

To bed, to bed:
 there's knocking at the gate.
 Come, come, come, come,
 give me your hand.
 What's done, cannot be undone.
 To bed, to bed, to bed.

(Macbeth, Act V, Scene I)

I. We dwell. We could not live, had we no dwelling. We would be disprotected and exiled in a world without center. Our dwelling is the center of the world. We advance against the world from there, and we retreat to there after the attack. We defy the world from our dwelling, and we take refuge there to hide from the world. Life is a traffic between world and dwelling. A pulsation between horizon and center. It is flowing and re-flowing, giving oneself and finding oneself, acting and contemplating, taking leave and returning. Our dwelling is its foundation. The world is the alphabet which we try to decipher. Our dwelling is its alpha and its omega. We dwell.

Do we? Where? What is it that protects us? That makes us non-exiles? That sustains our defiance? Where is the center of our world? Are our surroundings really a world? Is it founded? Has our life a meaning? (Horizon and center?) Can we give ourselves? And find ourselves? Do we act without contemplation, or contemplate without action, or are both our acts and sufferings just mere reflexes of conditioning forces? Can we take leave where there is no returning? What alphabet is that which has neither alpha nor omega? Can an infinite series of ciphers be deciphered? Can there be a code which is a system of signs without significance? Do we dwell?

The questions corrupt the answers. They gnaw, rational rats that they are, the irrational basis of our dwelling. They destroy infra-structures and they give birth to new questions. Our dwelling rests on the teeming backs of explosively fecund questions. The fecundity of the questions is the floor of our dwelling. An oscillating and undulating floor. The tail and snouts of the fecund questions is the place wherefrom we attack the world and the place where we take refuge. Like in a canoe that dances in a tempest, we see our horizon oscillate and vascillate. We are sea-sick on the backs of the rats, we vomit on them. We feel nauseated on top of the backs of the rats, on the floor of our dwelling. What's done, cannot be undone. To bed, to bed, to bed.

Because there are beds, still. Dwellings, strictly speaking. Strict dwellings. We dwell in the restriction of beds.

II. A special bed: a cradle. I try to make of it a center of a world. I project myself upon that crying thing in the cradle. A difficult project. Because, while trying to become that thing, I must abandon myself. What is it that I abandon? My memory, including my knowledge. My knowledge concerning that crying thing over there. For instance the following knowledge:

That crying thing over there is a man, because it is the son of man. A vertebrate of the mammiferous anthropoid variation. If analyzed it consists mostly of water and of carbon polymeres of complex chemical structure. It is a system that spends energy, and is determined by air, water and substances called "food". It will decompose, after a period that is approximately known, into air, water, and food for similar systems. It is a man.

That crying thing over there is a man, because it is the son of man. Its six gelatinous pounds enclose a nervous system that is stimulated by internal and external influences. Only the internal ones are acting at present. Soon it will open to the external ones, and the field of these influences will grow to enormous proportions. The system will transform these influences into experiences, desires, thoughts and acts. It will choose among the influences, will try to value them and to elaborate models to organize them. It will step back from them and reflect upon them. It will doubt them, confound between them and its models, it will philosophize. It is a man.

That crying thing over there is a man because it is the son of man. For the moment it is just a point in my field of vision. It is my object.

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But soon it will no longer permit me to reify it that way. It will try to make of me an object of its own. By this mutual reification we shall recognize each other, myself and that crying thing over there. Thus it will become my other. It will penetrate that chain called "culture". We shall talk and dialogue. The great conversation of culture will program that thing over there. Culture will become the net in which that thing will be captured, and it will exist within the net. It will never escape it, and and history will determine it from then on. This history, this culture. In spite of any rebellion the thing will remain prisoner of this culture. It will rebel nonetheless. That rebellion will not break the prison, but it will enrichen the prison and the other prisoners. The thing over there is a man,

It is a man, because it is not just the son of man. It has no previsible future. This lack of previsibility is not the result of ignorance of all the determining forces. Even were all the food, influences and culture known, they would not entirely explain the thing over there. There will always remain an unexplained and unexpected rest. That rest will be something totally new that appeared with the crying thing over there, something that cannot be substituted, and is therefore mysterious. Something that has never existed before is hidden within that crying thing over there. It is a man.

