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GEMS FOR CREATURES:  
CARE AND NATALITY BETWEEN HANNAH ARENDT  
AND SHAKESPEARE

Full fathom five thy father lies.  
Of his bones are coral made.  
Those are pearls that were his eyes.  
Nothing of them that doth fade  
But doth suffer a sea change.

*The Tempest*, I.ii.400-4<sup>1</sup>

Every creature comes from “not yet” and heads for “no more.” If man, coming from the “not yet,” were to venture at all on the search for his own being, he would make the question about “before” an expression of referring back to his own source on the basis of this pre-existing relation. Heading for “no more,” the creature refers forward to death.

Hannah Arendt, *Love and Saint Augustine*<sup>2</sup>

Reality is referred back to the phenomenon of care.

Martin Heidegger, *Being and Time*, § 212<sup>3</sup>

The opening camera shot of Kenneth Anger’s *Inauguration of the Pleasure Dome* glides along and swallows an opulent piece of jewelry. We follow a richly beset Lord Shiva the Magician out of his boudoir and into the temple where he heads a ceremony that leaves no known religion or cultural heritage excluded. The “inauguration into pleasure” consists partly of consuming vast amounts of jewelry. Anger was an open follower of Aleister Crowley, a self-professed disciple of the devil and patron saint of artists who, embracing the fetish as a relay of extremes and totemic remains, consumed the chains of single-minded origins. Anger’s allegorical last supper offers for unlimited consumption the vast riches of a world that no longer obeys the dictates of the creaturely, but preserves its domain on a funereal playground. Every jewel represents the final testament of a creature. On a different arena, the political, Hannah Arendt reminded us that we have an obligation to preserve every jewel, not in order to reanimate the legacy it represents, but in a museum state of mourning. The destructive slide from art into

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<sup>1</sup> William Shakespeare, *The Tempest*, ed. David Bevington (NY: Bantam Books, 1988).

<sup>2</sup> Hannah Arendt, *Love and Saint Augustine*, eds. Joanna Vecchiararelli Scott and Judith Chelius Stark (Chicago: Chicago UP, 1996), 70.

<sup>3</sup> Martin Heidegger, *Being and Time*, trans. John Macquarrie and Edward Robinson (San Francisco: Harper, 1962), 255.

politics, which is always accompanied by anger, has by now crystallized into a bejeweled ring of power. When Kenneth Anger directed his lead actor to consume the long chain of jewels, he watched his surname disappear into the depths of the media-technological apparatus.

Shakespeare, who was aware of the destructive tendency coded in poetic exercise that outgrows its sphere of influence and reaches into the world of spirits, superstition, and intoxication, contemplates the jewel of a final testament with *The Tempest*. The central allegorical relation, that conjures the remapping of current events into the shape of the play, is between Prospero, the magician and master of spirits, and Caliban, his creature. Although we are told that Caliban remembers some form of “natality,” a mother, we are also told he is the spawn of the devil. Children of the devil are contractual and unmediated by a maternal body. The “mother” he remembers is Prospero’s vengeful plan to change the shape of events and punish his usurping brother. The end of the contract that made Caliban is signaled by the end of Ariel’s prison term. Ariel, the media technological messenger, is also in the service of Prospero only insofar as he channels the master-father’s empire of death wishes yoked to revenge plots. For example, Ferdinand hears his own death wish against his father returning from the wind. Prospero has bid Ariel sing the tune of Ferdinand’s wish. As a scholar and a ruler, Prospero knows the human heart, which gives him power over Ariel. His course into exile is set by a brother’s betrayal, which is the ancient recipe for tragic finitude that delivers the medieval creature-hero on a triumphant carriage into its modern political reincarnations. Prospero’s relations to Ariel and Caliban, indeed their very coming into being, are bound to the revenge plot. The magician’s grievance is emblemized by the isolation of the island, which binds him to his creatures. Once the brother’s transgression is revealed and corrected, a daughter’s hand given in marriage, and a subordinate’s plot to usurp power foiled, Ariel is set free. A father’s legacy only goes so far. Along with its creations it is finite and crystallizes into stone formations.

Caliban is the mascot allegorical figure of the play, which stamps its misshapen face and body on our hearts as well. The references to his incomplete shape indicate lack of mediation by a maternal body and a divine creator. The human shape requires more than a father’s “humane care” (I.ii.248) Shakespeare puts a marriage ring, the daughter-jewel, on our hearts with the love between Ferdinand and Miranda and enslaves us. Their love is coincidental with the enslavement of Ariel, Caliban, Ferdinand, and eventually the company from the ship wreck. The latter are lured into a deadly trap with sweet music that entangles them in the web of their death and love wishes. Among the prisoners is the “loyal servant” Gonzalo who spared Prospero and Miranda’s lives and made their return possible. He is also the author of a beautiful utopian dream. The path of his enslavement is through his visionary ideas. The loyal servant offers a more sophisticated version of Caliban, Stephano, and Trinculo’s spirits-driven idea of usurping the king’s power. As courtier he speaks the language and values of the court and sublates them into a vision of a new and just society. The “sweet music” he is first to hear,

like the Sirens' song, is perilous and threatens their lives, but it is also the weapon of Prospero's justice and revenge.

