many see the artifact as a conduit for the aggressive aliens who plan to take over earth. On the metaphorical level, Susan White in her article, "Kubrick's Obscene Shadows" cites Michael Chion's interpretation that the artifact has a symbolic function, analogous to the biblical "[t]ablet of the Law without commandments" and argues that: "… the monolith triggers the functioning of a certain kind of evolutionary law, a Darwinian struggle for survival…" (130). This evolutionary law is related to "the social codes under which citizens of a state are required to

live" (130). The lack of a moral code, a law for ethical behaviour, is apparent in how the monolith 'calls' subjects to it. Its physical attraction calls the subject to touch; its 'signal' calls future mankind to its base in Jupiter; it apparently inspired the struggle between HAL and Dave. It is associated with inciting murder, deceit, manipulation, and relentless aggression in the struggle not only for survival, but supremacy. The monolith is represented as a sinister anonymous force of evil whose 'call' contrasts the ethical injunction of Rosenzweig's "interpellation beyond interpellation".

Kubrick's representation of the monolith's "interpellation" as fascist indicates an unease with the 'call'. The Nazis interpreted Nietzsche's vision of the Overman as reflecting a racial distinction, which then initiated its implementation of the Jewish solution. I am reminded of Benjamin's 'weak messianic force' here, and the fact that he identified how the call was manipulated by Social Nationalism for its self-serving project of world dominance. The Nazi's delusional association of the call with aggressive acts of violence is echoed in Kubrick's representation of the space race in *2001*. Dave's blind confidence in the value of his role in the mission reflects a blind faith in the benefit of the call from Jupiter. Dave eliminated HAL ostensibly because it overstepped its place in the anthropocentric imperial order by breeching the Robotic law of killing humans but also because it threatened man's supremacy by answering to an authority beyond the human. The fact that both Dave and HAL are equally vulnerable to this 'evil' call points to the indiscriminate call of 'evil' and to the dangers of its widespread effect in the guise of messianism. In one respect, this unease in the film can be equated with America's response to the alleged suicide bombers' attacking of the WTC, given voice by President Bush in his war against the 'axis of evil'. The parallel ends there, however, since the politics expressed by the alleged bombers against America's imperialist dreams shows some agreement with Kubrick's critique of America's space race.

Spivak parallels the alleged suicide bombers to liberation theologists and draws in Palestinian mothers as well, thereby indirectly acknowledging the ethical grounds of the alleged bombers' actions, though qualifies her concession to their politics by her distaste for both 'theology' ("Terror" 88) and 'violence' (95). Žižek lauds the alleged bombers for "shattering America's liberal democratic consensus" (154); they "share something with Antigone" (142) acting out a "sacrifice to the obscure gods"; they are responding to an ethical call to correct an imbalance caused by America's imperialist aims. As Spivak's resistance to their religious motivations shows, what remains incomprehensible for the majority of western secular scholars is that political action done in the name of God. Žižek notes that this secular reaction against a religious dimension to politics inspires a new anti-Semitism, which leads to his question: "Is then the invisible fundamentalist terrorist the last embodiment of the Wandering Jew?" (151). To rephrase Žižek's provocative point, the political Muslim is made alien by his/her difference to the secular west which is a difference identified in the Jew. In that respect, Arendt's idea of "the discourse of universal human rights" is always qualified, Žižek argues; the West promises political inclusion until it is faced with the 'alien' other whose extreme difference defined as 'terrorist' justifies excluding him/her (*Welcome* 150). What Žižek identifies as the double effect of the law of human rights as protective and exclusive, identifies a secondary aspect of what Chion defines as the absence of law and social codes in the monolith as indicated by HAL's 'independence'. It also repeats the thesis this work is exploring: that the trauma of secularism is rooted in the double demand within secularism to achieve equality on condition of the Christ exception.

The struggle between Dave and HAL in *2001* projects a future ill-equipped to deal with the ethical terms of inhuman rights; questions about whether consciousness is a sign of life, and what kind of life has rights, points to

inadequate terminology for life in contemporary politics/policy which persist today.[257] For the very reason that HAL the computer has a consciousness *of* the human, as it has language with which to express emotions, and even *equal to* human, exemplified in the fact it hears the call of the monolith as humans do, Dave's shutting down of HAL is anthropomorphized as the lobotomy scene. In what transpires, the absence of law signals the limit of equality in a totalitarian regime wherein only certain 'life' is deemed worthy of being sacred enough to be protected. HAL is the *homo sacer* by default. Unlike the *Muselmann* who has been made the exception, HAL does not exist within the law to be unmade by it; yet, what HAL shares with the *Muselmann* is its inhuman status, a condition reflected in the psychotic's resistance to recognizable human behaviour. The machine's vulnerability to the law is in some ways similar to that experienced by psychotics in institutions, as described by Foucault in *Madness and Civilization*. To what extent, in cultural representation at least, there is a correlation between the cyborg/psychotic and the *homo sacer* as both being, in part, *of* the inhuman and therefore, excluded from human rights, shall be considered to an extent in the next section on the *Muselmann*. With respect to *2001*, HAL is emblematic of the exception that exists in an antithetical relation to the messiah at the end of *2001*; this dynamic contrasts that represented by Žižek's life after 9/11, where the relation between the alleged hijackers and the messianic waiting is complementary. The horror of the event was not what the alleged hijackers did, but the shock of the trauma's return. Moreover, in Žižek's terms, in fulfilling an ethical injunction, the alleged hijackers answered the 'call' that initiated a messianic change. For Žižek, the

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[257] Dick's *Do Electric Sheep Dream of Sheep?* inspiring *Blade Runner* (1992) is an example of this ethical dilemma that has been theorized by Donna Haraway in "A Cyborg Manifesto". That is, only a society determined by the hegemony of patriarchy, would enforce a hierarchy of the right to life, excluding the inhuman other, whether animal or cyborg from that right, though they develop and contribute to society as any human would.

call is connected to the messianic. What I have outlined as a difference between philosophy and film here may be indicative of genres, but as will become clear, it also signifies that there is a phenomenological difference between Žižek's messianic change and Kubrick's 'star child' that is ideological.

In the hotel room furnished with Louis XVI furniture on Jupiter, Dave has a visitation by the monolith. His reach to the monolith is a gesture echoing Michelangelo's painting on the ceiling of the Sistine Chapel of David reaching for God, signifying a biblical connection in *2001*. Blindly, Dave has exchanged God for the monolith. He does not see what we see in the relation between the monolith and tools of mass destruction. Can we see Kubrick making a political comment in this exchange of pre-modern religion for modern secularism? That exchange is echoed by the way Dave is exchanged for a fetus. The montage of transformation in the clip of Dave on his bed, a view of the monolith, a blackness signifying entrance (transcendence) into the monolith, ends in our encounter with the 'star child'. The logic of the cuts suggests that the 'star child' owes its life to Dave and the monolith and, looking at earth, it is destined for earth.

Considering the monolith is associated with deluded notions of the 'call', in Benjamin's terms of the 'weak messianic power', the 'star child' can only bode ill. This reading contrasts many interpretations that see in the 'star child' a positive force. Kuberski, who sees the monolith as a symbol of positive transformation (161), interprets the significance of the 'star child' as the fulfillment of human evolution represented in the theme of Kubrick's lighting choices: "From the opening scenes of the 'Dawn of Man' to 'Jupiter and beyond the Infinite,' 'mankind' is translated from animal unconsciousness beneath a bright sky to an enlightened consciousness mediated by light itself" (77-78). White notes that Gelmis and Nelson interpret the "star child" as "a singular

optimism in the bleak landscape of Kubrick's films" (141). Ruppersburg maintains a kind of perversely positive interpretation of Kubrick's 'star child': "The end of *2001* is a form of religious vision. It compels us to imagine a new kind of existence, identity, and understanding. It provokes wonder, confusion, shock" (165).[258] In contrast to this positivity, Cocks identifies ambivalence. He notes that, whereas the 'star child' in Clarke's novel destroys "the nuclear weapons orbiting earth", which "ironically repeated the end of Dr. Strangelove", the solitary saviour at the end *of 2001* is enigmatic: "What has happened—or will happen—to human beings on earth? Have they all been transformed along with Bowman? Are they to be governed by the Star-Child? Or are they to die out 'naturally' in evolutionary competition with the new species? Or?" (Cocks 2004 1223-23.) I tend to follow Cocks' lead, but with less ambivalence.

Abram's interpretation that Nietzsche's Overman is found in the "star child" leads him to conclude that Kubrick's Overman, is "a thin reflection of a Nietzschean persona" (261), because it undermines the central liberating crisis of Nietzsche's project in the expression, "God is Dead". Abrams is correct to see a failure of Nietzsche's project in *2001*, which was perhaps Kubrick's point. The failure of Nietzsche's 'God is dead' is articulated by Kubrick in the 'God concept' artifact. In line with Badiou's observation, Kubrick's project shows that the dead God does not lie there dead but returns. This cycle reflects the shock

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[258] In Ruppersburg's analysis, films like *Invasion of the Body Snatchers*, and *War of the Worlds*, which signal an alien messianic force, raise interesting questions about the significance of the alien figure in film, as reflecting an anxiety with the other; this point leads to my issue with identifying the alien invasion as messiahs. Technically, there is nothing messianic about an invading force; however, the distrust of a messiah as a false claimant, would qualify a messianic claimant as a malignant, unwanted, alien. This of course, does not detract form his salient observation that the messianic figure appears variously in film as either the benign alien, as in *The Day the Earth Stood Still*, or a human with superhuman powers to travel through time, as in *Terminator*, or a figure of redemption, in the case of films like such as *I am Legend*, or *Sunshine*, or a redemptive remnant, as in McCarthy's *The Road*.

Deleuze sees in film as philosophy; the shock in *2001* is that the sinister influence of the monolith on humanity from the prehistoric age to the 'future', perpetuated by all scientific and social advances, returns disguised as salvation.

