

The Unbearable Burden of the Obvious

Part III, B: The Janus-faced Nature of Mankind

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Leo Feyaerts

Dedicated to Prof. dr. Dr. Lode Wils.

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Chapter II

Hell

§ 1. Language is discrimination. The tree is known by its fruit

1.1. The pervasiveness of opposites and implicitly or explicitly derogatory adjectives in value judgments

Marxists divide humanity into opposites, the haves and the have-nots, both of whom claim a monopoly on truth. According to Marxism, the Right proclaims oppressive and "therefore" untrue views of man and society, and the Left proclaims liberating views that reconcile all opposites and are "therefore" true. Since the Right denies the necessity and the possibility of this ultimate reconciling liberation, it is obvious to which ideological group I will be counted by the Left.

When Staf and I discussed the causes of violence, he gave me a detailed account of the contradictions between the Left and the Right. His lecture largely corresponded to that of Madame d'Haeseleer¹. Since I consider their views correct, I will give them the floor at the appropriate time (Chapter V, § 3). But their view that all evil in the world is exclusively the result of imitation of each other's lusts and of the possessed rivalry that results from them does not sufficiently explain why humanity is always divided. Something is missing from their conceptions, namely the need of all human beings that can be derived from the inherent characteristics of every language and formulation: *the need to make distinctions regardless of the economic interests of the language users and regardless of the motives arising from their gender, sexual orientation, culture and subculture.*

Look, mother, you meet every week with your writers and musicians in your music room and you all consider yourselves to be very eloquent and tolerant. For a long time I listened with admiration to the discourses of your company. I am sorry for you, but the tolerance you keep talking about is nothing more than an illusion. None of you realize that you are constantly contradicting yourselves. All bigotry is attributed by you - as by everyone else - to oppositions like bad rulers versus good

¹ Chapters I and II were probably written in her house in Brasschaat because she was still alive at the time. She died at the end of January 1968. Chapter II was probably written in November-December 1967 because he nursed the seriously ill d'Haeseleers in January. But his mother told me that the contents of Chapter III were already on paper before January as well (Staf Van der Auwera, 1999.)

subjects and vice versa, good rationalists versus bad romantics and vice versa, good atheists versus bad believers and vice versa, bad capitalists versus good proletarians and vice versa, good internationalists versus perfidious nationalists and vice versa, perfectly good Left versus perfectly bad Right and vice versa, superiority of the white race versus the black or brown or yellow or red and vice versa, superior *Übermenschen* versus inferior *Untermenschen*, true believers, enlightened and chosen by God or Allah and his earthly representatives, versus damned heretics and non-believers stuck in the darkness, backward faith versus the light of science, good matriarchy versus bad patriarchy and so on, in short light versus darkness and white versus black. Has none of you then realized that intolerance is not primarily a consequence of the existence of polarized groups and institutions as such, but of the natural ability and intrinsic need of man to manifest himself as a polarizing individual or as a member of a polarizing group or institution, among other things through his distinctive language, and of everyone's natural ability and intrinsic need to distinguish between people and groups, among other things through his distinctive language, the acquisition of which is also an innate ability?

One could say, like a Marcusean like Van den Borre, that all contradictions stem from whether or not one owns private property and that all polarizing ideologies stem from that concrete, polarized situation, but then one overlooks the fact that each person's brain must first translate the social, economic, ethical and/or legal situation of its owner into a language before that person is able to understand (fathom) his situation as being opposed to that of others and to articulate it as being opposed to that of others. Needs, images and feelings such as anger and resentment may flash through a person and become an obsession to him, but when he thinks about them, he immediately translates them into a particular language. Everyone thinks in a language, whether during a monologue held silently or aloud or during a dialogue. He cannot do otherwise.

In this, it does not matter whether a person expresses his thoughts in the spoken language or in the written language, a distinction Derrida makes to show that writing takes precedence over speaking: man makes distinctions through both. Everyone who thinks, speaks, and writes distinguishes between the stereotypical features of types of objects, living beings, and human beliefs that contrast with the stereotypical features of other types of objects, living beings, and human beliefs, and meanwhile each one *excludes* the stereotypical features of the one *by emphasizing* those of the other (= *by naming them*). Each of us makes distinctions

through nouns, adjectives, verbs, and so on, which exclude other nouns, adjectives, and so on. However, these excluded possibilities always remain in the background as an implicit contrast to that which is named.

"Dog" excludes all other living things and mammals. "All" excludes the contrasting possibilities "some" and "one"; "here" excludes "there"; "yesterday" excludes all other days. When one says or writes "cycling" one activity is central, while all others fade into the background as contrasting possibilities.

Value judgments are made because the people making them oppose the situation caused by another or by a group of others. It does not matter what nature this judgment is of and whether it is perceived by others. *Even an unspoken "bah" or a clenched fist invisible to others is a value judgment based on the implicit hierarchical dichotomy of: I am better than you.*

I can already hear them roaring: Another foolish Idealist who, with his Idealism, with the ideality of his meanings, hovers far above reality to maintain the social status quo in favor of the possessing class! After all, according to Marxist ideology, philosophical Idealism is the crudest and most unforgivable, anti-revolutionary folly ever. What do I care if I am labeled an Idealist, realist or materialist, and whether or not I belong to the "patricentric-acquisitive" bourgeoisie according to some? *Every time someone labels me a priori or after reading this essay as an Idealist, a right-winger, a fascist, or a class enemy, or attributes a quality or a defect to me using some other distinguishing noun or adjective, he proves that my image of man is correct.* (Idealist, right-winger, fascist, and class enemy were the derogatory, and therefore sadistic labels with which Van den Borre labeled me during our discussion in order to discredit me with everyone present and to himself be praised by his SVB comrades for his "left-wing tolerance.")

In animals, there is a problem-solving thinking that is not expressed in language. It eliminates alternatives by "trial and error". But I don't think an animal is capable of thinking about its solutions in abstract terms and communicating them to its peers with such terms. Can humans think without language? Perhaps as very young babies and when they live like Mowgli in a wolf pack. But in normal circumstances, the parents immediately refer to themselves and to each other by mentioning their own and each other's names or by mentioning their family relationship to the addressed child, and they point to all kinds of objects and actions while naming them with the names that are common in their community. And the young child learns quickly (through imitation).

Without hereditary capacity for language acquisition (without the logos), this learning by pointing out persons, objects and situations while naming them, and by imitating these names when speaking and writing, is not possible. Once language acquisition (= recognizing and naming things, people and situations on the basis of their universally observable stereotypical features, which exclude the stereotypical features of other things, people and situations) is activated, one thinks in a language. Inner monologues serve only to express one's own opinions about statements or actions of others. These own opinions are expressed in friendly or unfriendly reactions and/or verbal communications about them to third parties.

For a newborn, the only reality he perceives is the reality outside language.

Although every baby is born with an ability to acquire language, no newborn already possesses the ability to understand language and to produce and use words and sentences. If there is no reality that can be expressed in words outside language, as Derrida claims, to which people can refer in order to teach the baby what "a tree" is, what "water" is, what a "lake" is, or whatever, then any reference to anything is nothing more than a meaningless sound, no matter how many times it is repeated by other people and by the little child. To have meaning, the word must evoke a mental image or feeling in the mind of this child, and that image or feeling cannot come from sounds that do not refer to a particular object, form, or experience in reality outside of language. Feelings evoked by *the tone* in which words are spoken are, for example, "danger", "food", "anger", "safety", "happiness", *even if the newborn does not know these words* (Cf. Mowgli).