Such type of knowledge must be abandoned, if I am to project myself on the cradle. If I am to transform that thing over there into the center of a world. If I eliminate all this, what remains? The cry. And what is it that it cries? "I do not want to!" Nobody asked me if I wanted to be projected into this cradle. I did not ask to be born. To be born mammiferous or man, or member of this family, this people, this class, this culture. I had no choice. I do not accept a life that is so basely determined. I want to go back to that place wherefrom I was taken so brutally. I do not want to! To bed, to bed, to bed.

III. Night time, the time of Jasper's passion. The big city has disappeared under my horizon. The rhythmic pulsation of its apparatus that structures my world is gone. Night has devoured my world. My acting and action. The field is now open for passivity and passion. I am in bed and I read.

During the day, out there, I was a clenched fist. I hammered at walls and tables to open my way. Now I have opened the fist. In the open palm that I am now rests the book that I am reading. I live in the opposite direction. I do not emit, I absorb. I do not impress, I am impressed. I do not speak, I listen. I do not act, I am acted upon. I am not excentric, I am concentrated. My concentration is my palm; I read, I have opened my self.

The palm is a shell. It collects reading. Informative statements, I am a net for information, a spider for informative flies. Information penetrates my openings and flows toward that nothing which is at my center. I can read, because that nothing within me sucks reading. Were I compact like the fist I was during day time, and the waves of information would brake against my island. I listen thanks to my vacuity. The nothing is my organ of passivity, of admission, of learning.

I read, I listen. I listen, I let. I let, I admit. I admit information. I admit the book. The book is the other. I admit the other. I let him alter me. I read in order to be changed. I admit the other one, so that he may change me. I am plastic and I let the other one brand my plasma.

But not without resistance. I am plastic, but not amorphous. I have been informed by previous books. Others have already branded me. I have been programmed already. I cannot read without prejudice. My prejudices discriminate. They refuse certain information. I think them to be false, because they disagree with my program. Or I think them to be nonsense, because I have not been programmed for them. Therefore I cannot absorb all available information. I cannot read all the statements.

Some statements however can break through my program. Some nonsense may get meaning. Some falseness may become true. All of a sudden, I come to understand such statements. And my program is changed by such statements. Some previously programmed statements become nonsense, and others,

although previously programmed as true statements, are falsified. My prejudices have changed. I have been informed. Thanks to my reading I have become different.

What is it that was changed? My belief. Belief: hope and expectation. My reading has changed my hope and expectation. I expect a slightly different world when rising next morning. My reading has changed my belief, and therefore my world. After leaving bed tomorrow, I shall hammer slightly different walls and tables. My hammering tomorrow will be my response to my book tonight. The change I am suffering tonight will change the world tomorrow. We shall dialogue, the book and myself.

I hammer the world, in order to change it. To change it in accordance to the change I am suffering. My suffering is changing me, my action shall change the world. Tomorrow I shall give my response, and today I am assuming the responsibility for it. My suffering, my passion, (the reading), is my responsibility. It makes me apt to give responses. I read in order to be responsible, able to answer.

I read: I admit, within my central vacuity, the responsibility for my action. That means: I admit changing my belief. I am a sucking vortex. Tomorrow I shall be centrifuge and shall project my changed belief toward my horizon. The project for that projecting is within my reading. To read is to suffer projects. It is passion, because it makes me project myself. I read passionately, because I let my belief change, and I let it change, because I admit the other. I read in the direction of the other. That other one that is knocking at my gate. To bed, to bed; there's knocking at the gate.