I will emphasize that my analysis at this point shifts from Kubrick's conscious aesthetic choices to the unconscious associations raised by Kubrick's choices in *2001*. Dave's encounter with the monolith imagistically alludes to Michelangelo's painting in a Christian Church. Since the 'star child' is represented as a fetus clearly *of* Dave and metaphorically of King David, it embodies the Old Testament prophecies of the messiah as defined by the Christian narrative. With the intervention of the sinister monolith, this 'star child' is a Christian messiah, leading to the question: is this fetus the miracle of Jesus' birth, or the miracle of his resurrection? My answer is both. To reword what scholars identify as the transformation of Dave into the 'star child',[259] I would suggest that Dave's resurrection as the 'star child' makes the figure the second coming of Jesus. That motif is apparent in Clarke's rendering of the child as bringing an end to nuclear apocalypse, an apotheosis Kubrick's film avoids. Kubrick's messiah is weighted by shadows. Along with the long shadow of the monolith on mankind's history of technology and imperialism, there is another shadow reflecting an unconscious reflection of an element of Jewish tradition which, as Hollander identified, returns in Rosenzweig's and Derrida's versions of the messiah: that shadow is the significance of the star. Recall that *Num 24:17* was the pericope used by R. Akiva to identify a Judean warrior as Bar Kokhba (son of the star), or the messiah; his miserable failure to emancipate the Judeans from Roman oppression led rabbis to call him '*bar kosiva'*, 'son of the

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[259] Abrams writes: "… the aliens and the monolith act directly on Bowman's mind and transform him into the Star Child" (256). Wheat notes, "When the star child appears, Bowman is reborn, symbolically at any rate" (126). Cocks is more ambiguous in his description of Bowman's transformation: "The conclusion to *2001* represents the transition of Dave Bowman and thus of all humanity into a higher life form" (122).

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liar', or the 'false messiah'. As I reviewed in Chapter 3, *Num 24:17* was used by Justin the Martyr's to affirm Jesus's messianic status. Visible through the fascist aesthetic in *2001*, the monolith's determinism reflects back on the shadow of Christianity's centuries-long persecution of Jewish people, culminating in the atrocity of the Holocaust, and returning in Kubrick's 'star child', as a false harbinger of salvation. Jesus is rewritten in *2001* as a *bar kosiva*. In this respect, *2001* may be considered the real prequel to the alien invasion of *Independence Day*. The irony is that *2001* ends with Dave victoriously flaunting his offspring as his resurrected self, perhaps a conscious contrast to Nazi Germany's devastating loss of WWII, while in 9/11, Žižek's messianic awakening appears not to be fettered by negativity at all.

The question is: what do the trauma of *2001*, the film, and the philosophical meditation of 9/11 have to do with the messiah? As a project ending with the figure which saved mankind from atomic devastation, I suggest that it is possible to see that *2001* already encapsulates the trauma that will return in 9/11, which is America's experimentation with nuclear weapons on Japanese civilians through the limits circumscribed by Žižek: the return of a trauma that cannot be remembered. The way 9/11 figures in Kubrick's film can be understood through the 'shock' of Nietzsche's eternal return. Kubrick's exploitation of a fascist aesthetic to define the space race of the future is articulated in paralleling the totalitarian impulse of America's colonization of the universe in its space race, driven by technological advances whose origin is the weapon of war. America's colonization of space in Kubrick's *2001* is founded on its nuclear authority established in August 1945. From this event, a 'messiah' is born linking Nazi totalitarianism with American imperialism. This messiah is neither the one we want nor the one we anticipate: it is the enervating force of fascistic messianism, which, noted in chapter three,

Benjamin warned against, and I would suggest, it is the threat Derrida worked so hard to erase.

The Christian foundation to Kubrick's messiah returns in Žižek's messiah with the same demand to convert, but Žižek's representation reflects an entirely different response. Žižek sees the politics of the suicide bomber as a positive force in acting against America's aggressive imperialism. He is full of *jouissance* in the aftermath of the event as the hope of the future redemption; the only unease is excitement about the imminent changes aroused by the messianic arrival. This hope may suppose a Marxist reading of the Muslim action, perhaps reflecting what Qutb identified as an affinity between Marx's communism and the social responsibility inherent to Islamic doctrine, except one critical element distinguishes them. Žižek's political reading is strictly not religious, in contrast to Qutb, and those of the alleged suicide bombers, whose devotion and political actions were strictly religious. Žižek, finding an affinity with them in their political motivations, does not judge their religiosity but can only see these alleged terrorists as alternatives of the Jew—other wanderers of the desert, in exile, more examples of the exception. That is, the 'exception' launches the messianic expectation of the 'resolution' of the 'universal human rights' in Christian terms in Žižek's reading. It is on the ideologically driven issue of the 'Christian resolution' that the messiah of the film and the philosophy show a phenomenological difference. Whereas Kubrick's film exposes the messiah as inimical to mankind, Žižek waits for it as faithfully as evangelists await the rapture.

CASE #4: THE AUTISTIC FANTASY OF CARSON'S *AUTOBIOGRAPHY OF RED*
INTRODUCTION

Frederic Jameson's argument that historical amnesia has manifested in postmodern culture as schizophrenic a-temporality (*Postmodernism* 27) may help explain why autism has become such a prominent trope in culture since the production of *Rainman*, in 1988,[260] but a strictly Jamesonian analysis is somewhat thwarted by the fact that autism has inspired a social anxiety about finding a cure for the condition that in severe cases, causes death.[261] In light of Bettelheim's identification of an autistic equivalence in the *Muselmann*, the one who has more of a relation to death than to life, I would propose that the particular psychosis of autism recently deployed in contemporary cultural works may reflect a Jamesonian a-temporality, but that time-trouble is not indicative of forgetting history but of the effort to reclaim the power of the eternal in the face of death through the exception.

As I have previously argued in this project, what simmers beneath the surface of secularism is a vital attraction to the promise of a 'new life' of equality in Christ through Paul's law of Christ as the resurrection, which changed the mortal function of the symbolic. The 'letter' of the law was exchanged for its 'spirit' and thus made the way to living eternally. The psychotic, who lives without the mortal function of the symbolic Name of the Father (NOF) because she has foreclosed the NOF at the "Oedipal stage,"[262]

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[260] Stuart Murray conducts an analysis of selected cultural works that represent autism in sentimental terms in "Autism and the Contemporary Sentimental: Fiction and the Narrative Fascination of the Present" (*Literature and Medicine* 26, no 1 (Spring 2006) 24-45.

[261] Majda Holmer Nadesan claims autism is a twentieth-century condition because it directly follows from modern society's need to socialize children according to a normative standard (*Constructing Autism*, 2005); she, like Stuart Murray, recognizes a profusion of cultural works of autists which misinterpret the condition.

[262] In the *Diagnostic & Statistical Manual of Mental Disorders* (DSM), Autistic Spectrum Disorders (ASD) includes conditions from autism to Aspergers, which, as Tendlarz points out in *Lacan & Childhood Psychosis* (11), is similar in definition to, but differentiated from, schizophrenia. I use "autism" as different from Jameson's schizophrenia, and in line with Ian Hacking's definition of it in "Humans, aliens & autism" (49), as a polymorphic term. Not aiming

exists immersed in the 'hallucinations' of the *real* of living[263] and therefore may be said to represent the state of ecstasy Paul experienced in his encounter with the Christ of Jesus. According to the non-autist, what is pathological about psychosis is the lack of the death drive. From the symbolic angle, the 'death of the drive' in the autist suggests a passive suicide that can only be undone through 'new life'. In short, the non-autist fantasy aims to rehabilitate the autist's relation to death by translating it into the encounter with the eternal, or symbolically, the resurrection.

Anne Carson's *Autobiography of Red*[264] is not an autistic fantasy like the *Rainman, which* is why it stands out as a case study for this project. Geryon is, ostensibly, a homosexual who is metaphorically associated with an ancient Greek mythic winged beast resurrected from the dead. What is interesting about these predicates is that his homosexuality disappears behind Geryon's representation as an autistic subject enacting the resurrection motif. Thus, *Red* describes concerns raised by an autistic narrative such as *Rainman*, in that it is motivated by the desire to institute the functioning NOF through the symbolic resurrection. What distinguishes *Red* from other autistic fantasies is that the complicated quality of this persona acts like a prism through which exceptions

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to be a scientific study, my analysis shall remain limited to the psychosis of the condition, not dealing with neurological issues that have become more prominent in recent research.

[263] For Lacan, "the hallucination is located in the real" (*Seminar III* 136).

[264] Considering my analysis and focus on Geryon in this chapter is centered on his autistic nature, understanding how Carson's *Red Doc* is a sequel to *Red* raised only red flags. Geryon's sensibility dominates *Red*; in *Red Doc*, he disappears. The fact that *Red Doc* did not follow through on the promise of Geryon initially troubled me until I recognized the power of the narrative voice; it was a new subjectivity that replaced the role Geryon had in *Autobiography of Red*. The thing is, *Red Doc's* narrator has no face. That is, when I considered the slipperiness of the narrative, the way its omniscience seems to have no bounds (no character is favoured, no character is safe), nor is it bounded by semantics or conventional narrative either, I recognized the narrator has a subjectivity that repeats that 'autistic' destabilizing force of the autistic fantasy of Geryon. The subject of *Red Doc* is in this disorder. Taking that logic further, if Geryon stood for Carson in *Red*, then the narrator in *Red Doc* must be Carson herself, represented as a subjectivity existing somewhere on the psychotic spectrum. *Red Doc* describes a sane world from a psychotic's perspective, where G seems the sanest of the bunch of characters and the most opaque.

such as homosexuality and even the inhuman undead, are crystalized in the dominant fantasy of the autist. Through the course of this analysis, I will address the question: what unconscious desire is being represented in this autistic fantasy?

THE FANTASY

According to Lacan, the autist is signified by the One[265] who forecloses the NOF, and has no Other or object. The apparent a-sociality of the subject is manifested in two ways. There is a disarming self-absorption evident in the autist, which Lacan explains as reflecting her immersion in the imaginary without the symbolic to interpret it: "As the name indicates, autistic children hear themselves. They hear many things. This even ends up normally in hallucination, and the hallucination always has a more or less vocal character" (Tendlarz 16). Yasmin Gasser articulates the autist's inability to grasp the symbolic function of language to the extent that it can lead to the infant's inability to demand food: "Autism's weight of words corresponds (…) to a serious slowing down of language serial games—and not to a state of the infants' being—a slowing down which may go so far as to seal itself in a deathly silence."[266] The autist's inability to discern the difference between the image and language's power as representation means that the autist is unable to use language in anything but literal terms, if the subject even acquires language. All of these issues have led to an interest in finding a cure, which involves the

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[265] Jacques-Alain Miller articulates this concept as "Autism means that the one is dominant and not the other". "Lacan's Later Teaching" translated by Patricia P. Fulks. *Lacanian ink 21* (2005), Web. www.lacan.com.