Can everything perceived and experienced be adequately expressed in a language? Of course not. Much of it is beyond language. (Consider the inadequacy of impressionist painting and naturalistic descriptions with respect to representing reality.) Does this mean that everything outside language is merely illusion? Of course not. *We prove capable of expressing at least part of reality in a way that is understandable to anyone with a normally functioning brain.*

If a human being lived in absolute solitude from birth, he would certainly not acquire human language, despite his innate ability to acquire language. He would, of course, observe tree branches on the ground or on trees, as well as the differences between the branches of different tree species; but why (= because of what need) would he call a branch "a branch" and imprint that name on himself? To tell himself something about the differences between the branches of different tree species? When it is clear to him all the time that there are branches hanging in

the way and that it is these branches and no others? And why would he want to make moral judgments about the nature of his actions when he slaughters one or more rabbits? He cannot make such judgments because there are no persons whom he can benefit or harm by his actions and to whom he can communicate his motives. Language and morality are possible only in "we" situations: we together, or I alone, for or against certain others. But meanwhile, that utterly solitary specimen of Homo sapiens must kill animals and plants to stay alive. *So the sadism he needs for his survival is inherent in him by nature.*

1.2. The absurdity of the knock-out argument that the opponent's argument is merely a sentimental interpretation or pure rhetoric

People likewise affirm the correctness of my image of man when they ignore or reject that image or parts of it on the grounds that "my view is merely a sentimental interpretation". However fashionable this argument may be, it is a fool's errand because it is *belittling* and is therefore *an expression of sadism*. After all, it is a particular sentiment - namely, the need for sadism, the need for contempt, and the need to express that contempt in public - that prompts someone to make this judgment. So, either one omits any expression of one's feelings in all one's judgments and interpretations (if at all possible), or one does not. *But one cannot possibly be credible if one allows one's own, possibly leftist or rightist needs and feelings free rein while systematically or ad hoc condemning the interpretations of others on the basis of the "argument" that their interpretations are merely sentimental*. Besides, how quiet it would be on this planet if everyone silenced their feelings and needs! You could even hear an amoeba as she reproduces.

I know all too well the tricks that are put forward against "undesirable" messages these days in order to discredit them. Another way of discrediting the man or woman who brings up something that does not conform to the insensitivity that contemporary text critics demonstrate during their interpretive work² is to denigrate the judgment that his (or her) interpretation is just "pure rhetoric". This, too, is a value judgment born of the need for sadism. Whether or not this judgment is justified does not affect the degree to which it is sadistic. Nor does the tone in which it is expressed matter. The person or persecutor making the judgment cannot but be animated by a need for sadism, otherwise he would not express himself sadistically. *A tree is known by its fruit*.

But be aware that, based on the contemporary criterion that a correct interpretation of a text or statement is possible only if that interpretation is brought about by an interpreter who is completely free of any feeling while interpreting, any sadistic

² This insensitivity must be brought about by abiding in Wittgenstein's nirvana of algebraic logic or in one of his noncommittal language games, for example, in the philosophical one appropriated by the analytic philosophers or in the Marcusean nirvana in which all oppositions between Eros and Thanatos and between man and nature are reconciled, or in the Derridean nirvana of the perfect undecidability (= indifference) of the truth and moral value of every statement.

judgment resulting from such a "correct" interpretation is mere sentimental rhetoric. Even when that supposedly free of all sentimentality interpretation is wrapped up in *the bored contempt* displayed by Horkheimer, Adorno, Foucault and Derrida and their epigones while verbally criticizing their opponents.³

I wonder, by the way, whether all these supposedly insensitive people, if they were to die slowly of colon cancer (like Madame d'Haeseleer), or after a car accident, or after the attack of a madman, would be able to describe their pain as just a sentimental interpretation. And whether they would be able to dismiss their account of the facts before the doctor, the investigating judge or the lawyer, including the account of their physical and psychological experiences, as pure rhetoric. And whether, after a manuscript of theirs was stolen and destroyed in which they radically condemned any presence of a sentiment in an interpretation as affecting the credibility of that interpretation, they would be able to dismiss their own commentary on this amusing dispossession as a purely sentimental interpretation, and their written report of the theft to the police as mere rhetoric.

³ The members of the Frankfurt School have always delivered their social criticism from the *conformism* that reigned supreme in their ranks under the hegemony of Horkheimer (= from their own interpretation of the answer to the question of what requirements their theory had to meet to be the only true critical theory).

Their conformism, though imperfect, was powerful, and *the hypercritical Adorno, with his need for unanimity, felt very much at home in it*. Because of the mythical need for security in the mother's womb? (This is an assumption made by my dialectical imagination, as required by the Frankfurt School).

Inspired by the conformism of the Frankfurt School, Herbert Marcuse attacked *the dissident* Erich Fromm in *Eros and Civilization*, pp. 214-215 and pp. 247-248 and *A Reply to Erich Fromm*, in *Dissent III*, 1956, after Fromm had criticized Marcuse in an article in *Dissent II* and again in *Dissent III*. (See Martin Jay, *O.C.*, pp. 23-24, 25, 99, 100-112.) (Staf Van der Auwera, 1999.)

1.3. Language is man's most important weapon in the struggle for life

Any communication about anything through language is *a translation*. Every translation of individual and group behavior, including that of a Marxist or Derridean, labels individuals and groups. *These distinctive labels are a normal part of every language use*. Without such language, Marx and his followers would never have been able to distinguish and name different classes in society, or label someone as a philosophical Idealist. Without the use of these labels, no one would ever have been able to label a Marxist as a materialist. Without their use, Derrida would never have been able to label Western thought as ethnocentric. And precisely because everyone sticks such distinguishing labels on others, possibly by inventing new ones (newspeak), everyone either degrades themselves or those others. *In this regard, it does not matter whether one is lying or telling the truth.*

Language is a weapon that separates people, drives a wedge between them and pits them against each other. *Semiotics does this too, because the various forms (translations) in which semioticians render it are used as a weapon*. The structuralists use de Saussure's semiotics as a weapon to reveal the myths that the rulers use to keep the powerless on a leash. I am grateful for that because it relieves me of the duty to do it myself. Today's "intellectual avant-garde" uses Derrida's semiotics to attack every objectivism, every metaphysics, and every manifestation of Western ethnocentrism (= sadism) and unleash the sadism of their new conformist group that wants to impose the equality and undecidability of every linguistic expression on everyone. *What I accuse all leftists of is that they are completely blind to their own innate sadism, and to that of the powerless who are incited by their innate nature to plunder, molest and murder, while justifying their actions through new myths, invented by them or otherwise, which they later use to consolidate their position when they have come to power.*

Language is a weapon of survival. It is the most successful weapon that man possesses in the struggle for existence. But it is not a chair leg that happens to be within reach to bash the head in of an opponent who unexpectedly freaks out. Language belongs to human nature because the ability to acquire language is hereditary. Moreover, what human needs and functions are not the result of heredity developed in the struggle for survival?

It takes very little imagination to hear a heated male of the species *Homo habilis*⁴, whose ancestors had split off from tribe Hominini, which also consists of the chimpanzees and bonobos, roar to his community that he wants to get laid. Of course, he then roars this in a slightly different way than a heated chimpanzee or his own heated ancestors of the subtribe Homininae would. And it also takes very little imagination to see him attack a rival male who roars the same way for the same reason. It doesn't matter whether they both roar only consonants or vowels or a combination of both, a problem Derrida and Jean-Jacques Rousseau worry about in the final pages of *De la grammatologie*. Some things are abundantly clear in this example. *When a mammal, conscious or not of its personal identity, is roaring in such a way, it experiences itself as a frustrated unity (as an ego) of body and mind*, because both are simultaneously governed by only one need, by only one ideal, to mate with another specimen of its species, usually a female, but possibly another male, and to eliminate all obstacles (rivals), which prevent the realization of that ideal, by killing or forcing its rivals to retreat (= sadism).