IV. I sleep. Tomorrow I shall return to myself. Where am I now? In bed, of course, but I am waiting for myself there. I am beside myself. Where? I fell asleep. I know that I fell, because I let myself fall. I know that I shall be back, because I shall be called. But there is an abyss between these two knowings. I cannot speak about that abyss, because I am beside myself whilst I cross it. I am in bed whilst I cross that abyss. I am not present at it. Nor absent. I do not lose myself in the abyss, nor do I find myself there.

I cannot speak of the abyss. May be I can sing it? Oh abyss that is at the bottom of my bed. Oh abyss that is the foundation of my dwelling. Oh abyss that is at my center. Oh sleep, sweet brother of my birth and my death. When I fall into you, I leave myself, and when I leave you, I return to myself. Or is it the other way round: When I fall into you, I find myself, and when I leave you, I alienate myself from myself? To fall into you is to free oneself from illusions, and to leave you is to become the prisoner of one's self? Oh sleep, you confound my concepts. I shall never capture you trying to conceive you. You come when I let myself go, when I abandon all concepts. You are the secret into which I fall, you make me sleepy.

Nonetheless: I must decide myself for you to come. I must call you. I must decide myself to let you be: a decision against decision. A will against will, an anti-decisive decision. A dialectically strangled bough, and it is that bough which is my opening. Sleep comes through the opening of that contradiction. It is the abyss of the negation of the negation that results in no position.

My decision to sleep is a choice: it accepts one possibility and refuses all others. Having chosen sleep I gain something and I lose something. What do I gain? Nothing. I gain the nothing. I gain the ocean of annihilation, the overcoming of weight, the pause, "epoché", "quies in pace". What do I lose? Everything. Myself, my world, my power of decision and the field where decisions are made. I lose my freedom and my dignity. To fall asleep is the decadence of dignity. I am undignified whilst I sleep.

I may cover up my decision for sleep as loss of dignity saying: it is a reasonable decision. I sleep in order to renew my forces down there in the abyss, and can decide myself the better when I return. My sleep is a "réculer pour mieux sauter", a strategic retreat. My decision to sleep is not a final decision, (like the decision to die is). It aims at future decisions.

Fine: sleep is no longer mysterious. I have reasonable objectivized

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it. It is over there, I am over here; I have explained sleep. I have possibly explained sleep, but did I explain my sleep? Is my sleep really an object of mine which I can explain one way or another, and therefore manipulate one way or another? Or is it not the other way round: I am an objective epiphenomenon of my sleep? Is it not so that my wake days are an archipaelagus that fluctuates, dubiously, in the ocean of my sleep? Am I not is not that what I call "I", a pearl necklace composed of wake moments, but structured by the dark and "trans-I" string of my sleep? Am I not "I", because I am being periodically expelled from sleep, and is not that series of expulsions the form of being of the "I"? Do I not exist, because I come from sleep and shall return to it? (To exist = to be expelled from sleep?) The dark embrace of the hidden involves again my thinking.

The entrance to the abyss is veiled, and I can lift the veil or I can tear it. The veil of dreams. I do not want to tear it, (to analyze it). I want to look at it. Now it is something, now it is nothing, now it is a world, now it is it no longer, because it is still me, but I am still it. I and the world; extreme dreams, limiting cases of dreams. Wake world of the wake I: dreams farthest removed from sleep. Wake world of the wake I: extreme alienation. Having the veil of dreams before one's eyes, having before one's eyes the incredible fact that one can dream: is there any sense in trying to think ontologically? To try and distinguish between reality, (or various realities), and dreaming?

One must try to think ontologically, and be it at desperate task. Because one must try to find oneself. In order to be able to give oneself. And all ontology must start with dreams. The denser the veil of dreams, the closer I am; and I find myself where the veil is closest. Reality is dense dream, and if I hammer walls and tables, it is to densify dreams and thus materialize them. I am an ambassador of dreams in the land of reality, and reality is the dense field of dreams, a field in which I meet my other.