[266] This quote by Yasmin Grasser "The Weight of Words", translated by Jorge Jauregui. *Lacanian Ink 1*, (1990.) Web. The auditory nature of the psychotic's hallucinations is discussed by Lacan in "On the Question Prior to Any Possible Treatment of Psychosis" (*Écrits* 446).

assimilation of the non-autist into the symbolic, with little understanding of what symbolic assimilation means for the autist.

In response to the growing attention by parents and health-care professionals to cure autists of their condition, E. L. Bragg's video *In My Language* (2007) on youtube testifies to the value of the autistic life. Divided into two, the first half of the video is composed of static framed shots of Baggs fiddling with objects, moving her hands and arms as if flying or playing with a slinky. The second half, titled "A Translation," introduces a computerized voice-over that is meant to "translate" the visual collage of her motion which "is about being in a constant conversation with every part of my environment," she explains. Her translation retroactively signifies for us that, what we saw as aimless activity is actually a meaningful dialogue, not in symbolic but in sensual terms. That is, when she says that we should not read the water symbolically while watching water from the tap run onto her hands, she wants to stress that what we read imagistically in the video is, for her, evidence of the foreclosure of the NOF because it is a purely sensory experience; the word 'water' literally means her experience of flowing wet. What is striking is that the computer-generated voice with which she asks us not to see the water as symbolizing something, has the symbolic quality of representing her as alien and alienating herself from who she is.[267] In conveying the truth of her life by utilizing the very symbolic order she forecloses as an autist, her testimony is explicable at the very moment that her autistic relation to the *real* eludes us. We are witnessing her struggle with harnessing the symbolic to 'mean' her subjectivity that is uncomfortable with meaning; all that we can access of her is her compromised

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[267] Baggs' symbolic alien is echoed in Hacking's article title, "Humans, aliens & autism" and, as he outlines, is a metaphor for autism used by both autists and non-autists alike; for example, the organization, Cure Autism Now (CAN) equate children's autism as being taken by aliens ("Humans" 44) and there are the autists themselves who claim that being amongst non-autists is like being amongst Martians (50.)

relation to the symbolic which is the inversion of her experience of the *real*
clearly of the ecstatic quality where she remains, free of the symbolic that grips
us, her non-autist viewer. Even this interpretation of her discomfort clearly
symbolizes her experience as a fiction testifying to her relation to the symbolic
order.

In comparison to Baggs' experience, Anne Carson's *Red* is not an autistic
representation by an autist. Yet, it is not a Hollywood 'realistic' representation
of an autistic life either, since it authentically represents the conditions of living
that Baggs' expresses. Having made that point, Carson's text is not like Bragg's
autobiography; whereas Baggs makes the case that she needs neither pity nor
cure, *Red* represents a metamorphosis of assimilation signaling the importance
of the cure. If Baggs's text can be seen literally as the trauma of the symbolic,
which intersects the real, the trauma of Carson's *Red* is not autistic but of the
non-autist's oedipalization played-out, in 'slow motion' one might say, of the
assimilation/integration of the autistic exception into the social fold.

Carson's contention that "genres are conventional" and "Conventions
exist to be renegotiated"[268] defines an approach to her writing that serves the
interest of this project for exploring a 'general textuality'. Her experiments with
prose and poetry through secularizing mystical sources exemplified in her first
publication, the series of prose-poems, *Short Talks* (1992), recurs as experiments
with generic structures in all her subsequent works.[269] *Red* announces its
experiment as a fusion of the narrative of 'fiction' with the metaphorical power
of 'verse' through re-creating the autobiography of the mythic winged-beast
named Geryon. He is a 'monster' who fashions himself on (or is fashioned by)

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[268] Anne Carson interviewed by Mary di Michele and published in *The Matrix Interviews: Moosehead Anthology #8* (8).
[269] The form of the essay recurs in her work fused with the lyric in *Plainwater: Essays and Poetry* (2000), with the metaphor in *Eros the Bittersweet: An Essay* (1998) and with the novel as tangoes in a text following the publication of *Red*, *The Beauty of the Husband* (2001).

the biography in the extant ancient Greek fragments of Stesichoros' story of the winged-figure named Geryon who was killed by the half-mortal, Herakles. As we read Carson's argument that Stesichoros' story is important because it tells about Herakles from the perspective of the monster he killed, we are alerted to a new subjectivity, that of the exception embodied by the beast. Carson's allusion to Gertrude Stein's experimental autobiography,[270] *Autobiography of Alice B. Toklas,* qualifies that new subjectivity in terms both of gender and queer politics, and also frames the experimental fiction as post-modern. If Stein's testimony hides the truth of her masculine-like authority and lesbian love in a fictional self-telling by Alice B. Toklas while creating a representation of herself through a fictional collaboration with her 'other,' we are to recognize that Geryon is the exception of heterosexual society represented in an ironic literalization of the derogatory expression of the homosexual as 'beast', living out a contemporary romance with Herakles, which may or may not be seen as reflecting Carson herself. Though the autobiography of *Red* may be Anne Carson's reflexive self-telling through the 'fictional other' of Geryon,[271] that

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[270] In *The Limits of Autobiography: Trauma and Testimony*, Leigh Gilmore argues that the formalistic and ethical problems of the autobiographical genre inspire experiment (11); moreover, as a 'limit-case' genre, autobiographies of traumatic experiences are extreme examples of limit-cases (19). Since I consider any text to be the work of a subject's trauma, then technically any text can be read autobiographically, a point that complements Gilmore's paraphrasing of Valery's idea that "every autobiography is a fragment of a theory" (12), but leads me to question why she distinguishes autobiographies of trauma from other memoirs. I believe her perspective on trauma is reflective of the juridical subtext of testimonial prejudices in autobiographical testimony as a genre within North American culture where issues such as 'false memories syndrome' are real political and judicial issues (28). Stein's text troubles truth, and Carson follows her example.

[271] In considering the autobiographical aspect of *Red*, Sharon Wahl formulates two aspects of the same complaint. On the one hand, she argues that events or details in *Red* seem arbitrary because "Carson [has] simply attached some of her own interests or experiences to the characters". When identifying a parallel in Geryon's self-telling and that of the narrator of "Water", Wahl argues "this similarity makes Geryon less convincing a monster", because he is more a reflection of Carson herself ("Erotic Sufferings: *Autobiography of Red* and Other Anthropologies". *Iowa Review*, (29:1), 1999 Spring, pp. 184-185.) Wahl's description of the root of her frustration reflects how Carson, consciously or not, frustrates the distinction between truth and fiction in autobiographical testimony. To what extent Carson is engaging with Stein's

personal story is of less importance for me than the significance of the literary resurrection of the primordial mythic exception that is the focus of this project.[272]

The autistic sensibility in Geryon is indirectly verified not by Stuart Murray's article on representations of autistic subjects, but on his analysis of Carson's novel itself. He first notes Carson's philosophical question of autobiography which he associates with Heidegger's idea that life is a subject that is "resistant to representations and linguistic conventions";[273] this resistance, he claims, is played out in Carson's use of language: "Carson unmoors the underlying conditions of intelligibility, throwing into question the power of signification, the reliability by which words name things, and the fragility of the social convention that would uphold both the authority to name and the authority of the name" (106). This dilemma of expression is tied to the dilemma of perception, Murray contends, which is why he takes a phenomenological approach to *Red* through Merleau-Ponty's philosophy: "Merleau-Ponty claims that our primordial experience in the lifeworld is a synaesthetic experience, a natural commingling of the senses; however, this experience is forgotten, and it has been replaced by logic and an overly analytical attitude" (110). Merleau-Ponty's sense of loss for the non-verbal state of childhood points to the oedipalized subject that can still sense its pre-Oedipal life. Murray's recognition that Carson privileges the phenomenological sensory experience over meaning in her novel, because "language is slippery" (106) and for Geryon, "'Red' is

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very formal engagement with that trouble is a question worth posing if one is reading *Red* as Carson's autobiography.

[272] The formalistic complications of Carson's testimony which my paper does not consider are specifically the following parts: Stesichorus' fragments of the story of Geryon, which is followed by two Appendixes which, rather than follow, precede the 'novel in verse': "Testimonia on the Question of Stesichoros' Blinding By Helen" and the rebuttal, "Clearing up the Question of Stesichoros Blinding by Helen."

[273] Stuart J. Murray, "The Autobiographical Self: Phenomenology and the Limits of Naarative Self-Possession in Anne Carson's Autobiography of Red," 102.

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never stable, is never purely adjectival, and when it is, it stretches the bounds of sense and descriptiveness" (111), can be translated into psychoanalytic terms as representing the sensibility of the autist.

We are introduced to Geryon on the first day of school traumatized by his condition of synaesthesia, hearing sound in colour. The colour he hears most deeply is red, the colour with which he identifies himself. His condition leads him to experience "red" as sound and, as seen in the following passage, as smell: "He was focusing hard on his feet and his steps./ Children poured around him/ and the intolerable red assault of grass and the smell of grass everywhere/ was pulling him towards it" (*Autobiography* 23). Note that in seeing grass as 'red', Geryon's colour-blindness makes 'red' not 'red', further complicating the autist's already troubled relation to language's failure to 'mean'. Geryon's physical reality is a confusion of what can be identified as hallucinatory experience: colour is noise and people are currents that exert a force on him. The poetic nature of the language amplifies the instability of his environment and social reality. Telescoping of details anchors the boy against the anxiety induced by the liquidity of children on his first day of School, but creates that self-focused attention at the exclusion of exterior stimuli. The boy's hallucinatory sensory overload, perhaps similar to Baggs' sensory life, is exacerbated when his brother abandons him, sending him into crisis: "the world dropped away" and what would have served as a map to help him get into the school was void of symbolization as a "deep glowing blank" (24). Geryon's a-sociality, his lack of friends, is compounded by the fact that he has the linguistic troubles Gasser defines as the "weight of words": "The words each blew towards him and came apart on the wind" (26). What is important to acknowledge is that the experience described here is suggestive of the childhood described by Merleau-Ponty, experienced by a shy child on his first day at school, but it also is no less indicative of that which is endured by an

autistic sensibility; in this parallel, what this representation maintains is that this condition requires symbolic rescue made possible by the symbolic function enabled here by the non-autist poet, Carson.