Would the aforementioned male specimen of the Homininae really have experienced his rutting ego as merely a signifier/sign evoking only an indeterminate signified? And would he have labeled his roar of sensual desire, his expression of his heated ego-consciousness, as a mere interpretation? Would this expression of his language have been made possible by the *différance*? Or was that specimen simply so aroused by the action of his endocrine glands injecting testosterone into his bloodstream and brain that he automatically began to roar that he craved mating? Is his roar (or his bellow) of a fundamentally different nature than the linguistic expression of *Homo sapiens* who says, "Fuck, I'm fucking horny, I want to fuck", regardless of whether he says it in Dutch, Arabic or Chinese or expresses himself by means of Chinese characters or the Arabic or Western alphabet?

And the women? Did they not feel like fucking at the time? And do they still not feel like it? Wouldn't they have seduced the men at the time, and don't they still seduce them *while distinguishing themselves as a desirable unity of body and mind* (= as an ego), *and distinguishing between their candidate lovers*: "Look, tough guys, what a beautiful, fertile lady I am! Go ahead and fight [= sadism inciting sadism]. Whoever wins [= hierarchical dichotomy of precedence of the winner

⁴ Editor's note: Carlo's terminology has been updated to reflect the current state of paleontological knowledge (2020).

over the loser] can have me"? And you can bet they made love afterwards while basking in the sun of presence, because otherwise we wouldn't have existed.

And isn't it true that every time those specimens of the Homininae uttered another cry (which also consisted exclusively of consonants or vowels, or of a combination of both, possibly supplemented by the click consonants, as, for example, in the Khoekhoen language) to warn their family or tribe that they were under threat, they reconciled the contradictions within their own conformist group by trying to keep their group intact (regardless of whether they were leaders or just members of the tribe)?

What fundamental importance does it then have - after the genus Homo evolved into the species Homo sapiens - for this Homo sapiens to conjure up all kinds of signs (pictograph, cuneiform, Linear-B⁵ and alphabet) and phrases in his/her respective languages to warn of various kinds of dangers and to express the behavioral norms, patterns of behavior and collective beliefs necessary for the survival of his/her own group?

What really matters is that Homo sapiens has always used those pictograms/characters/letters and phrases to express his aggressive language that makes a sadistic distinction between himself and "the others" (possibly the others within his own group), but that possibly maintains or restores internal reconciliation within his own community by directing the aggression of this community against outsiders. And that he uses them to warn his group (while distinguishing between his group and "the others" and thus reconciling the internal contradictions in his group), and to formulate the code of conduct of his own group (= striving for internal reconciliation), and to avoid aggression from or against "the others" during a consultation with them, so that he can survive together with his own group. What everyone always wanted to achieve with each of their spoken or written words and sentences was always both to distinguish and to express their own sadism (inter alia by using a writing system that distinguished itself from other writing systems and thereby distinguished its users from "barbarians" without a writing system) and reconciling the internal contradictions of their own group, for example, by formulating myths (in the traditional sense of the word) and religions and ideologies and philosophies that were *models* for their own group's behavior, and for that group's views on the need for aggression, either against members of their own group (through law enforcement) or against other conformist

⁵ Syllabic script used for writing Mycenaean Greek, as far as is known the earliest form of Ancient Greek.

groups. Thus either "Thou shalt not kill" (Buddhism except Japanese Zen, Judaism, and Christianity), or "Thou shalt kill because... and until..." (Aztecs, Incas, Spartans, Romans, Medieval chivalry, Robin Hood, Machiavelli, Hobbes, Extreme Nationalists, Social Darwinists, Nazis, Marxist-Leninists, Muslims, followers of the State Shinto and so on).

At a younger stage of human development, the common history of one's own conformist group was proudly told to one's own members and future generations through various languages and writings, at least as long as the members of a given group believed in the value of one's own group. However, from the moment a state or civilization ceased to believe in its own value, its members described themselves and their community as "abandoned by the gods" and doomed to destruction, but in the meantime diligently and sadistically sought a scapegoat to explain their own failure. Both non-Christian and Christian late Roman writers did this after the invasion of Rome by the Visigoths under Alaric I (410 AD). The non-Christians accused Christianity of having caused the catastrophe, while the Christians accused paganism of the same because of the weakness of pagan morality. Paul Orosius, a Christian priest and theologian, believed that the plunder was God's wrath on a proud and blasphemous city. Zosimus, a Roman pagan historian, believed that Christianity, by abandoning the ancient traditional rites, had weakened the political virtues of the empire, and that the poor decisions of the imperial government, which had led to the plunder, were due to the lack of care of the gods.

*Now that our Western elite have abandoned their belief in the value of Western culture, they sadistically describe it as demonic because of its ethnocentrism and imperialism. (As if other cultures are not ethnocentric and imperialistic.) And of course those elites are now replacing the existing model (= the existing Western conformism and the behavior prescribed by it) with their own messianic models with their utopian pretensions. In contrast to its hated and despised predecessor, to which that 'elite' itself belongs (= self-hatred), it always assumes that this new model - unlike the previous one - will reconcile all contradictions once and for all, for example by prescribing that humanity must live a life *Jenseits von Gut und Böse* by using a non-distinctive language (Derrida).*

Being morally indifferent while leading others. Let the combination of these two things sink in. As well as the consequences of this "otherness through non-otherness" (*sic*), as the left-wing elite calls its indifference *to distinguish itself* from the "others", the right-wingers, *from those who "differ" because they distinguish.*

In short: language is a weapon that responds most perfectly to the deepest human need, namely to survive in a group and to excel in some way. But during conversations with family members, like-minded people or allies (= the internal reconciliation of opposites), we use our language to distinguish between the members of our own conformist group ("we") and our personal identity ("I"), and between the social identity to which we belong and "the others" (= or "them", the other conformist group and the individuals belonging to it). Language serves to distinguish our competitors (both our individual competitors and those who belong to our clan or social identity) from ourselves in the struggle for food, sex and status, with the aim of neutralizing or eliminating those competitors, either by us personally or in concert with our own conformist group. *And at the same time, language serves to distinguish ourselves in our own community, to stand out among our kindred spirits, either as the most conformist of the whole community (= as an exponent of the prevailing political, economic, cultural and moral order), or as the most revolutionary, seeking to overthrow the whole establishment with all its views and ideas in the most radical way.* Is this not so, Adorno, Marcuse, Rudy Dutschke, Daniel Cohn-Bendit, Derrida, Paul Goossens and all other members of the Leuven SVB?

And all this since Adam and Eve in Central Africa invented the pronouns "I/me" and "we/us" and "he/him" and "they/them", or equivalents of these pronouns by changing the form of conjugated verbs in the singular and plural and then using these means of distinction in formulating value judgments.

The intense need of all humans to make distinctions is evident in their creation myths. According to the Greeks, at first there was only chaos, emptiness, Nothingness. *In this unlivable indifference, a livable distinction* arose through the appearance of the goddess Gaia (Mother Earth) and the god Uranus (Father Sky). They begat other gods who created new things that were distinct from one another. Norse mythology outlines the same scenario: In the beginning there was nothing but a gaping void, the original space.