Caliban stands out in the group of Prospero's "slaves," to which we as readers also belong, in that he claims to be the original owner of the realm that has come under Prospero's care as a result of his brother's treason. Caliban has intuited that he is the creature of Prospero's -- and Shakespeare's -- plot, which makes his claim to "natality" absurd. Arendt introduced the term "natality" for the first time in her dissertation on Saint Augustine. Initially the term was coined to combat Heidegger's notion of the determination of human existence by "mortality," but evolved, without abandoning the fundamental position of Heidegger's philosophy on public space, into a political category. In "The Crisis of Education" Arendt argues: "education is the point at which we decide whether we love the world enough to assume responsibility for it and by the same token save it from that ruin which, except for renewal, except for the coming of the new and young, would be inevitable."<sup>4</sup> A melancholy fear of loss and death fuels this call on the saving powers of education. It opens an abyss of nothingness in which all legacies are threatened with extinction. The chill from the abyss reanimates a notion of "natality" that is thoroughly subordinated to a grim contemplation of absolute and total finitude, but that same *nihil* also provides the chance of new creation.

Psychoanalysis, on the other hand, has taught us that the father is always already dead and uncertain, that his legacy is a ruin. In "On Transience" Freud explains that the poet finds inspiration in lamenting the passing moment's total destruction in time, but reminds us that nothing is ever lost and the most thorough destruction has to reckon with a powerful return of the legacy. In the German tradition, which attempted to play the trading post of world heritage, Johann Wolfgang Goethe gave us the realm of the Mothers, to which every scholar, including Arendt and Heidegger, descends to bring back his Antiquity-prize, shatter the "beautiful world" with a fist, and hurl it into the abyss of nothingness. We know from Friedrich Nietzsche's writings and from Hitler's run for the prize of Antiquity that the slide from art into politics is a slide into nothingness. The gesture is unavoidable, but containable. Transience, Freud taught us, is the only link to survival on the line of father time, or *tempus*, the Latin root for weather and tempest. Ruins, including the slide into nothingness, are imprinted on the maternally transmitted veils of mourning and from there scheduled for unpredictable and unknown future returns. Shakespeare, whom Goethe considered to be "nature" and from whom he learned his craft, makes Prospero's relation to time and the tempest of destruction appear to be one of total control and identification, but in fact it is highly mediated. His contact with the tempest is established via Ariel the Singer.

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<sup>4</sup> Arendt, Hannah, *Between Past and Future: Eight Exercises in Political Thought* (New York: Penguin, 1968), 196.

Based on his natality-claim Caliban, like a naughty schoolboy, demands the island back from Prospero. The “sweet sounds” of the isle “that give delight and hurt not” have whispered “native airs” in his ears, but also inspired the plotting of Prospero’s murder and Miranda’s rape. It is not accidental that in another play poison administered through the ear destroys a heritage. Caliban’s position in the makeshift household of the exiles is ultimately that of a pagan, inter-special, half-human half-beast of burden. As an allegorical emblem he represents Prospero’s “primitive” emotions and shares a great deal with the usurping sibling, who separated Prospero and his daughter from wife, mother, and inheritance, and attempted their assassination. Prospero’s anxious farewell at the end of the play signals the uneasy legacy he leaves behind with the triumph of “justice,” the internal Caliban, who along with the love between Miranda and Ferdinand represents the poetic activation of feelings a playwright needs to bind his audience to himself. The politicization of Christian allegorical figures, which are deployed as conceptual creatures, or chiliastic emblems, in various stages of repression, in secular political modernity, determines a transgression and a regression to the deed of the murder of the father.

Our teacher in matters of allegory and the genre of the mourning play is Walter Benjamin. His study on the German Baroque, *The Origin of the German Mourning Pageant*,<sup>5</sup> crowns the creature as the sole heir of the stage abdicated by the pagan tragic hero. Benjamin was in the habit of not citing his most important sources, which only turned up the volume of their broadcast in his writing. It is widely acknowledged that the study is in fact about Shakespeare, whose corpus was injected into German letters by Goethe, and then again re-injected and reframed by Freud. German letters have been in the service of Shakespeare at least since the printing of *Wilhelm Meister’s Apprenticeship*. Hannah Arendt’s conviction that German literature does not begin until Goethe, may be unconsciously picking up on this line of transmission, but it also fails to see the open wound that Shakespeare is invited to heal for Goethe, the mass-casualty producing, suicide-inducing first novel, *The Sorrows of Young Werther*. Werther is ripped from the womb of the German baroque, a time-period to which Benjamin returns to discover the secrets of Shakespeare’s art. Saving Werther and the German baroque required the writing of *Wilhelm Meister* and the eternal contract with Master Shakespeare.