In this self-telling, Geryon is literally saved from autistic trouble through a kind of Kleinian therapy in autobiographical representation. As with Klein's symbolic intervention, this self-telling is masterminded by the poet for Geryon's sake. Implicit in the relation between writer and character is a compound barred subjectivity of an oedipalized subject. By way of establishing the narrative of Geryon's assimilation, oedipalization is signaled by starting his autobiography: "he set down all inside things/ particularly his own heroism… he coolly omitted/ all outside things" (29). Clearly, in identifying the inside from outside and demarcating the field of omission, a prohibition central to the NOF has occurred; he has passed through the Oedipal stage. If Geryon, the character, is domain of inside sensations of the *real* which has been marked off from the outside, he will, through the course of the novel be aided in organizing the outside through a compromised symbolic of his autistic project of the self; the poet-author as the non-autist who, controlling the symbolic rudder of the Master signifier by which the autist is portrayed, provides him with the symbolic order required to be the 'other' to himself, performed through third-person narrative.

The tension between Geryon's inner and outer is expressed formalistically by Carson's innovative use of italics. Typically used in literature to denote an inner voice or a supplementary narrative voice as in Daphne Marlatt's *Taken*, italics are used in Carson's *Red* to indicate speech by Geryon and those around him. If Geryon's third-person autobiography leaves him silently listening to an 'other' tell his story, then italics can be read as another layer of autistic listening, represented as a silence that persists within Geryon's self-narrative. Geryon's inner self, displaced through oedipalization in the third-

person voice, is further displaced from the outer world by emanations of a 'silent' dialogue with the unconscious happening within him. The ambivalence in the text between an inward-ness and outward-ness of this silent dialogue, recalls that tension Baggs expresses with her autistic self and the computerized voice-over. Are these dialogues in Geryon's autobiography self-generated hallucinations or has the autistic Geryon absorbed the outside into himself as One? We could say both propositions are true in this autistic fantasy.

Not only is the autist represented as immersed in auditory hallucinations but the prime signature of his self-telling is expressed through a symbolic manipulation of the literalizing tendency of the autist. Klein's seminal research on autistic children evolved from her famous case study with a boy named Dick. In therapy sessions, when Dick played with toys, Klein understood that the toy train was for Dick literally a train. Through play therapy, Klein was able to teach Dick to transfer symbolic significance to the toy; that is, once he was able to see himself as the train, he was then able to perform subsequent symbolic associations such as seeing his mother as the "station". This working through of symbolic meaning cured Dick of his separation anxieties (Klein 102) that had inhibited socialization. In Lacanian terms, Dick's recognition of the train's metaphorical trick indicated his oedipalization; that is, Dick began to see his mother as replaceable through the imaginary *object a* after which symbolic fantasies became possible.

The autist's tendency to see "everything symbolic become *real*" (Tendlarz 13), means that the *object a* does not stand in for the real as lack, but rather, is accepted literally. The autist's literalization becomes the primary factor in Geryon's photograph-based autobiography. Murray suggests that the photo is "Geryon's fetish of choice" (114). I would argue that fetish can only be applied to a fully oedipalized subject which does not describe Geryon in these initially stages of Carson's representation, and or, the literalization of the image exploits

semantic tensions. I would argue for seeing the photo to be the *objet a* that remains void of autobiographical significance in itself.[274] Technically, the photo demands neither verbal processing nor even an interest in the metaphorical function of representation to initiate. It is like Baggs' water, a literal relation to the imaginary dimension in autistic sensibility. While the cognitive disruption that occurs for the overwhelmed autist may be documented in the *objet a* as a copy of the real, the experience cannot be rendered as autobiography until the Master Signifier renders it with symbolic value. What distinguishes Geryon's autistic self-telling as a fantasy in *Red*, as opposed to a literal self-telling like Baggs's *In My Language*, is that the photographs are all represented through language: the *objets a* are autobiographical because they exist in the symbolic register through the oedipalizing contribution of the narrator/poet. In the effort to stay true to the autistic subject, Carson's photographic representation of a life in poetry exploits what is literal for a figurative outcome.

The literalness of Geryon's photo-autobiography is expressed in titles. The following title is an example: "It is a close-up photograph of Geryon's left leg just below the knee" (*Autobiography* 137). The title literalizes the image. Yet the title does not tell us that it was a photo taken accidentally when Ancash's mother moved Geryon's camera down and out of sight of the soldiers who had suddenly appeared. Anyone who has been in a war-torn country or at a contested border knows the threat of soldiers looking for the spy disguised as an innocent tourist with a camera. For Geryon, the photo is literally an accidental shot of his leg; as an accident whose event was both unanticipated and missed, it is, in metaphorical terms, a representation of a wound which the soldiers did not cause, but could have, if Ancash's mother had not saved him. This is the symbolic significance of the image which the narrator shares with us. In the

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[274] I find it ironic that my analysis of Carson's text indirectly counters Solway's criticism of Carson's poetry as being "autistic" ("The Trouble with Annie" 24).

author's hands, this photo is the occasion of the accidental *tuché* of being saved by Ancash's mother, retroactively constituted as the *object a* of Geryon being saved from death, a trope initiated by his resurrection from Stesichoros' fragments and repeated compulsively through the autobiography. As is exemplified in this photograph of Geryon's leg, the photos of his autobiography express a tension between literal and figurative understanding, similar to the dilemma defined by Bragg's aural (oral) testimony. This tension may explain why those readers primarily interested in recognizable poetic structure, such as critic, Adam Kirsch, who condemns her poetry as merely prosaic,[275] or Wahl who complains the narrative is not fantastic enough[276], or David Solway, who hears merely "drab writing", (Solway 24), miss the psychic poesy Carson is tracing.

McCallum makes an interesting argument that the *punctum*—that moment which disappears in the flash of the shutter—represents the traumatic moment of forgetting (McCallum I, par. 12 and II, par. 43). Drawing on Roland Barthe's theory of the punctum in photography, McCallum contextualizes Carson's literary innovation: "the synesthetic power of the *punctum*, thus, is central to what Carson brings to a theory of photography" (II par. 28.) The fact that the *punctum* signifies a trauma at the heart of photographic representation is not only a powerful interpretation of modern technology as a device for

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[275] In "All Mere Complexities: *Autobiography of Red",* Adam Kirsch's conclusion to his critical review is worth reading in full: "Carson neither feels her thoughts nor thinks her feelings. Yet it is the role of poetry to bring those two halves of experience together, a fusion, which is made possible by translating moments of being into musical patterns of words. Lacking a commitment to the rigor of such patterns—a commitment to verse—Carson attains neither poetry's music nor poetry's wisdom" (*New Republic,* May 18, 1998, 41). Kirsch's classical understanding of what makes good poetry explains his resistance to Carson's experimentation with the poetic genre.
[276] Sharon Wahl writes: "Look what *Red* starts with: a character who is a 'monster', and one with mythical origins; wings capable of flight; the scholarly framing, the book's formal beauty… I was disappointed that the narrative didn't go along with this, and take a direction for which those wings were necessary. In my enthusiasm for the premise and Carson's writing I imagined a book like an eagle's aerie built into a cliff face; a place you couldn't get to any other way" 183.

psychic interventions but, in my analysis, it also serves to show how the machine functions much like Baggs' computer generated voice; it oedipalizes the subject while freeing the subject from oedipalization. For the autistic Geryon, who has "progressed" to the symbolic Oedipal through the holophrasis of the photo, the *punctum* and its non-verbal, pure sensory flash, do the impossible by leaving the autist's *real* inassimilable. Without the narrator/author's role in framing the *punctum* as a photograph retroactively with a title, the photographs would be too literal to have meaning; without the author's frame, Geryon's salvation would be missed.

The curative power of Dick's train evident in Geryon's starting of the autobiography is fulfilled in Geryon's use of the photograph, the technology of the mirror stage of the ego. The photo becomes the positive step, in Oedipal terms, to the individuation symbolized in autobiography. As an image-generating technology, it reconciles Geryon's language troubles like synaesthesia, but most importantly, it keeps the outside world out and the inside protected. The narrator/author makes possible a collusion between Geryon's symbolic self-recording through the technology of the camera and the technology's relation to Geryon's *real*, in that the moment of the photographic capture which becomes the oedipal subject's *objet a*, relieves the autist of signifying duties. In turn, this collusion also makes the autist stand as the *object a* of the author's fantasy project. As becomes evident through the narrative development, the symbolic is necessary for bringing Geryon back to life from death.

IMMORTALITY

Blanchot's *The Instant of My Death*, a short personal account of being caught by the Germans in WWII, sentenced to death, and then suddenly being let free,

is an inexplicable event, or, as Jacques Derrida claims in an accompanying essay, *Demeure*, a miracle: "The miracle is the essential line of union between testimony and fiction" (75). Derrida's use of miracle is meant in secular terms: it metaphorically reflects how Blanchot was saved from death while it also reflects Blanchot's feeling of the eternal as an experience of immortality that overcame him on realizing he would not be killed (*The Instant of my Death* 5). That indifference to death, expressed by the eternal of the real, is the trope that I have noted Žižek recognizes as integral to the *Muselmann*. This relation to eternity, reflected ironically by Levi's reference to their 'endlessness' in the camps, is interpreted by Žižek in the autist as the 'death drive' that is dead. From the non-autist's perspective, the autistic subject's relation to death demands salvation as a 'life after death'.

In *The Ticklish Subject*, Slavoj Žižek notes that there is no resurrection for Lacan, there is only death, which the living can express through negation as a self-withdrawal:

> What 'Death' stands for at its most radical is not merely the passing of earthly life, but the 'night of the world', the self-withdrawal, the absolute contraction of subjectivity, the severing of its links with 'reality'—*this* is the 'wiping the slate clean' that opens up the domain of the symbolic New Beginning…" (179)

Blanchot's *Instant of my Death* focuses on that "instant" when he experienced "an abrupt return to the world" (5), which is intermittently repeated in the telling (6). That returning to "reality" points to the fact that there was a "severing of links with reality" or an "absolute contraction of subjectivity," evident in Blanchot's encounter with death as an experience of immortality. What Blanchot experienced can technically be understood as a psychotic event in that normal time was disrupted by the eternal of the *real*. Blanchot's return from

the real that initiated a symbolic 'New Beginning' is a resurrection motif that is visible in Carson's *Red*.