The creation myth of the Maori (New Zealand) begins as follows: "In the beginning there was nothing, absolutely nothing..."

Taoism (China) speaks of a "primal chaos".

Ancient Egypt had four creation myths. The first starts with Nothingness and darkness, the second with a formless universe, a primordial sea, the third with the god Ptah who creates by thinking (= differentiation), and the last with the god Khnum who makes animals and humans out of clay on a potter's wheel (=

differentiation).

The Babylonian creation myth, *Enuma Elis*, opens as follows: "When the sky above was not named, And the earth beneath did not yet bear a name, And the primeval Apsû, who begot them, And chaos, Tiamat, the mother of them both, their waters were mingled together, And no field was formed, no marsh was to be seen; When none of the gods had been called into being."

So, in the beginning there was only the salt water, Tiamat, and the fresh water, Apsû. They mingled and gave birth to gods who in turn gave birth to other gods. Then, however, a series of murderous actions begin when Apsû wants to kill his own children and Tiamat persuades Ea to kill his father (= sadism of the primordial gods and goddesses).

And finally, Han Chinese and Hindus believe that creation and destruction repeat themselves continuously: the eternal repetition of differentiation and destruction of differences, as by the antinomistic god Shiva, who is both creator and destroyer.

Like Apollo, Herr Nietzsche.

The Norsemen had their own version of the struggle between chaos and order. In *Völuspá*, the first song in the *Edda* (*Klassieke Galerij*, number 67, *De Nederlandsche Boekhandel*, Antwerp, 1952, translation Jan de Vries), it is described as follows: "In prehistoric times it was that Ymir lived : No sand or sea or salt waves. There was no earth nor wide heaven, only the gaping abyss and grass nowhere."

Ymir was the primal giant who was murdered by the Æsir, the gods of heaven and war (= sadism of the primal gods). From his flesh, bones and blood the Æsir created the world and a man and a woman (see Song 3: *Song of Wafthrudnir*). The three goddesses of fate (the Norns), daughters of giants, come from "Jötunheimr". Their appearance puts an end to the golden age of harmony, peace and prosperity, for henceforth the gods too are subject to fate. War breaks out between the Vanir (the gods of vegetation and fertility) and the Æsir. They reconcile. A giant rebuilds the ruined Valhalla, but the Æsir refuse him the promised reward, Freya, the goddess of beauty, spring and eternal youth. As a result, a devastating war breaks out between the giants and the gods, aided by the heroes who once fell in battle and were brought to Valhalla. World and Valhalla perish in the world fire (Ragnarök) and chaos reigns everywhere. But then Earth and Valhalla come back to life through the return of the completely innocent god Baldr (the messiah) who returns from hell (the underworld). He meets a few surviving Æsir and a new golden age dawns, even for the two people who survived Ragnarök.

In short, people think in a language, speak a language, and write a language in the same way that apple trees bear apples: Each of their products reflects the nature and needs of its creator. This is in contrast to aggressive pigeons with olive branches in their beaks that are supposed to symbolize peace. An antinomistic symbol (or an antinomistic deity) can only be invented by the imagination of an antinomistic being. (The invention of a God in whom all opposites are reconciled is also only possible through the imagination of a being driven by an inherent need for the reconciliation of opposites, both in himself and in the world around him.) "In the beginning was the word," the Logos (John 1:1); "And the word became flesh and dwelt among us" (John 1:14). Well, mother, the word did indeed become flesh. Or more accurately, through evolution, man has acquired the hereditary ability to acquire language *and has become logocentric in order to distinguish truth from falsehood in order to survive*. Language is the expression of man's most essential nature, the purest expression of his antinomistic, homicidal essence, which on the one hand longs to make distinctions and to stand out in its own community, and which on the other hand is driven by the herd mentality dictated by its need for conformism and the reconciliation of opposites.

1.4. Every language distinguishes; hence the accuracy of Sallust's "*Idem velle atque idem nolle...*"

Under 1.1. I have listed a number of distinctions that are constantly being made, but as I said, these are all superficial. *The bottom line is this: Everyone, everywhere in the world, in every age group and within every ethnic group or culture, makes distinctions in and through their language.* This is the hereditary nature of Homo sapiens, and, along with his need to reconcile all opposites, is his most fundamental need. Whenever a person thinks, speaks and writes, he makes distinctions: He distinguishes one motive from another, one understanding from another, one meaning from another and one emotion from another, one value from another, one individual from another and one group from another. That is how language works; that is its essence.

If language did not make distinctions, it would be meaningless. Absurd. (From the Latin *absurdus*, meaning "out of tune", hence "irrational"; related to *surdus* "deaf, dull"). After all, then language would simultaneously name everything and everyone and thus not something and thus nothing (= the result of Derrida's semiotics). Distinction is thus the goal and essence of any language that has content.

Language constantly names differences and makes value judgments about the speaker/writer himself and about others, confirming existing oppositions or creating new ones. In other words, *language polarizes*. Every language does. I know of no others. *It is therefore not the case that only Marxists, Nazis, Christians, Muslims, atheists, machos, feminists, gays, transsexuals and heterosexuals polarize by calling their own group positive and implicitly or explicitly dismissing the other as negative and therefore inferior (= by creating a hierarchical dichotomy).* Everyone polarizes the moment they produce meaningful sounds and fill pages with meaningful sentences (via Old French from Latin *sententia* "opinion", from *sentire* "to feel, to be of opinion").

Because every normal person uses a language, every normal person is a distinguishing being, a polarizing being and - to remain consistent - a being that discriminates against others while it is living a life, either *Diesseits* or *Jenseits von Gut und Böse*. So actually always *Diesseits* given the hierarchical distinction that this being constantly makes between the respective values of persons and things. This is true for both the Right and the Left. The latter employs the universal

generalizations (which Adorno says are merely myths or fetishes) "the alienating possessing class" or "the establishment" or "the power", "the have-nots", "the powerless" and "the wage slaves", and of "the elite" who stand up for them, namely "the Party" and/or "the left-wing intellectuals".

What does it mean to "agree with someone"? It means that you agree with someone based on your immediate translation of his/her feelings, needs and actions (by naming and/or appreciating them) that you (possibly intuitively) consider right or wrong, and based on his/her immediate translation of your feelings, needs and actions that he/she considers right or wrong.⁶

Such a person is your friend.

And anyone who disagrees with you based on his/her intuitions and translations is your enemy. Whether you like it or not and whether you want to admit it or not. He is your enemy who threatens your socio-economic status and translated moral and other certainties, even when you call those certainties "undecidable", or "provisional truths", or "interpretations", as leftist fashion demands. Hence the correctness of Sallust's statement *"The firmest friendship is ultimately based on an identity of likes and dislikes"*. But any group that claims that its members want the same thing *distinguishes itself* ipso facto from and opposes ipso facto any other group whose members aspire to *something different*.

⁶ There is a second stage of interpretation in which a person decides whether his judgment of the observed/said/valued thing is true or not, in which he intuitively or explicitly decides whether or not he is mistaken in his judgment of the other person and/or himself. He may or may not admit this error to himself or others. He can either blame himself or, as usual, blame the others (= sadism). He can cover up his mistake by making up a number of interpretive lies and excuses that justify or trivialize the mistake, and so on.