Benjamin offers one of the most thoroughly researched data banks of the creature of the Christian allegorical pageant. He tells us that the creature is not mortal, yet infinitely subjected to the cycle of death. It is the product of tragedy, which maps the path to death, the kind of death that crystallizes in emblematic mascot figures and is laid at the foundation of every city- or nation-state and every code of law. It is condemned to a perpetual state of emergency and draws within its pool of stormy weather every representation of sovereignty. Benjamin is clear about the

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<sup>5</sup> Walter Benjamin, *The Origin of German Tragic Drama*, trans. John Osborne (New York: Verso, 1998).

impossibility of infusing the creature with life and understands that its origin lies in the corpse: "There is in the physis, in the memory itself, a *memento mori*; the obsession of the men of the middle ages and the baroque with death would be quite unthinkable if it were only a question of reflection about the end of their lives."<sup>6</sup> Similarly, Benjamin tells us, from the point of view of death the products of the corpse are "life." What is considered corpse-like in life, all processes of elimination from the living body, becomes "life" in death. Nails and hair live and grow after the death of the body. The creature revels in all processes of elimination and makes its home in ruins and destruction. Allegory, however, offers it a home away from the home of destruction and sacrificial pagan rites. The allegorical imagination seeks to preserve and lovingly embrace the creature while containing the toxicity of its "life" in death: "For an appreciation of the transience of things, and the concern to rescue them for eternity, is one of the strongest impulses in allegory."<sup>7</sup> A profound understanding of the allegorical imagination allowed Benjamin to grasp the basic mechanisms whereby media technology establishes its control of the sensory apparatus while simultaneously losing and eliminating itself. Thus the creatures transmitted via modern media often exceed the limits set by death and pass into the play of light and shadow that carries the imprints of technology. Benjamin was among the first to tell us about the self-reflexivity of the medium and of the requirement that certain imprints remain unrepresentable if there is any hope for their survival. The infinite finitude of the creature is impossible and unthinkable outside the survival of the media, whose elimination and destruction creaturely "life" constantly seeks.

Hannah Arendt's notion of natality is bound to the ancient creature from the allegorical pageant. Instances of resistance both to the modern world and its technological apparatus as well as to periods in history that were dominated by an obsession with death and all processes of elimination and preservation, such as the Baroque, are abundant throughout Arendt's corpus. On the one hand, her work is limited to modern conceptual creatures jumping at her through the blind spots of a historical outlook that prizes Greco-Roman antiquity above all else, such as "political activism" on the side of acceptance and "totalitarian politics" on the side of elimination. On the other hand, her resistances serve as an index to the symptom-forming topoi of modernity. Arendt did worry on occasion that her work might be preserving what she adamantly sought to destroy.<sup>8</sup> It is up to us to decide, if decide we must.

Following her teacher and lover Martin Heidegger, Arendt argues that the creature comes from nothingness and is headed for nothingness. From the point of view of psychoanalysis this premise also indicates that the creature skips the age of intense pleasure, which accompanies contact with the pre-Oedipal maternal body and

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<sup>6</sup> Benjamin, *Origin*, 218.

<sup>7</sup> Benjamin, *Origin*, 223.

<sup>8</sup> Hannah Arendt, "A Reply to Eric Voegelin," *The Portable Hannah Arendt*, ed. Peter Baehr (NY: Penguin Books, 2000), 158.

binds all mediatic life. The creaturely experience is one of direct unmediated exposure to the light of a law that *is* Being. Pagan or monotheistic gods made the ancient creatures we recognize as ruins. The modern age gave us creatures made in labs, pressed in newspapers, bottled in TV tubes, and aired on x-waves. The ancient creatures are not so much surmounted or overcome as they are repressed, reformatted, miniaturized or colossally magnified by technology. What ancient and modern creatures have in common is the yearning for the maternal body they never had and the space of solitude to which they are condemned. (Caliban, again, is a case in point.) The creature can interpret its being only as *care*, as that which it can effect in the world it co-creates with its creator, but only through the bare operations of its life processes, as *animal laborans*, and not through the more public modalities of making and acting. Put in the words of Hannah Arendt reading Augustine: “The mode in which life knows and perceives itself is worry.”<sup>9</sup>