I cross the land of dreams when I approach the world: I waken. I cross the land of dreams when I fall asleep. When I waken I pluck pieces of dreams in order to materialize them. When I fall asleep, I lose all dreams. Dreams are models. Reality is models materialized, finished models. When I fall asleep, I abandon all models. When I sleep, I am, like Wittgenstein, beyond all models. And what cannot be spoken of, must be silenced.

The abyss of sleep gapes underneath my bed. It calls me to let myself fall into it. To let myself go. There's knocking at the gate. Come, come, come, come.

V. The other one. I recognize myself in you, you are my trembling, trembling of the other. We are trembling, you and me, my other one. We tremble in our embrace. Something tremendous has embraced us, you and me, something tremendously Other.

It is that tremendously Other that makes us be "we", that makes us lose the "you" and the "I". Possibly the "we" that we are is identical with the tremendously Other that embraces us. Has It a name? Love? Desire and death of desire? Will to be, will to cease to be, will to let the other be? Action and passion, acting and suffering? Let Its name be simple "we"; (but "we" cannot be simple).

I need you, my other one, in my loneliness toward death. I recognize my loneliness in your loneliness: let us join lonelinesses, let us be lonely together. I am lonely, because I was born alone and I shall die alone. Nobody took my place at the moment of my birth. Nobody will substitute me at the hour of my death. I cannot delegate powers concerning my death. It is in my loneliness that are all my powers. Therefore all delegations of full powers, all attournies and associations, are nil in the face of death. They are nil, because I cannot be substituted. All attempts to break out of my loneliness in the course of my life are nil, because I am fundamentally lonely. I cannot be substituted.

Everything in the world can be substituted. It can be exchanged for some other thing. This is why everything in the world is valuable. Its value appears during the exchange for another thing. Their possibility to be exchanged is the value of the things. I myself am of value. When I die, the world will be poorer. I will have to be exchanged for some other thing. The world values me, and I value the world. We do not

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love each other: the world and I.

But you, my other one, are absolutely without any value to me: I can not substitute you. I cannot exchange you, because I recognize within you my own insubstituibility: my loneliness toward death. I recognize you, and therefore you have no value: I love you. Should you die before me, I shall not have suffered your loss: I shall have suffered only the loss of all the things in the world. Because it is you and I, in joined loneliness, that give value to all things. Without this joint there is no value for me in the world. You are my foundation for all values, therefore you have no value.

We shall die, each one of us for himself, in our inescapable loneliness. We shall not die together. "We" can never die, because it is the loneliness, the "you" and the "I", that is mortal. We are immortal, and death has no power over us. We overcome death, because we are "we". But we are "we" only for fleeting moments like this one. In the normality of daily life, our "we" is full of "Is" and "yous". And it is these that drag us, you and myself, toward death. Both of us. But I know of no other way to overcome death. I know that I am lonely and that I am going to die. I know that you are lonely and that you are going to die. Let us, for fleeting moments like this, challenge death by our "we". Come, come, come, come give me your hand.

VI. I am in bed, decided to sleep. It is an eternity since I am thus decided. I am all open toward sleep. But it refuses to come. I am all opened up for it. I wait for it ever since an eternity, and time freezes about me to form eternity. The "nunc stans" of the Ancients. Frozen time has devoured space, digested space, annihilated space. The standing time, the swampy lake of times. In that swamp I experience the meaning of the term "grace".

I am disgraced. The grace of sleep has been denied me. I opened myself full of hope, but the sleep did not come. I tried to let myself fall into it, but I did not fall. Is this hell? Devoured space, swamp of the times? The abyss that refuses itself, and myself closed in spite of my will to open myself up? Denied opening? Why was I refused?