Geryon's photography is not simply a device to symbolize the autist's acculturation to a symbolic centered existence; rather, and more importantly, it is a device, which establishes Geryon's special relation to the eternal real. I would argue that what McCallum identifies as the camera's apotropaic function (McCallum II par. 22) is a powerful concept only in recognizing its significance for Geryon, the autist. The magic of his photos is not just indicated by the technology's ability to make a print of reality, but is reflected in the photograph's ability to represent the autistic tendency to see "everything symbolic become real": it literalizes the symbolic order. As such, that disruption of meaning is echoed in a kind of disruption of temporal time as reflected in Žižek's 'night of the world', or Blanchot's miracle. The interruption of temporal reality with the autist's eternal plays out as the resurrection, the first one performed over Geryon's mythic ancient grave, and all those repeated compulsively with every photo.

Carson explains the document of Stesichoros' telling of the classic mythic story to stress that, whereas Geryon, the beast, was killed by Herakles, in the modern retelling, Geryon is resurrected into a hero. Thus, the ancient killing event is recreated metaphorically as the romance in which Geryon is so in love with Herakles that Herakles's emotional indifference 'slays' Geryon. In response to the breakup, Geryon is represented as literally dying: "…weak as a fly Geryon crouched against the sink/ with his fist in his mouth/ and his wings trailing over the drainboard" (*Autobiography* 71). Note how Geryon's wings are here represented as insect-like; a trace of his identification with the fly in melodramatic grief is exacerbated by the pathetic fallacy of rain, setting the terms for the magical signification of Geryon's photo-based autobiography. Utilizing the same fifteen-minute exposure of the volcano photo which had

been titled, "Red Patience," Geryon photographs a fly in a pail of water; his finished photo shows the insect "Drowned but with a strange agitation of light around the wings." Here, the prolonged exposure makes visible the dying throws of the fly in "agitation of light." That is, in that temporality of death captured by the photo, we see represented in the dying of the fly, Blanchot's "instant" in which Geryon's dying was stopped; the mortal wound by which Stesichoros' Herakles killed the winged Geryon is metaphorically repeated by this photo. Geryon's miracle is that the photo is analogous to the 'shot' of a gun, which the fly, as the alter ego, magically takes for Geryon, in conjunction with a pun on the literal significance of the photo being 'taken'. The magic of the camera, represented by the *punctum*, saves Geryon from death; it "wipes the slate clean", so to speak, which like Blanchot's instant, leads to a symbolic 'New Beginning', a life after death.

In Lacanian terms, since the symbolic kills the thing (because the symbolic confronts the subject with his/her mortality)[277] the photo of the fly reveals something important for Geryon: Geryon's undead immortal status is maintained because the fly is the thing killed in Geryon's place, a substitution made possible because of the autist's magic ability to see the symbolic as real through the technological device that maintains the autistic foreclosure of the NOF. Every withdrawal into the "night of the world" of his photographic essay, every contraction of himself into his autistic self-representation, prolongs Geryon's life, or, in metaphorical terms, immortalizes him.

Geryon's new relationship to death connects to his obsessive questioning, "what is time?" Professor Yellowbeard responds that "time is an abstraction we impose on motion" (*Autobiography* 90). This logic quickly becomes subjected to Geryon's photographic magic when he concludes: "Much truer/ is the time that strays into photographs and stops" (93). In the

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[277] Lacan. "Position of the Unconscious," *Écrits* 719.

photograph, which shows the clock as "five minutes to six," the absence of motion is the timelessness of the *punctum* as the eternal of the *real*. In that photo, Geryon literally grasps eternity by stopping time. What is provocative is that the photo maintains a contradiction; it shows Geryon as the one who forever exists retroactively in the symbolic order as the fantasy of immortality, while remaining true to his autistic nature as rejecting the NOF.

If Geryon the human can be seen as exhibiting autistic tendencies, and his secret is this mythic winged self that attracts the death sentence from which he is repeatedly rescued by his magic *punctum*, then the only autobiography that can resist the fantasy-making compulsion must be a photograph *sans punctum*. In McCallum's thorough analysis of the photographic revolution in Carson's text, she overlooks the anomaly of the double *puncti* in photograph #1748, subtitled, "It is a photograph he never took, no one here took it" (*Autobiography* 145). In this image, Carson drops her "authorial pants" figuratively by representing space for a photograph that is not a photograph since it alludes to a poem by Emily Dickinson, "1748";[278] she problematizes her authority by breaking the grammatical rules of the sentence and using a comma in place of a period or semi-colon. Photograph #1748 is the most paradoxical moment in the autobiography because it is not only a photo that no one took, it is also not a photograph and not just because it refers to a poem. When Geryon is flying over the eye of the volcano, far from the author's "here", "and he smiles for the camera" (145,) there are two devices that are recording, the volcano's eye and Geryon's tape recorder, neither of which creates a photograph, and both of which the author separates from the "here" of her writing. As a self-document of Geryon, the photographic moment of the volcano exists only metaphorically, and is encountered by the inside of Geryon

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[278] Carson is referencing Emily Dickinson's poem #107, "The Reticent Volcano keeps", *Emily Dickinson: Complete Poems* (1924). http://www.bartleby.com/113/1107.html. July 7, 2013.

only. What is literal of Geryon, what reflects the real as the impossible eternal, is operative in the following fact: the author who documents all outside things is noticeably "blind" to the "there" of the real document from "here" and is framed as missing and equal to the impossible idea of resurrection. The volcano's camera eye, the primordial undead real of it, apotropaically protects Geryon from being consumed by the volcanic flames—a sort of symbolic representation of the *Real* encountering the *Real*. It is as if Carson, the narrator, has chosen to represent her own autistic nerve as that which returns again and again to exploit the magic of the literal.

It is not until Geryon flies over the volcano that we understand, "he has not flown in years" (145). Ironically, this moment in which we realize these wings actually function, retroactively interjects the *real* into the symbolic. In opposite terms, the symbolic disappears into the real when we read: "The Only Secret People Keep". The secret that this testimony keeps, because the author cannot represent it in language, is the recorded sound of the *real* entering the symbolic order: Geryon's flying. Apart from Geryon's survival, the only material document of this *real* flight is the audio tape which this literary testimony cannot represent, bringing us to a moment of not "hearing things" as the audio of an autist "listening to himself." The sound recording of an immortal winged being over a volcano is an intellectual feat that remains beyond the bounds of prosaic verse and its particular literary silences, pushing the NOF away as a poetic tension gestures to the silence of beyond. Thus, Photograph #1748 covers over the rupture made by Geryon's *real* immortality, after which, the slate has been wiped so clean that his magic can be shared with Herakles and Ancash where they stand with "immortality on their faces" (146). For the reason this sharing supposes a kind of cure of autism through socialization, and because this text is a self-reflexive autobiography, an aporia is visible.

Monique Tschofen suggests that the end of *Red* reflects a sort of transcendent moment, which "lets us reach beyond 'outside' things to connect with immortality itself" (40). While we can read Carson's fire as an idealistic retreat from the modernity of the camera to the primordial world, accepting Tschofen's interpretation would involve a misreading of Geryon's particular relationship to the technology of the camera, Carson's role in this autobiography, and most importantly, the importance within the text of autistic literalness about the last detail that remains unspoken: Geryon's homosexuality. The volcanic fire, found in the baker's oven, the fire which is mankind's source of life and symbol for life, is the technology which is internal to the photographic process: an image is burned into the film with light. I argue that this baker's fire is simply the last photographic holophrasis, whose precedent was the volcanic eye, which targeted the exception in his act of freedom, in his physical truth of winged bestiality, pushing ironically at the Christian doctrine's condemnation of homosexuality as bestial. In that respect, the last *objet* a of three individuals standing as one, with "immortality on their faces" (146), is the *punctum* of the exception transformed into the resurrected: echoing Geryon's photo of the fly in the throws of dying, this image is the substitute of that which the symbolic kills and it leaves Geryon free to exist in eternity. With the "night of the world" at their back, with the dark struggle of their soul behind them, the symbolic 'New Beginning' of Geryon, the beast he was, has been transformed into the exception amongst others of the anointed Jesus Christ in the trinity.

The argument goes that without the symbolic work Paul did to identify the 'exception' of Jesus and the promise his exceptionality offered to 'all', eternal life would be limited to the 'elect', the adept, the mystic or psychotic. As Paul did with the cursed Jesus, Carson-the-narrator created the terms by which the 'excluded', the disenfranchised, persecuted queer Geryon, whose 'magic' ability to fly has been pejoratively represented as his bestiality, could be seen as

his angelic and unmediated relation to the eternal. In that distinction, Geryon has been beaitifed in the universal promise of salvation. Carson's apparent argument in this project that the autist need not always be an autist, because psychosis may be only a temporary event as indicated in the ecstatic experiences of the mystic, reflects the valuable questions raised about the dichotomy of insanity/sanity. On the other hand, the fact that Carson's work suggests that the 'denigration' or persecution of the exception is a symbolic function that can be unmade is problematic. Geryon is represented as the inhuman pagan winged-thing whose transformation into the exulted figure by which he 'immortalizes' his friends, clearly emulates the Christian tradition of salvation. He has not only passed through oedipalization, he is the exceptional convert; he is a Christ.

While Carson's *Red* is not an autistic narrative *per se*, it iterates the problems raised by autistic subjectivities created by non-autists, especially when compared to autistic representations such as A. M. Baggs's testimony. In her self-made video, Baggs' makes quite clear that she needs no saving from herself. Carson's Geryon, on the other hand, is nothing without the author's oedipalization salvation. The fact that this cure is done through a Christian paradigm of conversion points to a limitation that we unconsciously live with as modern secular/sectarian subjects. Yet, even while Carson sustains a prejudice for Christian conversion, she shows a slight but significant critique of the Christian paradigm in Geryon's final moment. Geryon's salvation at the end is not singular, indicative of the Protestant Reformation's emphasis on Jesus as the only and uncorrupted saviour; with his friends, Geryon forms a holy trinity. The Catholic intervention of the Protestant ideal in this last image is a provocation that should not be overlooked and invites further consideration.