The dissertation on *Love and St. Augustine*, a traditional philosophical treatise on the relationship between creature and creator in the work of the early Christian theologian, develops a view that underlies Arendt’s later political convictions, that life after death is removed from all earthly purposes. Benjamin would have had trouble accepting this position because it precludes an understanding of technology in the modern world. Yet, his own thesis on the German baroque was largely considered a failure at the time, which may indicate that Arendt’s work was closer to the standard in German universities of the twenties. With the dissertation Arendt attempts to emancipate her thought from Heidegger’s. The result is a work obsessed with the central question of his philosophy, namely what determines being. Arendt’s answer, an echo of Heidegger’s, is: the relation to one’s origin determines being. As Augustine proposed, the ability to relate to a Creator-figure or document consciously and with care determines the creature’s being. This *being* posits a direct, unmediated relation to the manifest contents of a communal memory reserve. Arendt was systematically opposed to the private realm, which she defined after the Roman model as the realm of women and slaves. In the modern world this would include all office workers and servants of the bureaucratic apparatus. Arendt wished to see the “private realm” entirely sequestered from the public and the political. The slogan “the personal is political” is a one-way street that leads over and away from the personal dead body and is the oldest trick in the book of belief systems and organized religions aimed at usurping the singular energy of the private space Arendt helped us understand, though in the negative.

Walter Benjamin observes that the repetition of the death of the creature provides the basis for a transition from tragic finitude to allegory and the mourning play. The genre of the mourning play is singularly established and abolished by Shakespeare, argues Benjamin in the *Origin-book*. Theodor Adorno championed the book as Benjamin’s foundational work. Arendt disagrees. Her qualms with Adorno are well known. The *Origin-book* is not among her favorites. Nonetheless,

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<sup>9</sup> Arendt, *St. Augustine*, 11.

her observation that Adorno was Benjamin's first follower and disciple establishes a link of intimacy and non-Oedipal continuity in the work of the two authors. Adorno was Benjamin's most careful and meticulous reader. As a trained philosopher he was able to perceive the Origin-book as Benjamin's most systematic, albeit philologically determined, work. Shakespeare's corpus, argued Benjamin based on his philological research, contains the Baroque totality and excess of the genre that became synonymous with his name. The Origin-book provides a philosophico-philological basis on which Arendt's work on the creature, the emblematic figure for care-based-natality and natality-based-on-care, finds a home in the allegorical project that doubles Shakespeare's corpus.

The term "natality," which has been widely read as Arendt's answer to Heidegger's speculations on "mortality," appears only once and only in the revised version of the dissertation. Even though it makes a brief appearance, the discursive position of "natality," "the fact that man enters this world through birth,"<sup>10</sup> supports a foundation for the critique of Augustine's conception of the relation to *this* world. Augustinian thought, Arendt's dissertation reveals, can only relate to a world before or after. *This* world is the world of the creature and it stretches between the "not yet" and the "no more." In spite of its reference to "birth" Arendt's understanding of *being* as relation to one's origin, which she terms "natality," does not refer to an open future, but to a singular event from an infinitely repeatable past, which is marked by sacrifice and the death of the deity. The creature that lives between "not yet" and "no more" is radically final and temporal. Frankenstein's creature, composed of pieces from dead bodies, is a case in point. Ongoing separation from the living body and from the techno-body, which require continuing re-birthing through technologization, is a prerequisite for mediation not limited by temporality, but preserving life. Eighty or so years, the span of a lifetime, are time enough to experience earthly immortality, in *this* world. Immortality is not the sovereign property of the gods. On the human level it ceases to be sovereign property and poses the challenge of bearing witness in daily life, which is only possible from the point of view of life snatched from the jaws of death and time.

When Martin Heidegger asked the most creaturely of questions, "Who am I?" "Who Made Me?" and "What does 'To Be' Mean?" he set out to construct the latest ontological test that we are all expected to pass. It is not enough just to go through the test in an experimental fashion and live with the results. To pass one must show care. The deepest-seated care for what the fathers left us validates our existence. Heidegger taught us that *care* means being in and with the world. *Being*, he insisted, can only interpret itself as *care*. The pre-ontological document he chooses to support the legitimacy of his peeping into the parents' bedroom is the ancient fable about the creation of man from the mud of Earth and the spirit of Zeus by the goddess Care. Care found a piece of earth in the river and formed it into human shape. Zeus blew his fertilizing creative airs into it, animated it, and

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<sup>10</sup> Arendt, *St. Augustine*, 51.

claimed its spirit after death. Earth claimed the dead body. And Care claimed it as her possession while it, man or woman, lives, after birth and before death. Care owns what lies between the nothing of the “before” and the nothing “after” and, according to Heidegger, binds man to the world. Before and after, Earth and Zeus, determine man’s existence in a temporal dimension. Care stamps the creature; the spirit of Zeus animates only manifest, dead forms. The headline of Heidegger’s philosophy – being thrown in the world and headed for death, human existence is determined by death – limits being to a state of createdness.