Because I insist. Because I insist to exist, and because this insistence is me. Because I affirm myself. I am being denied because I affirm. I affirm my existence, and sleep answers: exist then. My insomnia is my affirmation. And since I am affirmation, I am a thinking thing. This is what sleeplessness is: thinking thing without extended things. Hell. The turning wheel of thinking and re-thinking thoughts. Thoughts that divide themselves, and thoughts that combine themselves. Thoughts that crawl, thoughts that roll, and thoughts that precipitate. Thoughts that bury each other, and thoughts that resuscitate each other. And all this without any extended thing to be thought of. All this without discourse in standing time. In the eternal return.

I try to save myself. I can debate reasonably with my thoughts. I try to prove, to my thoughts and to myself, that they are empty thoughts. But my thoughts re-affirm themselves always, because they are my thoughts. They affirm themselves, because I affirm them. Eight thousand five hundred and thirty six times seven hundred and forty eight are how much? ask my thoughts. Never mind, I answer. Obviously it does not matter, answer my thoughts, (very reasonable themselves by now), but nonetheless there is an answer to the question. I try to calculate, in order to get rid of my thoughts. I cannot calculate. I am tired. Come, sweet sleep, deliver me of calculations. You do not want to? I shall force you by appropriate techniques.

I count sheep. I simulate sleep. I take pills. After all, I know sleep. Science has revealed to me its objective characteristics, and I know by experience its subjective characteristics. And, in fact, I fall asleep at last. I sleep synthetically. Deliberately. I have overcome insomnia, I have forced sleep. I have overcome hell. Technically I have saved myself.

Are all deliberate, planned and technically achieved paradises like this? Like deliberate sleep? Are all methodical salvations, (yoga, zen, marxism, many aspects of catholicism), like the salvation through sleep of pills and counted sheep? Hells that simulate paradise? Why is synthetic sleep false? Because it dissolves without saving. Because it liber-

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ates without letting me go. False sleep. Is there a false death? Suicide as the death of pills and counted sheep? This is the question of all the questions, The supreme question. Because if suicide were false death, then there is no freedom. Freedom is the ever present possibility to say "no" to any possible condition by deciding for suicide. If we cannot take this decision truly, if to die means to let oneself go, then freedom is nothing but an attempt to hide death. We are disgraced.

I cannot live without sleep. Without access to the fundamental aby: I cannot, because I come from there, (I was born). The abyss is my home, I am an abysmal being, a sleepy being. And I cannot, because I go toward the abyss, (I am going to die). The abyss is the aim and meaning of my life, it is my utopia, I am an abysmal being, a sleepy being. If sleep denies itself, I must force it. What is culture, if it is not pills? Art, science, philosophy, religion, if not narcotics? Or simulations of sleep? We suffer from insomnia, we, the "civilized ones". We are disgraced.

Obviously: all this is nothing but insanity born from insomnia and it turns around like the turning wheel. A desperate provocation of grace. But grace cannot be provoked. If I am disgraced, my dignity demands that I accept myself that way. I cannot sleep? Well, then I do not want to. I want to stay wide awake, and I dispize sleep, that indignity. I affirm and thus close the infernal circle for good. What's done, cannot be undone.

VII. I am in bed, ill. I suffer pains. I am body. I am all here in bed. My pains prove it. My being is my pains. I am concentrated within them. I am entirely body.

My pains isolate me. I am all particular and private. I publish nothing. Published pains are no pains. They are entirely corporeal, they admit no codification, and there can be no theory of pains. They are unthinkable, just sufferable. They are immediate experience, they cannot be mediated. They are immediate experience, they cannot be remembered, (they are immediately forgotten). They do not last, they are totally spacial. They condemn me to extreme empirism. They are utmost indignity, because they are neat and private. They are disgusting, and I, ill as I am, am a disgusting being.

My pains objectify me. My body assumes total dominion, I am body. This disgusting and painful body. Time is gone: I am nothing but extension. The dimensions of space are my pains. They measure everything. I am not history, nor culture, nor thinking. I am extension, nature, thing. My pains disprove empirically the cartesian thesis. I suffer pains, therefore I am. I suffer pains, therefore I do not think.