1.5. Consequently, all value judgments are of a Manichaeian nature (= morally dualistic)

In general, who are the good guys and who are the bad guys for any group whose members want more or less the same thing? My own group is always the good one and the other is always bad, inferior, ignorant, foolish, backward, stubborn, selfish, prejudiced, heretical, errant, discriminating, making distinctions, and so on. Let this sink in to you once and for all: *Whether you are a leftist or a rightist, every time you use any of the above qualifications, albeit only in your mind, you are discriminating against and stigmatizing others and excluding them.*

In other words, every value judgment is of a Manichean nature because all people, including Marxists of all persuasions, are Manicheans because of their morally distinctive perceptions of themselves and others. Without that perception, they would never have been able to make a morally distinctive value judgment through a Manichean language. Derrida also makes such a value judgment by *accusing* Western thought of ethnocentrism, logocentrism and imperialism. Apple tree - apple.

And don't start whining now by countering this with the supposedly nuanced, but in fact trivial objection that you can graft the branch of a pear tree onto an apple tree. In other words, that like some kind of God the Father, you are able to create a new, semi-Manichean human being without waiting for the results of a slow evolution. It is indeed possible to 'perfect' an apple tree by grafting it, but even after that you still get a fruit that partly looks like an apple and partly tastes like an apple, and what is your gain? The possibility that the new fruit will contain less Manicheanism or not just Manicheanism? That remains to be seen, because the tree remains what it is, an apple tree, which, given its genetics, normally produces only apples. And as long as there are pure and unadulterated apples hanging from the branches, looking and tasting like pure and unadulterated apples, you are dealing with a pure and unadulterated apple tree. *And as long as there are pure and unadulterated sadistic statements coming out of people's mouths and pens and keyboards, you are dealing with pure and unadulterated sadistic persons.*

Biological evolution is only possible when heritable traits are inherent in the species. Thus, improved breeding through breeding and selection is possible only when the creatures you are trying to improve possess heritable traits. Given the

success of breeding and selection of plants and animals, the presence of these traits in them is a certainty and it is also certain that these traits can be modified. All living beings, including humans, are carriers of hereditary properties. These are the nature of those beings. Therefore, in order to change their nature, one must change their hereditary properties. For humanity, this means creating *Brave New World*. Certain interventions in human nature were already carried out by the Nazis: Eugenics, in which the most physically and mentally fit men were crossed with the most physically and mentally fit women, and those labeled as inferior were sterilized or destroyed. *Those who do not want to follow one of these sadistic paths designed by lust for power must wait for the effects of a slow evolution.* There is no point in hoping for an unexpected mutation that will make all the sadism of one or a few people disappear in one fell swoop, because these mutants will no longer be able to wield a distinctive language. And most certainly they will no longer be able to wield a language that makes sadistic judgments about themselves and their non-mutated sadistic fellow humans. They will literally be deprived of any speech by their mutation. *This is an objection that can be raised against any "perfectly good messiah" and his teachings, and against any cult of personality.* After all, without the existence of a perfectly good, silent and apathetic mutant, there can be no perfectly good, silent and apathetic *messiah*.

§ 2. Contradictions and antinomies inherent in relativism

2.1. "Universal doubt" and "moral relativism" are contradictions in adjecto

All that I have said so far about discrimination and sadism applies in full to any group that manifests itself as the fundamental proponent of universal doubt and, on that basis, as the group that abstains from any objectivist moral judgment (any moral judgment formulated as universally valid). This group inevitably turns against anyone who questions the meaning and value of universal doubt (= against all obstacles that stand in the way of its ideal), thereby transforming its universal doubt into the universal absolutization of the correctness of their own claims. While taking a *Jenseits von Gut und Böse* position according to their own judgment, its members condemn everyone who makes a moral judgment from a certain objectivism as backward, bigoted and right-wing, *and thus make an absolute value judgment instead of the relative and subjective one that is the only good and right according to them*. Of course, why not? Owls come in all shapes and sizes, regardless of the talent with which they exhibit their stupidity, including the kind that scream "Hallelujah" when they are told they are contradicting themselves, "See! I told you everything can be contradicted." You have indeed said one thing, my dear, that you have contradicted yourself. Quite clever, indeed! Congratulations.

But indeed, any person can contradict any statement. *But that ability does not automatically make every contradiction a meaningful statement, let alone a tolerant message or a message from someone who positively empathizes with someone else*. Saying that a certain action is possible indicates the possibility of choosing between two opposing actions: affirm and deny (deny = contradict). People can choose because they have free will, regardless of how inclined they are to choose one of the alternatives from a particular need. *Without need, no choice*. What need, dear relativists, prompts you to systematically contradict every assertion? The need for modesty? *A modesty that is given extra luster and emphasis by your assertion that you are equal to the one you contradict*? The need for tolerance perhaps, or that for positive empathy?

A few examples.

Your best friend is suffering from fatal dysentery and says to you, "I'm dying."

You reply, "Sorry, my friend. Every statement can be contradicted. You are not going to die. You are only suffering from a corn. But you can now in turn deny this."

Does such a denial, uttered under these circumstances, make any sense? Is it tolerant? Is it positively empathetic?

Another example. Your best friend is homosexual and you see him cum while having sex with another man. The context and sexual orientation of the witness are left to your imagination. Your friend says with a glorified face, "Wow that was great!" You reply, "Don't kid yourself, dude, you felt terrible. By the way, you are not gay as you claim. After all, any assertion can be contradicted, and as far as its truth is concerned, that contradiction is absolutely equal to your assertion. And besides, you cannot have enjoyed it because "you" as such does not exist, for you are "the Id"."

Does this denial of yours make any sense within the context described? Is it tolerant? Is it positively empathetic?

A final example. A woman is raped by a man with a surplus of Thanatos due to....
(Fill in something.)

"Help!"

"But honey, you don't need help at all; you're already being helped. But you can deny this, you know. But I don't have to take that denial into account, because that denial is equal to my denial in terms of its truthfulness. And who needs to be helped here? After all, you are just "the Id"."

Does this denial of yours make any sense within the context described? Is it tolerant or positively empathetic?

By your denial, you are not discriminating against the person calling for help: You are not distinguishing between the truthfulness of what is claimed by that person and what is claimed by yourself. *You are merely demonstrating your total indifference to the truthfulness of what the person in need is calling out to you, and to the factuality of what is happening, as well as to the emotions and needs of the person being raped.* Exhibiting indifference in word and deed is a choice made from a particular need. Which one? You readers know that full well by now, but nevertheless keep in mind the contents of paragraphs 2, 3, 6 and 13.

Contradictions are only fruitful if they are eliminated. By tolerating fundamental contradictions, one tolerates an intellectual inertia that makes any progress in

science and thought impossible, and any consistent action based on reason impossible. *The most beautiful paradox, then, is this: Without the sadism inherent in every critic and critique, all rationality is impossible.*

Therefore, genetic modification that would remove all sadism from the human genome would be a disaster. Humanity modified in this way could not possibly survive unless it were subjected to a dictatorship of sadistic, unmodified manipulators (*Brave New World*).

My paradox formulated above does not mean that it is impossible to acquire scientific knowledge out of pure interest (= to satisfy one's own Eros). In that case one goes to work with what is available without criticizing it: One adopts already existing knowledge in order to adapt one's own knowledge to it or replace it with it (= *one subscribes to a specific conformism*). The point, however, is that one cannot design a new theory without considering other theories as incorrect or incomplete and publicly judging them as such, and that no one is able to use his own scientific knowledge as an argument in a debate without going against the views of others, either out of narrow-mindedness (= out of sadism), or by noting "I am more right than you" or "My views on this matter are truer (= worth more) than yours". Both statements intentionally lower the status of the person whose theories one is criticizing (= sadism). In the history of science, there are numerous instances of scholars who continued to dispute the correctness of each other's views. In the context of this essay, I refer to the dispute between Fromm and Marcuse within the Frankfurt School over whether or not the Freudian Thanatos belongs to human nature.