In classical psychoanalysis, creation, the creature, and createdness are related to an early phase of differentiation and to the function of the father. In his study on the Madonna’s conception through the ear Ernest Jones<sup>11</sup> observes that the notion of fertile air stems from speculations about the earliest inquiry, baby’s research of the question of its origin. The only orifice that “produces” at this early stage is the anal orifice. Divine breath is the sublimated version of the other fertile breath, Jones reports. What these early and earthy theories accomplish is the foundation of a basic structure for the level of experience governed by the fantasy of existence without the mediation of the mother. The fable about Care belongs to this level of human experience. The creature is not born of a woman, but created by a deity, whether a god, goddess, or material document like a code of law, be it ethical, legal, or scientific. Its constitution originates, fantasmatically, outside the blood bond that links infant to mother, but also predates the father and his law of intervention and substitution that orders the separation of the dyad. Pre-Oedipal paternity represents a reversed figure of God the creator and opts for the second best blood bond, the blood signature. The law of creation also belongs to a pre-historical, pre-ontological, and pre-Oedipal primal time that subordinates the body and retrofits it within a reversed projection of the Oedipal father. In Arendt’s and in Heidegger’s thought maternal and paternal “care” and “natality” are not distinguished, although, as Julia Lupton argues in her opening remarks, Arendt polemically links natality with the public sphere, and not only with the life functions of the *oikos*.

Shakespeare makes the distinction between curatorial and tutorial natality at the end of the play when he insists, via Prospero’s anxious plea for mercy, that dreams and the realm of spirits be released from their bondage in the indulging heart of the spectators and allowed to return home. Caliban is Shakespeare’s most elaborate contemplation of the creature.<sup>12</sup> The fate of Caliban is linked to that of a daughter. The seeming happy end does not make the main characters any less creaturely and finite than the more obviously “tragic” and Baroque characters like Macbeth and Othello. A father is said to lose a daughter in marriage and gain a son. The trade-off is never equal, because with the marriage of the daughter, the

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<sup>11</sup> Ernest Jones, “The Madonna’s Conception Through the Ear,” *Essays in Applied Psychoanalysis* Vol. II (NY: International University Press, 1964), 266-357.

<sup>12</sup> See the chapter on “Creature Caliban” in Julia Reinhard Lupton, *Citizen-Saints: Shakespeare and Political Theology* (University of Chicago Press, 2005).

father dies. Finitude accompanies marriage. To guarantee their survival through battles, generals of the ancient world sacrificed a virgin daughter before leading thousands of men to death in war. The sacrifice was believed to secure temporary immunity to death. Shakespeare dies shortly after the marriage of his youngest, and by all accounts most beloved, daughter, which links his fate as a magician and conjurer of fates to Prospero's, who also prepares to die after Miranda's engagement party. Shylock, a father in another play who "dies" upon his daughter's marriage, cries out: "my ducats, and my daughter! And jewels, two stones" (II.viii.17-21).<sup>13</sup> The first two losses he enumerates are understandable. Jessica is lost in marriage. Ducats signify Shylock's livelihood. He is a lender and currency is his lifeline. But why jewels?

To illustrate performatively what she perceives to be Benjamin's technique of decontextualized citation and to gloss his historiographical method Arendt quotes *The Tempest* on jewels in her *Introduction* to Benjamin's essays, *Illuminations*, as I have done for an epigram to this essay. Ariel sings these lines to the shipwrecked Ferdinand who has landed naked on an unknown island. The task of the aerial messenger is to break the news of his father's death and thus put Ferdinand "in the mood for love" and marriage. Freud records an upsurge of sexual libido in the event of parental death. Miranda, a representative of the father, is the pearl of substitution that will replace the lost father. Arendt links the pearl-fisher historian to this aerial messenger. He disseminates love and death in one breath. The pearl-fisher is a kind of a human incarnation of what Benjamin called *angelus novus*, the angel of the new or news. He gazes at ruins and wishes to reanimate them. They set his wings aflutter in a storm of sexual libidinal upsurge that is always coupled with death and loss.

Arendt was fond of historical gems. Roman citizenship was one of her most highly prized pearls. Reanimation fantasies blast certain other pasts beyond the state of ruins. Not everything historical qualifies as a gem in Arendt's world. She had a rather phobic reaction to Benjamin's choice of a "disreputable" subject for his thesis, and felt obliged to tell us that the German Baroque does not qualify as a pearl left by times gone, indeed, not even as a decent ruin. Its "nothingness" was proof enough that there is no living link with the past. This conclusion can also be drawn from her philosophical speculations, which are limited to the created world. There are certain pasts she considered worthy of being thrown beyond pearls and ruins and into the Heideggerian nothingness.<sup>14</sup> They do, however, represent a living link to the past, in spite of Arendt's energetic denial inspired by problems with her mother. Psychoanalytically, the denial of a living link with the past, which is a screen for denial of separation and trauma, along with the charge of scatology hurled at the Kabala and at the baroque, are symptoms of a stuck and

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<sup>13</sup> William Shakespeare, *The Merchant of Venice*, ed. David Bevington (NY: Bantam Books, 1988).