CONCLUSION

As has been made clear in the case studies reviewed so far, the sense of unease with conversion, or assimilation, described by the philosophical works in Chapter 6 exists also in cultural texts in very similar ways. What stands out is that the difference amongst works does not divide along disciplinary or cultural lines, but on the subject's relation to the exception. That is, the star evident in Derrida's and Rosenzweig's projects is also in Kubrick's film, but differently. Whereas Rosenzweig's unease with the Christ messiah was weakly reflected through the abstraction of redemption in the star, Derrida's and Kubrick's work, reflected a strong unease. This might suggest that a subject with religious affiliations experiences less unease with the messiah than a secular subject. In contrast to Derrida's unease expressed in the abstract 'desertified messianic', Kubrick's 'star child' messiah is decidedly Christian, and I would argue that that is why it is represented by Kubrick as a clear threat, consciously or not. In contrast to the sinister fetus, Žižek's messianic is decidedly comforting which, I would argue, is unconscious because, though it borrows the unease reflected in Benjamin's abstract idea of time, as does Derrida's abstract messianicity, it is represented in a positive light. Žižek has already defined the term of 9/11 as something he can convert to: an anti-globalization politics in line with Marxism. Žižek's comfort, which is similar to what we see in Badiou and Blanton about the universal, affirms that atheist secular scholars, who do not have a negative relation to the exception, have a more positive relationship to the messiah. This comfort contrasts those who express an ambivalent relation to the exception and resist messianic expectation and an easy path to the universal.

While Agamben's *homo sacer* serves to explain the correlation between Carson's autist and Kofman's *Muselmann*, the "new subjectivity" in *Red* contrasts the figure haunting Auschwitz in Kofman's philosophical meditation.

Seeing this difference of the "exception to the rule" as being based on either discipline or genre overlooks the fact that *Red* is not about surviving Auschwitz. What is described in this difference is the effect of human rights discourse on social networks. Agamben's figure explains the relation between the *homo sacer* relegated to the camps during WWII and the exception after WWII: the post-war climate is traced by human rights and its efforts to include the excluded, a very Pauline impulse. As I hope I have made clear, the impulse for correction in human rights is qualified by a demand for conversion, which is performed in the autistic fantasy of *Red* as the Oedipal cure. Carson's Geryon, as with Žižek's messiah, expresses a comfort in the conversion promised by the exception of Christ, which contrasts the unease in works that are created by those who have a troubled relation to the exception.

This point raises two final observations. How would a text by a Muslim engage with the Christian exception in secularism? Considering Islam, like Christianity, is a faith centered on conversion, would the Muslim's relation to the exception reflect something other than the dis-ease reflected in texts by Jewish writers? On the question of differences, I note that, Carson's composite exception as the autist, the homosexual and the inhuman 'fantastic' animal, points to something that Žižek's messiah cannot. Geryon is neither a singular figure, nor is he alone in his final moments seeing as he is a part of a trilogy. This pattern, I propose, reflects a symbolic allusion to the Catholic trinity that counters the singularity of Christ of the Protestant tradition inherited by secularism. In short, Carson's text encourages seeing the religious paradigms of the Christ factor not as a dichotomy of two camps, but as a variety of responses within and without the Christian camp as defined by the Protestant fathers of secularism. Taking Carson's work as an example, I would argue against critiquing a text for its partisan ideological bent, even the one that speaks from deep inside the ideology that has the most to lose by exposing its power, even

secularism. Rather, the messianic phenomenology reflects the trauma we each are forced to work through in our engagement with the 'correction' initiated by the Christian interpellation that we take up in our western secular or sectarian lives.

Implicit in the analyses of the *objets a* of the messiah and *Muselmann* and other exceptions, is that they are the disguised return of the exception, where the 'exception', further displaced from the imaginary as it has no determinate form, is an abstract remainder of the real equal to The Thing. As the exception, it inspires what Žižek identifies as the "*che vuoi*", denoting an anterior or even interior aspect of the *tuché,* that cusp of the real which Dolar identified as the terrifying indeterminacy of the aural *objet a*: the 'call'. The call is the closest we get to the mystery of the real: the call is always unknowable, and consistently manifests 'unveiled', invisible. It is the indeterminate demand with which every individual struggles to understand and so answer.

CONCLUSION

INTRODUCTION

I set out in this project to consider how the cause of an apparent anomaly in a social phenomenon, the recurrence of religious terms in secular discourse, was a symptom of a trauma in secular society. I followed through on work of other scholars who identified traumas in cultural phenomena. Blumenberg traced a Freudian concept of trauma in our modern age to the Gnostic teacher, Marcion; Badiou, focusing on twentieth-century events, defined the volatility of a "passion for the real" in the compulsive return of nineteenth-century idealism. Adapting both approaches, but shaped by the *objets a* of the messiah and *Muselmann*, I identified an anterior 'cause' in the term 'messiah' through Paul's representation of his encounter with the real of Jesus. In my focus on Paul's texts I recognized an affinity with Northrop Frye's Biblical-studies approach to literature that inspired his thesis that literature was deeply influenced by the Bible. If Paul's experience can be heard as returning in the religious *objets a* used in intellectual and cultural works of the twentieth century, it seemed that Frye's theory about literature's dependence on the Bible could be applied to other disciplinary works, such as philosophy. In dismantling the disciplinary divide through Lacan's concept of 'fantasy', I have made a case for hearing biblical material in philosophical and cultural 'fantasies' equally, at the same time that I have provided reason to see that Paul's first-century theology can also be considered fantasy contextualized by a long tradition of religious 'fantasies' of the doxa.

For all my work to analyze fantasies through the *objet a*, this project has only ever been about the real; as part of that objective, I have tried to uncover

the factor that is common to both the messiah and the *Muselmann*. The disparity between the real of the ecstatic event and its weakened deflated form in the symbolic-centered fantasy explains my focus on the evidence of the real, visible in patterns of interference in the symbolic. In my effort to trace what is inexpressible of the real through first-century fantasies of Paul and his time, from the messiah to laws to his message of conversion, and reading these first-century fantasies against twentieth-century *objets a* of the messiah and the *Muselmann*, I have managed only to describe the aura of recurring interrelated traumas. For all this vagueness, I have added a dimension to Taubes' 'messianic logic', which qualifies Santner's observation that secularism is riddled with fantasies of the exception. It is the exception that flags the common factor of the ethical aspect of the Thing of the question, *che vuoi:* it is the 'call'. The 'call' is the *objet a* whose proximity to the real gives it an indeterminacy that can be accessed only through its manifestation in the contradictory faces of the exception.

Before reviewing the contradictions emanating from the exception in the pages ahead, I would like to make some qualifying remarks about my conclusion. The parameters by which I circumscribed my analysis, two seemingly disparate terms, was an impulse of attraction, which I can only explain as unconscious. I might have used other religious *objets a* instead of those I chose, terms such as *homo sacer* and "God is dead", but I did not. Unconsciously or accidentally (can there be one or the other?) the fact that both terms identified that the trauma was reflected in the exception, an idea explicit to the Home Sacer and implicit as the Christ in 'God is Dead', proves not only the value of this research, but also indirectly affirms the premise of this project: that secularism contains a trauma which manifests in the interference of the exception. Another set of search parameters may add nuances I overlooked or redress unconscious prejudices. I also recognize that my privileging of Paul as

an anterior 'cause' of the 'messiah' over other possible causes such as Moses, Isaiah, or other prophets, has given this project a decidedly Christian focus to reading secularism. That is, even if modern western secularism has a foundation in Protestant Christianity, its development over time may be indebted to non-Protestant or non-Christian cultural influences, which this project did not trace. As such, the conclusions I offer in the pages ahead are provisional and are given in the spirit of laying the ground for future debate.

PART 1

Despite the central failure of this project as being about the real which eludes symbolic capture, there are some significant symbolic conclusions generated by this research, the first being that there is evidence for how secularism sustains Christian ideology's promotion of equality based on the exception of Christ. Notable about Benjamin's messianic, driven as it is by a Marxist 'call' for equality, is that it is qualified by the Kabbalistic paradigm of *tikkun* which seems to be used as a way to resolve the symptom of the exception. Agamben overlooks this effort in claiming that Benjamin was inspired by Paul in his 'weak messianic power', Britt claims. Britt's critique of Agamben reflected unconscious motivations that helped to isolate the source of his concern: he wanted to disqualify the effect of the exception Agamben claimed to hear because it would contaminate Benjamin's work with Schmitt's association with Nazi fascism and its race policies. As my research showed, hearing the Pauline inflection in Benjamin's work does not contaminate it. Only on reviewing what Paul could have meant by the law of love and especially the Law of Christ, could I begin to explain that the tension apparent between Agamben and Britt was rooted in the contradictory nature of the Christian exception. The law that excepted the Gentile from the Judean clan was the one that became insignificant in the face of the call to eternal life, according to Paul. Eternal life

was accessible for the non-Judean on the condition of accepting Christ, or the Law of Christ that replaced natural law. The salvation Paul promoted is the 'call' of the superior exception, denoted by the cursed man who God blessed with eternal life: that was Jesus Christ. The Christian impulse for inclusiveness determined Christ's return in defining two groups of 'exceptions': those who converted and so were exceptions in the spirit of Jesus, and those who did not convert and were excluded from Jesus' spirit. This dynamic returned sublimated in secular politics as a dynamic between Schmitt's exception and the exception that Human Rights aimed to bring in from the cold. What I hope Britt and scholars like him recognize as a result of this research is that his distrust of Schmitt's exception is an unconscious reaction to the Christian principle that has defined it and determined secular ideology.

My intention in offering the historical review of the first-century messiah in this project was not meant to be comprehensive in the historical sense, but to problematize Britt's argument that not all messiahs after Paul are Christian, a claim that is based on the assumption that Paul's messiah was Christian. This is a paradoxical claim because we know it is not true, as Britt attempted to prove, but also because we know it is true in that the Christian tradition dominates western culture. Jesus is the unique divine figure who grants believers new life. He is the one who suffers for all mankind annually and refuses to lie down and die finally, as Badiou, Caputo, and Lacan have individually warned. Jesus is God incarnate, according to the faith. In the aim to expose the fantasy of this mighty idea, I have pointed out how the singular Christian messiah has roots in the original multiplicity of the figure in Judean culture. I have also shown how Paul distinguished Jesus with a term, not integral to the Judean faith, but to the Greek culture and its concept of the 'anointed', *Christos*. Moreover, I offered some proof for seeing that Paul's creative use of Isaiah for himself may have inspired him to identify Jesus as a suffering servant, also. If, in Isaiah, the

suffering servant was 'anointed', a messiah, in that he was chosen by God to preach to the Nations, Paul's letters suggest that he self-identified with the figure as a member of the chosen people: he claimed to have been chosen by God to spread the good news of redemption to all. These allusions to Isaiah about himself imply several things. For one, according to the historical material we have, Jesus was probably not identified as a 'suffering servant' until long after his death. It is highly likely that Jesus was not commonly understood as the suffering servant during Paul's early ministry. This means that his use of the term for himself did not reflect competition with the Christian Jesus, but shows that he identified with the Isaianic figure at a time when the principle of the 'mesiach' centered on a political responsibility shared by all Judeans, thus the messianic multiplicity. It is possible that Paul's creative use of Isaiah's 'suffering servant' inspired the use of this biblical material to prove Jesus's messianic status. The result of this research is that, while I agree with Britt's claim that "not all messianic roads lead to Paul," I respond to his second assertion that not all roads lead from Paul, to argue that at least the main messianic arteries do, offering support to Agamben's thesis and subsequently lending support to Taubes' assertion that Christianity owes its debt to the first-century Judean and not to the ghost of Jesus.