Those whom I have caught formulating contradictions and antinomies will no doubt now claim that I am continually wielding an even more fundamental antinomy than theirs, namely, that of the universal need for both the making of distinctions and the reconciliation of opposites.

This is a correct observation.

Without the fundamental antinomy I am identifying, it is impossible to explain the existence of the antinomies inherent in each of the conciliatory solutions to which humanity proves to have an unquenchable thirst, a thirst it seeks to quench with the wisdom of their shamans, seers, thinkers, messiahs and prophets and with their myths, rites, symbols, mysticism, religions and philosophies, including those of moral relativism and/or skepticism.

It is therefore one of these two: Either one holds on to the antinomies of the provisional solutions of the past and the present and remains stuck in them, or one

accepts the fundamental antinomy of human nature. The latter choice is the most reasonable, because a being who invents and elaborates antinomistic solutions everywhere and always can only do so because it is prompted to do so by inherent antinomistic needs and feelings: apple tree-apple.

Instead of constantly striving for *universal reconciliation*, while always being obliged to express that goal in a language that *emphasizes differences* (= antinomy), one would do better to first answer the following question: Suppose I am wrong, whence comes humanity's stubborn adherence to a particular conformism (based on myths or religions, or on principled conservatism, or on evolutionary or revolutionary ideology) together with their equally persistent need to formulate differences and oppositions between one's own conformist group and other conformist groups, and between the orthodox members of one's own conformist group and the dissidents who oppose the official line, *for example, the oppositions between Stalin and Trotsky and between Marcuse and Fromm?*

This need for conformism and the creation of oppositions is not merely the result of capitalism and Christianity. Trotsky and Stalin were engaged in a power struggle within the socialist system of production in the USSR, which by virtue of Marxist-Leninist doctrine should have been pacifist and united precisely because it was atheistic and communist. Stalin eventually had Trotsky liquidated by an assassin hired by the Comintern, and Trotsky's supporters disappeared into death camps. Speaking of sadism.

Moreover, Khrushchev was the initiator of the destalinization of the USSR (= Khrushchev's thaw). In that same Stalinist socialist system of production, he *oedipally* denounced his spiritual father who had included him in the party leadership. He portrayed his ex-boss as a perfect demon in "The Secret Speech" at the 20th Congress of the Communist Party, 1956.

Communist China openly broke with the USSR seven years ago (1960), while both Mao and Khrushchev were in power in these socialist, atheistic and materialistic production systems. Is this not yet another *parricide*, despite their common socialism, atheism and materialism? Or is it this time a repetition of the myth of Cain and Abel? My dialectical imagination now sees a Chinese peasant, Abel/Mao, being attacked by his brother, the Soviet shepherd Cain/Khrushchev, as both are engaged in the struggle for the blessing of the Supreme Patriarch, God the Father Karl Marx, while both sons offer to him their own version of the one true model of proletarian revolution and classless society.

You can see what one is capable of when one gives "all power to the imagination",

what a plethora of mythical archetypes one can then discover in the beliefs and practices of modern man, *regardless of whether this man is living in a "patricentric-acquisitive" capitalist society or in a communist system* in which it is assumed that all contradictions have been reconciled and the cause of every form of oppression, the private ownership of the means of production, has disappeared. *In reality, the practice of every communist party turns out to be at least as "patricentric-acquisitive" as that of the capitalist bourgeoisie, and oedipal parricides turn out to be commonplace in communist parties.*

I hope, mother, that after all this you will finally see that fantasies about the goodness of man in his natural state (Rousseau, Nietzsche, Derrida) and Freudian myths about the murder of primal fathers and about egos and superegos (Frankfurt School and the Structuralists) are not sufficient to explain human behavior. These conceptions are a smoke screen. They do not solve problems, but rather obscure everyone's view of antinomistic human nature, unless people are willing to notice this antinomistic human nature in the feeling, thinking, and acting of all mythical characters.

"But why do the debunkers of the myths, by which the possessing class seeks to maintain its power, cling so fanatically to the myth of man's natural goodness?"

But mother anyway! If they did not believe in that myth and at the same time did not assume that the natural goodness of man was already largely realized in themselves - *the mote in your eye is the best magnifying glass* - on what grounds could they still maintain that they, and they alone, have the right and the duty to make sadistic criticisms and to eliminate others? Surely one can only ascribe that right and duty to oneself if one harbors the polarizing illusion that one is oneself perfectly good, possibly as a result of a biological mutation, and that one is therefore the only one pursuing a perfectly good cause, "the greater good", the universal reconciliation of all opposites, the earthly paradise of species-beings who are perfectly equal and good by nature. It must feel particularly good to think of yourself as perfectly good and intelligent and to think that you have every right and duty to constantly portray your opponents as incurably stupid or corrupt. But one would rob oneself of that fantastic feeling, that unlimited sadistic pleasure, if one were to demythologize the myth on which all one's own pretensions are based: the myth of the image one has of oneself.⁷

⁷ The same form of narcissism is a personality trait of all fanatical believers (regardless of what they believe in). One could therefore call this form religiously inspired narcissism.

The need to differ from one another and to have one's own truth prevail over that of others has nothing to do with culture, ethnicity, private property, class, nationality, skin color, atheism, Christianity, Confucianism, Islam, gender, and sexual orientation, and never has had anything to do with it.

"With what then?"

With man's inherent need to distinguish himself and make distinctions and to translate and make known to others all those differences, especially in the form of implicit or explicit value judgments about his own personal and social identity and that of others. Why else have all kinds of myths and rituals around the world led to the emergence and maintenance of societies that were radically different in practices and beliefs *long before capitalism as a system had emerged and long before Judaism and Christianity had emerged?*

Centuries before Christianity and capitalism took hold in Mexico, the Indian Maya sacrificed children to their gods and the Indian Aztecs did the same to their Indian rivals. Slaughter is actually a more appropriate term for Aztec ritual activity. By what needs were these peoples driven? Why did the Indian polytheists of Tlaxcala choose to attack Tenochtitlan along with the white, monotheistic Spaniard Cortés, rather than continue to serve as food for the sadism of the Aztecs? The daily human sacrifice in the religious center of Tenochtitlan (the *Teocalli*) was a religious duty imposed on the Aztecs by their creation myth which was practiced in a very conformist manner in their metropolis. The Tlaxcalans fought for their life while battling their rivals who ideologically motivated their own struggle for life with their creation myth. The ritual human sacrifice was a repetition of the self-sacrifice of the god Huitzilopochtli, who *voluntarily* jumped into the fire to rise as the life-giving sun (= *the free will of the primordial gods*). Repetition of this divine example through human sacrifice was necessary to ensure the daily resurrection of the sun god, and thus the life of his worshippers, the Aztecs. What could be more beneficial to these than the existence of adversaries? They killed two birds with one stone: They sadistically sacrificed their opponents to the gods, while at the same time expanding their power and maintaining their totalitarian conformism, their internal reconciliation of opposites.⁸

⁸ Given the Frankfurt School's preoccupation with the libido, the death instinct, and the reconciliation of opposites, I assume that according to them all egoism and altruism, and the Freudian Eros and Thanatos, can only be reconciled when all involved take pleasure in their sexual activities, but also that they believe that the Aztec military and administrative leader, the Emperor, the *Huey Tlatoani* Ahuizotl and his assistants, the dignitaries, brought about the same reconciliation in and among all Aztec revelers in 1487 [VII *Acatl* according to the Aztec

In antiquity, battles and wars between the Greek *poleis* were the order of the day, and likewise between Greeks and Persians after the Athenian military support to the Ionian cities following their revolt against Darius I (500 B.C.) and after the Persians' attack on Athens (Marathon, 490 B.C.). Later, in 480 B.C., the Spartans fell at Thermopylae, remember, mother?