<sup>14</sup> Hannah Arendt, "Introduction," *Illuminations*, essays by Walter Benjamin, ed. Hannah Arendt (NY: Schocken, 1969), 40-41.

transgressive relationship with the pre-Oedipal father. Unprocessed and consciously denied loss, which credits these relations, requires the rapid turnover of equal substitutions. The disowned and orphaned past, such as the German Baroque or the Kabala, becomes a locus of static relations with maternal heritage.

Freud chose Ariel's song from *The Tempest*, the same lines quoted by Arendt, to illustrate the main insight of his 1912 *Totem and Taboo: Some Points of Agreement between the Mental Lives of Savages and Neurotics*, that the murder of the primal father by the band of brothers leaves unmistakable traces in the history of humanity:

An event such as the elimination of the primal father by the company of his sons must inevitably have left ineradicable traces in the history of humanity; and the less it itself was recollected, the more numerous must have been the substitutes to which it gave rise. (Footnote #65: In Ariel's words from *The Tempest*: 'Full fathom five thy father lies/ Of his bones are coral made;/ Those are pearls that were his eyes;/ Nothing in them that doth fade,/ But doth suffer a sea-change/ Into something rich and strange.')<sup>15</sup>

The countless substitutive formations that arise from the original deed grow "richer and stranger" the deeper into the recesses of memory the deed is driven. Freud did not consider gems and pearls original or native formations. They represent substitutive structures that serve to mask the original deed. The crowned body of the King is heavily bejeweled to mark the sacrificial stabs that sank into the dead body supporting the throne of power. The pearls around the neck of a woman mark the dotted line for the knife of repeatable sacrificial rites, and for the plastic surgeon's scalpel. The footnote functions to ground Freud's claims in a longstanding tradition that has not forgotten the violent context of its bloody origin. Gems are hardly innocent thought fragments that have suffered a dissemination change. The pearl-fisher historian is a priest with a knife and the creature is cut out from human flesh. In the Standard Edition English translation of Freud's work, the quotation from Shakespeare is cited in a footnote and is not included in the main text. In the original German publication Freud cites the lines from *The Tempest* in the main text in the original English and offers a footnote with the German translation. The seemingly utilitarian and superfluous footnote citation of Schlegel's translation of Shakespeare's lines into German also serves to illustrate one more time Freud's main argument, that "rich and strange" formations do multiply every time the murder of the father gets carried out and repressed anew. Translations and disseminations are such formations. As a totemic figure the creature represents the dead father of the primal horde. The tragic hero of the ancient stage became the foundation of Athenian ethics only through his sacrifice. This is the central claim that Freud advances in 1912 and that Benjamin

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<sup>15</sup> Sigmund Freud, *Totem and Taboo*, The Standard Edition, XIII, trans. and ed. James Strachey (NY: Norton, 1950), 192.

confirms in his *Origin*-book a decade later. The creature's dead body provides nourishment, while it is our prime instructor in the rites of mourning.

Freud heeded the difference from totemic identification, which is required for proper mourning, when he chose Shakespeare's character Hamlet to star in his first book and thus got Goethe and Shakespeare to co-sign his science. Shakespeare introduced the term "bestial oblivion" for the perfect, fantastic state of nonpolitical consumer bliss in 1599 when he wrote *Hamlet*. The market of interminable mourning works for food and sleep, no more. In his "Thoughts on War and Death," Freud reflects that men would never venture to explore territories away from home and lead wars to conquer them if they had mourned their dead. He found it necessary to introduce the notion of proper mourning after the Great War devastated the European continent, tore its constitutive parts into deadly and suicidal splits, and pressed psychoanalysis into the utilitarian and social service of curing the war neuroses. Psychoanalysis was invented to conquer the undiscovered land of improper burials during peaceful time and in the museum state of unmourning, that is, interminable mourning. Its first patient was Hamlet.<sup>16</sup>

Arendt's work, which rests on the absolute principle of political action at all costs and by all means and ends, belongs almost in its entirety to the endless blanks in Hamlet's final soliloquy: "What is a man,/ If his chief good and market of his time/ Be but to sleep and feed?/ A beast, no more./ Sure he that made us with such large discourse,/ Looking before and after, gave us not/ That capability and godlike reason/ To fust in us unused" (IV.iv.33-39). This is where Hamlet tears himself from the "bestial oblivion" of ghost sighting and prepares to strike back at his projections by pinning down and putting to use the "large discourse" of before and after. The basic paradox of Arendt's work is that she paid lip service to earth-bound life that lies between before and after, birth and death, but acted from the position of the "large discourse" that spans before, now, and after. Today the "large discourse" of before and after sustains the enormous media-advertising complex that keeps plastic surgery clinics open. The fear of losing face, of bearing a mark of difference, is time-bound to the creaturely stretch from "not yet" to "no more."