In this project I have made a case for seeing that the Jesus we know has been constructed in history, and have shown how that construction is related to the fantasy Paul rendered of his ecstatic event as the gospel to the Gentiles. In psychoanalytic terms, Jesus Christ is Paul's remainder of the event that seals over the crisis. What seems inexplicable in the fact that a personal *objet a* can have become a mandate for world politics within centuries attests to how tangled our perspective on history is, and how my research is limited: I followed only some strands of that tangle, one being Paul's language. In privileging belief over facts, the spirit over flesh, eternal life over mortality, Paul made the

invisible more vivid than reality for his listeners. That is, the proof of eternal life in Christ's resurrection is a tautology, which explains why its 'dazzling splendour' has persisted as the core of Christian ideology: the only evidence required has been deferred to the day of his return. The only proof of its validity is the faith with which believers wait for his return. People were and continue to be attracted to his message not for its symbolic sense but for its literalness: by enforcing the impossible as possible, Paul brought the real into the symbolic which, ironically, attests to the return of the exception in secular ideology.

The interface between the real and the symbolic is explained by Badiou's idea that Jesus' crucifixion/resurrection is obviously a fable, but it is also the truth of the event. The question is: of the event what truth is accessible? My effort to answer that question brought me to an analysis of Paul's letters, which are notable for being the earliest extant documents about Jesus. By the time Paul knew Jesus, Jesus was dead; paradoxically, the significance of Christ's resurrection gains definition through Paul who was not there for the crucifixion. Paul used himself as proof of his encounter with the unknown Jesus; the miracle of the resurrection was articulated in Paul's own death and resurrection in the Christ. The fact is, both Shantz's neurobiological approach to the ecstatic event and Lacan's concept of the encounter with the real highlight the same fundamental quality of Paul's message; since ecstatic experience disables the linguistic capability of the brain, then anything Paul has said about his experience, his encounter, his dying and being resurrected, can only be understood as the fantasy of his trauma. That is, as I have argued in Chapter 5, the power of Paul's message as literal uses the historical Jesus symbolically to cover over the real of a personal ecstatic event.

If Paul's trauma reflected a personal encounter with the doxa, then how did it come to dominate the world through the Christian narrative? While historical method makes it feasible to trace the spread of Paul's belief into our

present day, I have made a case for understanding how its spread into the present can be found in a momentum from the past reflected by the themes in the contemporary Greek novel, *Joseph and Aseneth*. In that narrative, the anonymity of the "son of man" figure that visits Aseneth points to a tradition about angelic visitations represented in Merkabah literature: the visitor 'looks like a man' but is not a man. The countenance of the real encounter, which appears human, is experienced as giving and inspiring love. In seeing Aseneth's fantasy as similar to Paul's fantasy, two anomalies in Paul's letters stands out. If Christ was Jesus, how could Paul have recognized him in his ecstatic experience if he had not known the living Jesus? If Christ was Jesus, why did Paul delay spreading the good news of Jesus to the Gentiles, as he admits in Galatians 1:15-24[279]? One more question exposes the knot of Christian teleology: how can Paul encounter love in a figure he did not love but, as is implied in his language of inversions, probably despised for inspiring the heretical movement infiltrating his faith? Tradition, as defined in Acts, argues that the figure who visited Paul was the real Jesus with the power to love the one who persecuted him through his followers. That argument is true only if Paul actually encountered Jesus. By way of cutting the knot, I ask: What if Christ was not Jesus but the 'doxa', in mystical terms simply Aseneth's 'one like a man'? What if Paul's resurrection was not about literal death but about encountering his own immortality, as the fictional Aseneth did, and as has been documented in Merkabah literature? These are the questions this project cannot answer except to pose them in the effort to expose the weakness in the Christian fantasy of Jesus' crucifixion and resurrection, and thereby contribute to Badiou's effort to delink Paul's experience from the 'historical' Jesus and so re-envision the impact of his message on secularism.

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[279] "I did not confer with any human being, nor did I go up to Jerusalem to those who were already apostles before me, but I went away at once to Arabia, and afterwards I returned to Damascus. Then after three years I did go up to Jerusalem to visit Cephas…"

Since Paul's message to the Gentiles evolved from a *Nachträglichkeit,* a delay of three years after his ecstatic experience, we must accept the independence of the real of Paul's ecstatic event from the symbolic nature of his message. Paul's terms for including the excluded in God's salvation involved allegorizing an existing rite of conversion: circumcision. His message to the Gentiles was that they need not be circumcised to gain eternal life; the only condition for entering the fold of God's redeemed people was to circumcise in the heart. For the reason that Paul understood conversion as an act done by the Gentile who wanted to enter eternity with the Judean, Paul was no convert; Paul was not preaching a new religion but preaching a new way for the excluded to participate as equal in his faith. Whatever his altruistic intentions, the effect of his fantasy of his personal doxa was devastating. Roman-occupied Asia Minor and Judea was riddled with mass apocalyptic anxiety that inspired charlatans, as Josephus described the false messiahs, and also motivated honest mystics, such as Paul and even St. John the Baptist, to save those who sought solace in the Judean cult. While Paul aimed only to assist these Gentiles, attracting more and more believers, his mission indirectly caused a trauma within the Judean clan, within families, within individuals. Those Judeans who believed in Jesus eventually were encouraged to exist with those who did not live Judean lives. Living separated by blood relatives was a hardship secondary to the crisis they endured which was also experienced by those left behind. In the revolution of Christ in the Gentile world, something broke for both the Judean follower of Jesus and the Judean clan, and that was the principle of the exception. If, before Paul, the Judean was distinguished as exceptional because he/she was chosen by God, after Paul, exceptionalism became split between the one who is excepted as excluded and inferior and the one who is excepted as superior. Identifying which exception applies depends on which side of the fence one is standing on. The fact the 'exception' is so unstable explains its

symptomatic function in secularism as the radical contradiction of equality, and the driving force of its compulsive return. Its compulsion is to hide its contradiction by attempting to resolve it. In simple terms, the 'kernel' of the trauma of secular ideology is articulated in this semantic rupture.

PART II

The exception is expressed in the 'call' whose shifting terms were roughly outlined in Chapter 5: Paul's call to eternal life became centered on the condition of Christ wherein the Gentile who accepted Christ would be saved by immortality; Paul's message to the Gentiles caused a second trauma within Judaism, which comes to us as the call to equality of the 'all' conditional on the Christ exception. The 'all', defined by conversion to Christ identified the line of inclusion and indirectly reframed exclusion. That paradoxical demand in the call for equality is expressed in the problem raised by human-rights discourse in our modern secular life. Take, for example, Gourgouris' assertion that all must accept the non-religious order of secularism; his claim articulates the conditional nature of inclusion (conversion) expressed in the issue of young women being forced to take off the hijab in France's public schools. This Muslim woman stripped by state law epitomizes how profoundly correct Santner is to claim that secularism is riddled with fantasies of exception. Not only has this Muslim woman been forced to erase the 'exceptionalism' of her cultural/religious identity and so 'secularize' as a citizen, a coerced conversion, she is also expected to be thankful for being freed from religious constraints. The human-rights argument goes that the Muslim woman is liberated from religious oppression because of the law that allows her to be free of her hijab; meanwhile, the law that forces her to attend classes as a secular citizen does not see she is naked for herself in her community in conforming to secular ideology.

In Chapter 1, I problematized Anidjar's assumption that secularism was Christian by noting the discontinuities between some secular projects, such as pro-choice and gay rights, and Christian principles. In recognizing that these exceptions are determined by human rights, I have made a case for seeing that the apparent discontinuity is superficial. One could say that those Christian denominations that have somewhat secularized, such as the United Church, are arguably more Christian than the conservative Christian ecclesia. Secularism is Christian because it is determined by the exception. What is Christian about the exception is its promise: universalism can only be achieved by integrating the exception in its new form as assimilated, a process that is defined by the principle of what Paul defined as conversion. That dynamic points to the contradiction which Žižek claims is at the core of ideological fantasy; if Habermas claims that secularism needs religion to distinguish its superiority over religion, then it follows that secularism also needs the exception to define its promise for equality. The exception is the symptom of secular ideology, which is articulated in the conundrum expressed by Freud about Jewish criminality: just as Jewish 'election' defines the criminal targeted for Christian rehabilitation, so Jewish election serves the secular machine for the 'all'. One more turn of the screw of this logic leads to its perversion in anti-Semitic ideology. In Auschwitz, secular equality returns as the impulse to abolish the difference of the *Muselmann* who is the Jew who "does not die a Jew in Auschwitz" because his 'election' is extinguished through conversion.

The extent to which I agree with Anidjar that secularism is Christian, is the extent to which secularism has sublimated universal equality as a project of assimilating the exception through human-rights discourse. What my research shows is that the exception is not just a simple function of the sovereign's divine decision, as Schmittians assert, but as a complication of the Christian condition. Equality is possible for 'all' on the condition of conversion. This demand within

Christianity becomes the infrastructure of secularism which is heard as a double demand in the call to equality, a term of correction admired by all contemporary citizens, and which unconsciously causes unease for those who recognize that equality is conditional which makes it a 'falsity'. This unease is clearly marked in the representation of the messiah in Derrida's and Kubrick's works. Derrida knows that there is no 'all' because, as a living member of a people excluded as the 'exception', he recognizes that the condition of the 'all' would require he erase his distinction in favour of the force that demands assimilation: the Christ. That is why there is no messiah in his work, just a rendering of Benjamin's abstract idea of a salvation as 'messianicity', wherein fulfillment is always deferred. Kubrick clearly sees the future messiah as the threat of the Christian one, not to be trusted. In contrast to Kubrick's sinister fetus, Žižek's full support of the messiah as the new much anticipated beginning stands out. What also stands out is how Rosenzweig cut the Secular/Christian conflation of conversion/interpellation in his personal and intellectual life. By stepping away from secularism's coercion to reject his election and to assimilate, he identified the call to equality as reflecting a demand for conversion by those who do not have a direct access to eternity, as do the Jewish people.