Christianity affirms that the Verb became flesh in order to suffer pains. An extended thing. It affirms that God became an object of the type I am now. Just as disgusting. What God? That abyss that vomited me at the moment of my birth? Into which I fall when I fall asleep? Toward which I go when I go toward death? That makes me say "we" in fleeting moments? That gapes always underneath my bed? It was that abyss that became an object and, in an extreme positivism, suffered disgusting pains? A totally immanent, private, extended thing? Incredible.

And for being incredible, should it not be believed? Because this extended thing that is the body, this thing without mystery, nor meaning, this absurd nonsense called "illness", is the only possible answer to the calling of the abyss. It is the extreme taking-off of dignity, the abandon of thinking, the only possible sacrifice of the spirit. Those who suffer pains are the true imitators of the Christ, and I, ill as I am here in bed, am a monkey of the Messiah. That there is absolutely no mystery in all that, that it is all so stupidly obvious, that is what is mysterious about it. There is no avoiding the evidence of facts. And facts are always silly. What's done, cannot be undone. To bed, to bed, to bed.

VIII. Death bed. Agony. That thing over there in the bed, that object of mine, does not seem to want to be it. Desperately it does not want to be a thing. Well, this is the death of the other one. Theatre of the absurd. Very bad theatre at that. Cheap, because it provokes symapthy and fear in a primitive form.

But careful. They are presenting something over there which is not so obvious as it seems. Somewhere there is a gap in the scenery. That thing over there is body. But, quite recently, was it not a man, like me?

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With whom I communicated? Where are the information which I transmitted to that man? Obviously within this body. But information is something codified, therefore conventional, symbolical, how can it have been reduced to body? And if it was, what will happen to it when this body there decomposes? Will the information suffer the effects of entropy, and if so, in which way?

And what about the information that recent man transmitted to me? They are within me. So that if that body over there will have died, it will be only the body that will have died, and not the man. He will continue living within me. And through me within that conversation called "history and culture". All this seems to escape through the gap in the scenery.

So that everything is in the best of orders. "The human dimension is immortal, it is "historical", and only the disgusting body over there is mortal. After all, to say this is nothing but to repeat, in a somewhat de-mythified way, the message of all the official Western religions.

Yes, but the theatre of that agony over there denies in a brutal and immediate way this attempt to minimize death. The body over there is entirely uninterested in any immortality, be it noble or demythified. It does not want immortality, it wants life. It articulates, with each of its movements and concretely, the absurd fact that it is condemned not to be any more a living body. It would exchange the precious immortality for five more minutes of life, not on a speculative, but on an immediately concrete level. Oh supreme indignity, oh idiotic concreteness of death.

But, after all, this is the death of the other one. It is not my death. It is entirely different. It is so, because I can experience it, but I can do nothing of the sort with my own death. This is what my death is by definition: that what I can never experience. Where I am, there it is not, and where it is, I am not. I have nothing in common with my death. It is not my problem.

Nonetheless, it is toward my death that I go constantly. It is the aim of my life. I cannot live without it. Were it not, and my life would have no motive. It is my only motive, and it gives urgency to all of my instants. Were I immortal, I would be dead. It is true: my death is not my problem. Equally true: it is always with me in the form of my life.

I am my death. But I am also my birth. My birth projects me and my death directs me. Therefore my death is here and now, and my bed is every night my death bed. Although I can never experience it, there is nothing I know better. I communicate with it daily. There is no sense in asking how it will be at the hour of my death, when all culture, and human society, will have dissolved into nothing, and when I will be merged in the concrete loneliness and indignity of being a thing. It will be as it is now. And I will be as I am now. That means: the sum total of my acts and sufferings. And this is the answer to the silliness of death: I know that I shall be annihilated. But what I did I did, and what I suffered I suffered, and those are irrevocable data. Not even death can revoke them. This is my dignity within indignity. What's done cannot be undone. To bed, to bed, to bed.