And do you remember where the term *barbaroi* comes from and what the ancient Greeks (Hellenes) meant by it, whether they were advocates of private property or not? The Spartan *homoioi* (= "the equals") enthusiastically participated in making this *cultural distinction*. All Hellenes noted differences, translated them into distinctive terms, and thus formulated a thorough distinction between Hellenes and non-Hellenes.

The Romans, Japanese, and Chinese also made this distinction between the level of civilization of themselves and that of their neighbors. The latter were considered inferior and thus verbally referred to as inferior. The word "*Berber*" is derived from the Latin word *barbarus*. Hence the Western European term *Barbary* for Morocco, Algeria, Tunisia and Libya from the 16th to the 19th centuries. But the Berbers also considered others to be barbarians. The name *Ghana* is probably derived from the Berber word *agnaw* (meaning mad, misunderstood, stranger).⁹

This is the universal scenario. It is observable and verifiable by anyone who looks around carefully and listens attentively during conversations or speeches, and by anyone who has studied history without allowing his perception to be clouded by

calendar], when during the 4-day dedication of the temple of Huitzilopochtli and Tlaloc [god of rain and vegetation] they nonstop cut the beating heart out of the chest of each of the thousands of captives on the upper platform of the brand-new, snow-white and fully decorated temple pyramid.

Although this was not the interpretation of the subjugated city-states who were obliged to fight "Flower Wars" with the Aztecs, which of course always ended in victory for the Aztecs, so the latter had the right to sacrifice their defeated opponents to the gods. All but one of the leaders of the other city-states came to Tenochtitlan to attend the above grandiose "feast" only after a clear and *unambiguous* threat. (Dr. R. van Zantwijk, *Handel en Wandel van de Azteken* [The Ins and Outs of the Aztecs], Van Gorcum Assen, Amsterdam, 1977, pp. 185-189). This eminent expert on Aztec society writes: "The four [great] temples were dripping with blood, and Tezozomoc [an Aztec historian] writes that the eleven calpulli temples [*calpulli* = district] of the aforementioned fifteen [...] were also covered with the blood of the sacrifices." According to van Zantwijk, Tezozomoc devoted 40 pages to this feast, more than to any other topic, showing how much importance the Aztecs attached to this particular "feast". (Staf Van der Auwera, 1999.)

⁹ *Ghana* means "*Warrior King*" in the Soninke language and demonstrates blatantly the serene, natural goodness of the kingdoms and empires in the Ghanaian territory before the arrival of Islam and the Christian Portuguese.

an a priori need for the absolute equality of all cultures and the perfect reconciliation of the opposites.

Therefore, I now repeat my questions to Adorno and Horkheimer and to all structuralists, Derrideans and other subjectivists and relativists. *Whence comes* the ubiquitous need for contradiction, for perceiving and naming contradictions and for aggression against those who manifest themselves as dissenters with different perceptions of values? Whence comes this need in all times and in all civilizations and states and regions and economic systems, and among all skin colors, and in all religions and philosophies and parties and sects and genders and sexual orientations? What is the source of this need when the existence of contradictions does not turn out to be the result of the existence of private property, capitalism, and Christianity? Are these pervasive needs not then a feature of human nature? And if this need to distinguish and formulate differences and to make sadistic value judgments and use violence against opponents judged as different and on that basis as bad or inferior or life-threatening is demonstrably peculiar to human beings, to what extent is the claim that these same human beings can be "perfected" into autonomous species-beings in which all opposites are reconciled true? *Does the pursuit of this ideal then still make sense?*

Surely you philosophers of the Frankfurter Schule use your own jargon? Surely you also utter all kinds of derogatory and sadistic judgments about your opponents?¹⁰

Surely you Derrideans also constantly accuse (= sadism) dissenters? After all, you accuse the entire Western civilization of objectivism, ethnocentrism and imperialism, don't you? In your eyes, of course, this is completely justified. But the Aztecs were also completely convinced of their rightness when they fought the Tlaxcalans. And the Tlaxcalans also thought they were completely right when they fought the Aztecs. And the monstrous Spaniards also thought they were absolutely

¹⁰ Despite their official unanimous aversion to any dogmatism, Erich Fromm was barred from their circle by the Frankfurt School as a revisionist (of Freud's view of man) because he did not handle critical theory "correctly". Fromm attempted to formulate *a positive anthropology*, which was an abomination to the others, except Marcuse. Fromm also rejected Freud's view that the libido was one of the most fundamental human instincts. And finally, Fromm was an abomination to both Marcuse and the others because he limited the fundamental instinct of man to Eros, thus eliminating the Freudian Thanatos (which the others considered necessary to bring about a violent revolution). (Martin Jay, *O.C.*, pp. 99-100). It was Adorno who was the first to openly attack Fromm (Martin Jay, *O.C.*, pp. 103-104). Moreover, Adorno censored passages from Walter Benjamin's work (Martin Jay, *O.C.*, pp. 205-206). And, of course, he carried out all of these actions solely to accomplish "the greater good." (Staf Van der Auwera, 1999.)

right when they slaughtered the monstrous Aztecs based on their Christian standards. Everyone always thinks they are absolutely right when they defeat their opponent(s) in a discussion, in whatever tone and on whatever topic. It does not matter whether this discussion takes place in a meeting of a primitive tribe in the Amazon rainforest, or in the back rooms of Brussels, or in the Politburo of the Chinese Communist Party. After all, the opponent always deserves to be put in his place, doesn't he? Maybe just out of spite or revenge on your own part, but he deserves it anyway, doesn't he?

2.2. The sophism of Protagoras

2.2.1. "Man is the measure of all things"/"everything is relative"/"everything is interpretation"

The sophist Protagoras, the relativist whose epistemology was opposed by Socrates because he saw through the sadistic consequences of such relativism and realized that it would cause society to disintegrate, preached the adage that man is the measure of all things: All knowledge is relative, for the reality perceived by the observer is completely filled in by the observer himself. He fills it in with his own interpretation of what is true and false and of what is morally right and wrong: Everything is relative.

Thus, reality depends solely on the person who interprets it, while that interpretation is determined by the time in which that person lives and the place in which he finds himself. Truth and goodness are therefore valid only within the culture of the one who interprets and within the structure in which he finds himself. Every subject (i.e., every thinking and feeling entity) is determined by that culture or structure. Autonomy of individuals does not exist, no one is ever responsible for anything, no one is ever guilty of anything, and everyone gets to do what they want. End result: the deserter Alcibiades and the collective murder of the spoilsport Socrates.

2.2.2. The agnostic version

"I don't know whether truth exists or not, so I accept the most likely interpretation as provisionally true while waiting for a better one."