Arendt appears to have literally suffered the fear of losing her face. In one of her letters to Heidegger, her relationship to whom restaged a troubled relationship to her mother, she shares her ongoing terror of losing face. According to Freud the relationship to husband reproduces the relationship to the mother. The fact that Arendt never let go of her romantic attachment to Heidegger spelled trouble for her marriages. Heidegger is in a sense the static on the line to mother, husband, and current environment. One could make the argument that Arendt never really crossed the Atlantic. Romantic attachments are of the order of the creaturely. We

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<sup>16</sup> See Julia Reinhard Lupton and Kenneth Reinhard, *After Oedipus: Shakespeare in Psychoanalysis* (Ithaca: Cornell UP, 1992).

are most manipulated where we “feel” its intense immediacy. The other “husbands” were casualties of the love affair with creature Heidegger.

On September 30, 1929, shortly after her marriage to Guenther Stern (whom she would later divorce), Arendt writes:

Martin, when I saw you today – forgive me I reacted immediately. But I was stung by the image of you and Guenther together at the window and I alone on the railway platform. I couldn’t wipe out the diabolical clarity with which I saw what happened in this way. Forgive me.

I was overwhelmed by it all and obviously confused. It’s not only that your gaze always ignites in me the clearest and most urgent recognition of the continuity of my life, but also, *please* let me say it, of our love.

But also: I stood before you for a few seconds. You should have recognized me by then, but you looked sideways. And you didn’t recognize me. Once, when I was a small child, my mother had played a foolish trick on me and frightened me out of my wits. I had just read the fairy tale about the bewitched boy whose nose grew so long that no one recognized him anymore. My mother acted as if that were the case with me. I remember keenly the blind horror with which I screamed: but it’s me, your child, your Hannah, I am Hannah. It was exactly like that today at the rail platform.

And then as the train departed it was as I had just thought it, and that means, as I had wanted it: both of you up there and I alone and quite powerless against it. There is, like always, nothing else left for me to do but to wait, wait, wait.<sup>17</sup>

This is a surprising and rare moment in Arendt’s writing. That this type of discourse was allowed between her and Heidegger, in spite of their outspoken rejection of Freud’s science, points to an illicit engagement with what Freud did openly and organized as psychoanalytic practice. Arendt’s mother appears in the role of a castrating parent and represents the Oedipal father. In this waking nightmare mother, lover, and husband blend into one. Hannah never let go of them. The transgressive relationship between student Hannah and teacher Heidegger not only robbed both of a world of sublimation and eroticized their thought processes, but also condemned both to a psychic disposition of social isolation. Arendt’s publicist victories in America present no contradiction. What Heidegger imagined as Arendt’s thriving social life was in fact a screen for that problematic relationship and its relentless grip on their world. The nightmarish production featured in this letter signals the problems that allowed the transgression to take place in the first place and simultaneously acted as defense against its recognition.

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<sup>17</sup> Hannah Arendt and Martin Heidegger, *Briefe 1925-1975*, ed. Ursula Ludz, my translation (Frankfurt am Main: Klostermann, 2002), 67-68.

Like romantic attachments, and as Shakespeare taught us with *The Tempest*, care nestles in the heart. In Goethe's *Faust*, the allegorical pageant that offers a livable home to transgressing scholars, *Care* speaks thus:

Unheard by the ear  
 I ravish the heart;  
 With a changing countenance  
 I wield grim violence;  
 Pathfinders and wave-riders alike  
 Experience the eternal fright  
 Of my unfailing companionship;  
 Even though they don't seek me  
 They find me constant by their side,  
 As solicited as I am cursed and let betide.  
 Have you never known me?  
 I am Care. (V. 11,424 - 11,431)<sup>18</sup>

The concept of *care* represents a point of continuity between Arendt's and Heidegger's thought and reveals the desolate world inhabited by dead and dying creatures to which their famously illicit love affair condemned them. For Heidegger care is the only authentic form of *Dasein's* Being, of the thrownness of being between birth and death. *Caritas* for Arendt represents the only authentic form of natality, which, as we saw earlier, is a concept derived from fantasies of self-engenderment. *Caritas* is a relationship of authenticating meaning in the face of one's own death and nothingness. Care, which includes social care and was the paramount task and privilege of the sovereign in the old regime, is bound to the created totemic world. The creatures that found a home away from home in the allegories of Shakespeare's mourning pageants become the subjects and rulers in Arendt's baroque version of modern politics.