The *Muselmann* returns in twentieth-century thought as a figure of conversion and thereby more explicitly points to the negative exception of Jesus Christ. The autist in the postmodern text points to another version of the excluded exception. The two cases of this 'excluded' exception, the *Muselmann* and the autist, point to different positions to the demand for correction implied by conversion; an unease equal to Derrida's and Kubrick's works evident in Kofman's text contrasts the positivity in Carson's autist-become-messiah story, equal to Žižek's messiah. The demand to convert in *Smothered Words* has the horrifying physical effect of choking. The monster of Kofman's survival as a

faux-Christian figure shadows her father's unwitnessed death; whether or not she or her father were ever *Muselmänner* does not change the dis-ease inspired by Auschwitz's 'gorgon,' the perversion of the secular impulse to erase religion as the genocide of a people who were distinguished for election. In almost completely opposite terms, Carson's Geryon stands as the fulfillment of the Christian exception whose monstrous a-sociality is transformed by oedipalization into a divine figure. His victorious assimilation at the end only affirms how Lacan's NOF is over-determined by the Christian demand for conversion as the condition of socialization (assimilation), which leads me to see a homology between Baggs' choice for an ambivalent isolation and Kofman's survival.

Apart from the implications of this research which I have touched on, I will conclude with considering two more issues in these last pages: a new way of thinking of trauma and how to proceed with secularism's condition of the exception. The fact that in Lacanian terms any text is an expression of trauma means that technically any secular text in my project could have been used to isolate the 'kernel' of the real in secularism; I have done my best to exploit this fact in this research. Taking Lacan's concept to its limit, my project identified that disaster-centered Trauma Studies has a monopoly in humanities research that inhibits the scope of its application to broader cultural political analyses. It is true that there is no equality between the benign and prevalent condition of the Oedipal event and what survivors of the Holocaust experienced. Nor does it make sense to equate the Holocaust event and the ecstatic event of Paul or Rosenzweig. Even so, these are all examples of the subject's encounter with the real. The onus is on those of us who do Trauma Studies to find ways to accommodate these differences and I shall consider some approaches now, with respect to the research of this project.

Based on the limited scope of my research, it would seem that the monopoly that trauma has had on Holocaust Studies has led to a conflation of symptoms of other pathologies experienced by survivors. Kofman's work, for example, may reflect the trauma she suffered as a survivor, but it also expresses the 'guilt' that recurs in survivor testimony, signaling the debilitating enervating energy of melancholia, the condition which manifests in an explicable fusion of an ambiguous emotional loss and an equally ambiguous sense of guilt. Kofman's testimony explains this melancholic response to her father's death tied to her choosing secularism over the faith with which she was raised until the war. Melancholia is not trauma; the former is the result of the subject's unconscious introjection of the love object that has gone or been rejected, while the latter reflects the subject being affected by external circumstances. I want to emphasize that this is merely one example in which two symptoms have become associated with each other because of the particular cirumstances of a particular field of research. Does this signify a problem with the use of the psychoanalytic method in humanities-based research? If the evidence suggests it does, the problem does not necessarily indicate the failure of this method; rather, it provides perspective on how to develop the psychoanalytic method in the future of humanities research.

Another issue I raised about Trauma Studies scholarship centered on La Capra's warning that the rise of the use of the psychoanalytic theory of trauma as a method in scholarship of humanities-based disciplines fosters a cult of victim to the extent that the perpetrator becomes invisible. Based on Tasso's story of Tancred, I have made the case for seeing that crime is a legal term that, while differentiating between perpetrator and victim in order to bring justice, does not apply to trauma. In fact, legalese discourse exploits trauma in identifying the victim to be rescued for justice, which denies the 'perpetrator' the right to her/his trauma. Considering psychoanalysts recognize that trauma is

a human condition of life experience from the subject's first word to the last, there is a problem in denying some people their experience to it, as if suffering is a privilege. While privileging the victim's suffering perhaps reflects an impulse to bring justice where the courts do not, this privilege misuses the trauma diagnosis leading to the obfuscation of the actual issue in La Capra's warning. Furthermore, the conflation of law with psychic life complicates the work needed to identify where and how justice needs to be done.

With respect to the prevalence of trauma, I also want to stress two things. It is misleading to think of it as the new universal. Since trauma only exists in its return (through fantasy), those who do not have a means of creating that return are technically without trauma, the logic being that without a symptom there is no condition. This is a true statement only for those of us who exist in the symbolic. How does A. M. Baggs experience trauma, for example? This question points to the necessity for developing new nerve endings in the dexterity of psychoanalytic approaches used in the health care and humanities fields. In that respect, understanding how different experiences can be considered trauma suggests that we must accommodate a spectrum under the category of the experience. My contribution to understanding this spectrum was to consider where the *objets a* of the messiah and the *Muselmann* fit into it. In relation to the Oedipal event, both these *objets a* reflected not the interpellation of the subject into the ideology of mankind, as per the laws established in ancient history from the incest prohibition of the primal horde to the Mosaic laws but rather, the *objets a* came to articulate the second interpellation, the interpellation beyond interpellation, of the 'call' from beyond secular ideology. It is tempting to suggest that the 'extreme' conditions of the 'ecstatic' call are equal in intensity to the 'extreme' conditions of those who endured the Holocaust, reflecting a spectrum from joy to horror, love to hate, heaven to hell, and everything else falls within this spectrum. Yet, to plot these experiences

along a single axis I think occludes understanding what is meant by the fact that the messiah and the *Muselmann* exist at polar ends.

As I suggested in the introduction, the unconscious use of these terms in secular projects identified the desire in the 'call' that comes from heaven. Each of the case studies articulated differences, which I suggested reflected a different response to the call, seeing in the 'call' the consistency of the unveiled quality of the real. One might say that this second call is equal to the Oedipal call in that it demands an answer; and as with the Oedipal call, its demand is, as Dolar articulates, terrifyingly indeterminate. This second call is at times, however, in conflict with the socialized 'call', as exemplified in Antigone's choice to heed the 'call' of the gods rather than the laws of the state. Thus, this second 'call' is ethical in Lacan's concept of the law of desire and also in Badiou's association of the subject with the truth of the Event. Perhaps what can be said about this second call, as the case studies are considered together, is that not all receive the 'call' in the same way. Paul's 'call' and, I would say, Rosenzweig's 'call' could be defined as equivalent to the tradition of ecstatic experiences: they experience this interpellation as signaling a break with their culture. With respect to Derrida, Kofman, Badiou and Žižek, the 'call' may be interpreted through their scholarship, and Kubrick and Carson in their art. The variety of responses to secular ideology within the two trends of unease and comfort points to the complicated quality of tracing the real. Perhaps the trauma of the "interpellation beyond interpellation" is, as with Lacan's concept of the law of the desire, singular and thus fundamentally incomparable.

In all the fantasies reviewed, it may be possible to suppose that we have seen an answer to Lacan's question: "Have you acted in conformity with the desire in you?" Those whose politics have been defined by Christian principles, such as the atheists Žižek and Lacan or the Christian Blanton, reflect a fidelity to the truth of the Christian event, determining their comfort with the exception. In

these cases, we can understand that doing responsible scholarship involves accepting culpability in the Christian effort for correction and have a personal interest in equality. Those who do not see any truth in the Christian event, but still uphold a faith in equality and human rights, can do no more than remain true to the desire in them with respect to the 'exception'. I have reviewed some very vivid examples of the unease inspired by the Christian truth-event expressed in works by Freud, Benjamin, Derrida, Kofman, etc., and their different responses point to the fact that there is a fidelity to the truth of an event that is not Christ. Rosenzweig's 'new thinking' is an example of this fidelity to the truth which perhaps more explicitly identifies an event expressed in the Book of Isaiah. What is new in Rosenzweig's thinking technically is not so new, but I hope this research has helped readers see its profound significance. In not converting to Christianity, Rosenzweig answered the demand in secularism to assimilate and the demand in Christianity to believe in Christ, by accepting the 'call' implicit in his election as a Jew; what was not explicit before but which his choices make new through his introduction of Isaianic thinking into secularism is that eternity is the destiny for all, but not all are required to get there in the same way.

The messiah and the *Muselmann* express the post-secular because they engage secularism's ideology in its contradiction: the exception. It is through this contradiction that I want to conclude by returning to Britt's discomfort with Agamben's analysis of Benjamin's messianic. As far as Britt was concerned, Agamben was a Schmittian because he theorized about the exception. Britt's inability to see Agamben's idea of the exception as anything other than Schmitt's "thing" of an abnormal product of normalcy signals a broader trend in contemporary thought on the topic of the exception: a focus on Schmitt's binary. This tendency in scholarship was made visible for me at a panel on the exception at the ACLA conference at U of T this spring, (2013). In addressing

the conflict aroused by the exception, one panelist focused on incidences of the 'unexceptional', or the normal.[280] It was an interesting presentation because her effort revealed both the desire to break free from Schmitt's binary and the unconscious hold it has on our thinking. In recycling Schmitt's binary, she missed the trouble evident in the definition of exception, which my work on the trauma of secularism has made the effort to bring to light. The 'exception', this product of a semantic rupture, reflects the remnants of a defining moment of conflicting interpellations of the exception: there is the exception attributed to Schmitt against normalcy which is the perversion in secularism of the Christian exception that determines the call of the 'all' of the universal; and there is Jewish exemplarity, Hollander's expression for election. Thus, what emanates from the Thing of the exception is not one call, but all these calls together within secular and sectarian terms, each of which demands an ethical response. The way beyond Schmitt is not to listen to him or erase him, but to listen through him to the three interpellations emanating from this Thing all at once, articulating the return of Paul's real.

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[280] Emily Apter. "Towards a Theory of Unexceptional Politics". ACLA, University of Toronto, Toronto, ON, April 6, 2013. Conference Presentation.

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