There is nothing wrong with this attitude in mathematics and science, but there is if you live in Vietnam in a village that has only recently been bombed by the Americans, and are collecting the remains of what just a few minutes ago was your wife. In that case, I assume you will not be satisfied with the comments of a right-

wing disaster tourist who calls himself a journalist and publishes in his newspaper that your wife's life is nothing more than your biased interpretation of what happened and that your nationalistic anger after her untimely death is merely sentimental rhetoric. Nor with the interpretation of his left-wing Western European colleague who tells you that she is number 23502 in the statistics he uses to denounce American, capitalist and imperialist inhumanity, and that her death is an inevitable and necessary collateral damage in the class struggle which, by virtue of an iron scientific law, will inevitably culminate in the victory of the proletariat and the liberation of all humanity through the reconciliation of all opposites in classless society.

Life is life and corpse is corpse. The living make distinctions; the dead are equal.

Suppose someone remembers the moment when his beloved died of a heart attack in his presence. What is provisionally valid with respect to the truth of his perception that his beloved died? It is utter nonsense to claim that what a person has seen and experienced is just a chance interpretation of an event that either never happened or happened in an entirely different way. It is obscene nonsense, a sadistic slap in the face to said person, to say to him after what happened, "Everything is interpretation" and "All truth is provisional". Will the deceased ever be able to rise from his grave or urn? Or has the mourner misinterpreted the lack of pulse, the lack of breathing, the cooling of the body and the onset of rigor mortis?

The traditional understanding of what truth is, is that it is the correspondence between empirical facts/data and communication. In order to express this correspondence intelligibly, signifiers are used which immediately evoke in the mind the stereotypical or specific features of certain mental images, which have arisen from the observation of persons, objects and situations in reality outside language, as well as certain word-image/signifiers (e.g. "Idealism") which also evoke certain stereotypical features (of a way of thinking or of a certain style in art) which have been observed in reality outside and/or inside language. That the Frankfurt School and Derrida dismiss this conception of truth as, respectively, fact-fetishism and Western ethnocentrism based on logocentrism, stems from their *real need to manipulate the facts*, respectively, through their dialectics and deconstruction, *with the aim of proving that they are objectively right (= with the aim of proving that their claims objectively correspond to the true state of affairs, whether outside or within language).*

Truth at the existential level is always the representation of reality, however imperfect that representation may be and, consequently, however imperfect your own truth may be. To claim that you are speaking only a provisional truth while making a statement about the life and death of people who really exist or have existed is a blunt denial of their existence and of their death, a cruel, insane inhumanity: "My assertion that this woman, my beloved, whose remains I am now collecting, is dead, is a hypothesis that is only provisionally true."

Moreover, when you *truly* consider your assertion about the past existence of your beloved to be a only provisionally true hypothesis and communicate it as such to others, *there is present in you as strong a belief in the truth of your statement about your assertion as if you had asserted that it is an indisputable fact that she actually lived.* For you believe *unconditionally* in the *absolute correctness* of your statement, "My statement that (...) is a hypothesis (...)." *This statement of yours is not a hypothesis, but both the establishment of the true nature of your statement and an objectively observable fact.* Without your firm belief that your statement reflects *the true nature* of your assertion, it is impossible for you to formulate your statement as an established truth and communicate it to others as being an established truth: After all, you say, "My assertion (...) is a hypothesis." You use an affirmative main clause with the independent verb "to be" in the indicative and present simple tense, while the affirmation of the true nature of "my assertion" by this verb is not relativized by accompanying adverbs expressing a conditionality.

When you implicitly appropriate to yourself the ability to articulate that a certain something (in reality outside or within the language) is really of a certain nature, or is really this-or-that, or is really the case (= that your statement about it corresponds to reality = that you speak the truth when you use the traditional definition of what is truth), *you have no right to claim that no human being is capable of articulating that a certain thing is really of a certain nature, or really is this-or-that, or really is the case (= that no human being's articulation corresponds to reality and is therefore true).*

The same applies to anyone who believes in the true existence and truth of his assertions "Everything is relative" or "Everything is relative to something else."

2.2.3. Everything is relative

The view that man is the measure of all things was reintroduced during the Renaissance and has since degenerated, as it did in Athens in the latter days of its Golden Age, into a radical relativism/subjectivism of all knowledge and morality.

"Why is this adage a sophism and why can it be nothing but a sophism?"

Quite simply, mother. If man is the measure of all things, and if the measure by which all men describe reality (= "all things") can only consist in the relativization of all reality, then all mankind can only relativize itself continuously, because that all mankind is part of "all things". Then there can be no absolute and unconditional truth, certainty, goodness and the like because all these qualities are constantly relativized and cannot but be constantly relativized. But in that case, the principle that everything is relative is also constantly relative, which makes this principle an absolute and unconditional truth. This is an obvious and well-known observation.

NB. *Never say as a relativist that "one" "must" relativize oneself or one's own truth, because this implies [1] that everyone has the choice to do so or not (= this implies the existence of free will), and [2] that you are imposing a categorical imperative which by its very nature makes impossible any relativization of what is imposed as to be relativized (namely oneself or one's own truth).*

2.2.4. "Everything is relative to something else" is a contradiction in terms

And it is equally obvious and well known what the objection of the relativist to the above is: "You are right when you consider the phrase "everything is relative" in isolation. But when one says that "everything is relative", one always means that what one calls "relative" is relative to something else. The phrase "this matter is relative" always means that this matter is relative to something else with which this matter is compared and by virtue of which this matter is judged. Taking this meaning into account, a judgment is never relative without taking something else into account, but always relative to something else, to a particular time or place or community or individual." [= subjectivism.]

[Note the repeated use of "always" and that of the indicative mood and present

simple tense of the independent verbs in the main sentences of his commentary and the complete absence of adverbs expressing conditionality. *There is nothing relativistic or subjectivistic about these sentences. On the contrary.*]

"There is nothing absolutely good or beautiful," says this relativist, "and this view of mine is not problematic because I know that my own statements about beauty and goodness come from a particular context, namely my own, and that they will therefore not be convincing to everyone."

Indeed they do not convince me because they remain problematic even after this explanation. An Inca, who is constantly at war with his opponents and takes for granted that the Inca people make human sacrifices to please their sun god and reward adultery with the death penalty, shows that he is driven by some permanent needs that cannot be relativized given their *factual* and *deadly* nature: His need to distinguish himself from members of other tribes, his sadistic desire to dominate those others, his religiously inspired sadism, and his simultaneous need for conformism within his own community (= his need to reconcile internal contradictions). When this internal conformism is destroyed by deviant behavior, e.g., adultery, this non-conformist behavior, *which is a form of resistance to (= of defiance of) the conformist group*, is sadistically defused by application of the death penalty to the adulterers.

Now compare these real needs of the Incas with the same real needs (and resulting behavior) of any other culture. The simultaneous need for distinction/sadism and conformism/reconciliation of internal contradictions within one's own group is universal and therefore cannot be relativized: *That need is existential.*

What can be compared is the degree to which sadistic behavior was and is prescribed and practiced by different cultures. That degree differs from culture to culture, as does the degree of coercion with which different cultures enforce conformist attitudes and behaviors in order to reconcile internal contradictions. If, as a (cultural) relativist, you claim that the suffering of all humanity is close to your heart, you are not permitted to ignore these differences in the name of your "unproblematic" relativism. If you do, you are a pretender and hypocrite and therefore utterly lacking in credibility.

Because the relativist argues that everything is always relative to something else, he demonstrates that this form of relativity is more important and relevant to him than any fact, including the fact of the undeniable suffering of certain victims. If this were not the case, he would not have formulated his final conclusion as an absolutely and universally valid statement, namely, *"Everything is relative to*