Goethe, who became an allegorist after he worked through his troubled early work, was aware that *care* is a traditional exercise in thinking inherited from the priestly castes of the old regime. As an allegorical figure, Care makes a limited number of appearances in *Faust*. We first encounter it nestling in the heart of suicidal depression, orchestrating an endless lament over something that cannot be lost because it is always already lost and dead, paternal heritage. Care urges Faust to drink up the poisoned cup inherited from the forefathers. Its proper place in the heart is where death is registered. It marks the loss of nearest and dearest and is the principal vehicle of a direct hit necessary for wiring and activating the body politically. It creeps into Faust's estate at the end when he attempts to build a retirement home to replace the last pesky reminder of the imperfect land he inherited, the humble cottage of the old couple by the beach. Care mars Faust's likeness to the gods and makes him a worm: "I am not like the gods! It's felt too

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<sup>18</sup> Johann Wolfgang Goethe, *Faust*, Der Tragoedie Zweiter Teil, my translation (Stuttgart: Reclam, 2001), 199.

deeply; I am like a worm" (Part I, 652-653). The worm is a traditional figure for the manipulated helpless creature at the mercy of plots of total control. Hamlet contemplates it as the only body politic that sovereign and subject share. The preservation of the position of sovereignty in modern politics, as Arendt would agree, creates a "convocation of worms." At the totalitarian equalizing level, sovereign social *care* stamps a body politic with the shape of the worm, the third term of automatic desire.

The witch in *Faust I* confirms Heidegger's basic premise in reverse as she prepares the potion that will transform the body of the old scholar into that of a youth: "The high art of science lies hidden from the world! Think not and she'll be yours without care" (Part I, 2567-2572). The bewitched scholar is appalled. Care and thought are what brought Mephistopheles to his high-vaulted gothic chamber and initiated his journey. How could he, the great scholar who tried to solve the mysteries of heaven and earth, come from a place without thought and without care? As the fantastic forerunner of a "magical" and superstitious conception of the arts of science and technology, the witch's lore supplies the needs of automatic desire. When Heidegger opposes care to the technological mind he repeats the Faustian gesture of splitting from the psycho-genealogical scene of production while remaining fully invested in the detail and the product of science and technology.

Another appearance of *care* in *Faust I* foregrounds its role in politics: the drunken society in the alehouse whets its appetites for wine and revelry on the excitements of threatened sovereignty: "Our Holy Roman Empire, lads, what holds it still together? ... Thank the Lord each time you wake that the Empire is not in your care" (Part I, 2090-2094). The song that follows the political recital ridicules another object of care, unrequited love (not the object of unrequited love!), which like the poisoned dish the fat rat circles around poses a paradoxical threat: damned if he eats, damned if he doesn't. Freud also links the panic that characterizes the experience of the female genitals to a threat to "throne and altar," the traditional symbols of political power from the old regime.

Written in 1927 the essay on fetishism is one of the few works by Freud that deals explicitly with the philosophical category of "ideas" as subject of *denial* as opposed to the psychoanalytic category of "affect" as subject of *repression*. As idea the fetish is a substitutive formation that screens the denied experience of woman's castratedness. The affect produced by the "energetic action" required to keep up the denial, Freud explicitly declares, is not repressed. The fetish provides a safe, livable, and contained zone for the execution of fetish action, which is different from political action. Aleister Crowley's artistic following, for example, has professed fetishism as its creed and "natality" and made the "shine" on the "knows" the paramount object of consumer worship.<sup>19</sup> Like gems and pearls the

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<sup>19</sup> The "shine on the nose," "Glanz (glance) auf der Nase," is the introductory example Freud chose to head his discussion of fetishism. Sigmund Freud,

shine on the nose covers an experience that is denied. Its "original" prototype, always second to the missing original, is the death of the father and the castration of the mother. Aesthetically Arendt's body of work belongs to the order of the fetish. Eventually even Heidegger became the fox-fur.<sup>20</sup>

It is indeed a phallic female, the allegorical gray woman-monster called *Sorge* or Care, that among her sisters, Need, Lack, and Debt, alone creeps into Faust's heart, blinds him, and claims his life at the end of the allegorical second half of the tragedy. Care appears to gain entrance into Faust's prosperous estate by stealth.

The reader and writer of two millennia of literary history alike appears to have forgotten her, but she never left. Nestled deep in the heart of the suicidal scholar she waits patiently for the preordained devil time of his death. The women and mothers who died for him, however, save Faust from fulfilling the contract with the devil and undo what *Care* had done. *Care* is Menelaus' paramount privilege when he orders Helena, the founding loss of European civilization, to prepare the ground for her own sacrifice, every single time in eternity. Yet, Helena returns to mourn the passing of all trespassers. Similarly, the fate of Heidegger and Arendt, the scholars who devoted their lives and work to *Care*, is contained in Goethe's *Faust*. The totalitarian leaders of the "darkening world" they fiercely fought for or against also find their home in gruesome allegories. Arendt's work contains numerous plots and toxic ruins from the condemned world of a totalitarian modernity. Although her wish was to leave them rest in peace, she lent them a reanimating hand when she turned to political action and away from fetish action. The creatures of the modern world feed on her and their uneasy half-lives remain with us.

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<sup>20</sup> Hannah Arendt, "Heidegger the Fox," *The Portable Hannah Arendt*, ed. Peter Baehr (New York: Penguin, 2000), 543.

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