Introduction

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"What book do you think Napoleon carried in his field library?—my 'Werther!'" (305). The entry from 1829 in Johann Wolfgang Von Goethe's *Conversations with Eckermann* comes late in a book that had already touched upon Napoleon's fondness for *The Sorrows of Young Werther.* Five years earlier, near the beginning of the chronological entries, Eckerman presses Goethe on the same subject:

> "Napoleon," said I, "pointed out a passage in 'Werther,' which, it appeared to him, would not stand strict examination; and this you allowed. I should much like to know what passage he meant.
>
> "Guess!" said Goethe, with a mysterious smile. (49)

Mosaic issues 56.3, 56.4, and 57.1 turn on the question of suicide. Whether or not Napoleon had singled out Werther's death at his own hands to be the passage that "would not stand strict examination" we will never know, but we can be certain that suicide was part of the backstory of the meeting between Napoleon and Goethe in 1808. The emperor carried a copy of "Werther" with him on his campaigns. The connections Goethe forges between the time in which both men lived, the questions of youthfulness, "continued enlightenment" (247), "productiveness" (247), and "Poetry and philosophical thoughts" (306) as much as "deeds" (247) all hinge for the aging man of letters on the exhaustion of the Romantic symbol at the hand of allegory.

The grim existential topic of suicide itself was suggested to me as a theme for the journal by the French post-Conceptual artist Saâdane Afif. Shock is the best way to describe my reaction to the idea, which is such a taboo in so many cultures, families, among friends, and so on. Capturing the zeitgeist on the minds of many in Berlin, where he lives and works, was assuredly part of his intention, but Afif also reminded me that in *The Myth of Sisyphus* Albert Camus calls suicide "the one truly serious philosophical problem" (11). And, of course, suicide—what authors as diverse as Shakespeare, Beckett, and Derrida call "the worst"—is a recurrent trope in literature, art, and theory. Beyond this I imagine Afif's proposal counted on the trope's ability to bridge the gap between art and life that is so important to the tradition of the historical avant-garde within which he works; what's more, it crosses this divide and cuts to the quick far more swiftly than the abstraction, that is death. With the specificities of his practice in mind I would also submit the concept is modulated by the temporal deferrals which are so central to his exhibition practice, implicit to his unique version of collaboration that hinges on establishing often surprising and unlikely relations between people, part of the systematic and all too often dire repetitions as well as intellectual conceits instanced in and as his corpus, and, following Camus, the "humiliated" status he accords to thought, a status which equally applies to whatever formal resolution or medium Afif works within. Finally, behind his lyric works and longtime pursuit of music as a method for galvanizing community, the trope is more than likely a proxy for the *gravamina*, isolation and despair that periodically have a grip on us all.

My reasons for pursuing the topic are another story. Françoise Dastur's hard words for extreme sports as an evasion and overcoming of death is part of this—the thought had me bristling at first (3). A few brushes with death while rappelling the Dru, parapenting on Les Esparrons, and other adventures will never not stop rattling me, but I hold on to them as positive moments. Making that dicey jump from the end of my rope to a tiny stance in a deep corner of overhanging granite on the Southwest Pillar was an urgent and pragmatic decision forced upon me that seemed the only way out. Only I untied the knot at the end of my rope, watched as my stitch plate slid off the end, or heard it bounce endlessly down the rocks. Only I jumped at the apex of that final pendulum swing. How would anyone else know anything of this?

But, we can never touch the void, as Joe Simpson supposes and "King Lear" reminds us, something especially true in our own brushes with it, and particularly when we "watch" ourselves in those horribly long moments as if from someone else's perspective, which is one of Dastur's points. "The death with which we are […] confronted is always the death of others," she writes, "and in particular of those who are

close to us. The foremost experience is, for us, the experience of mourning" (3). Still, she quotes Montaigne, emphasizing "in order to get used to the idea of death […] there is nothing like coming close to it" (38). And I would stress, just as Dastur does, that the "anxiety" that comes along with such encounters is never overcome, but carried over and "remained within," as she frames the problem for philosophy (43).

Death in the mountains always has the hint of suicide about it, but then so too does writing and reading. And none of this blurring between suicide and death makes the question of either any more or less answerable, it only deepens the mysteries of each. The inexhaustible and inexplicable motives of the one or ontological questions concerning the other simply remain, to haunt us. The essays collected here in *Mosaic* 56.3 on the work of Goethe, John Donne, Sigmund Freud, Jacques Derrida, Fethi Benslama, Walter Benjamin, and others are all drawn from *Mosaic*'s tremendous archive. All confront death and in doing so brush up against the question of suicide, or vice versa. They constitute an exceptional set of singular perspectives on this worrying subject. Of these authors and their thoughts on death, only Benjamin committed suicide, yet the many taboos and stigmas surrounding the latter never fail to have their effects. So, we keep on wondering if in fact it was death at the hands of the Gestapo or Spanish fascists (Mauas). And/or, if it was suicide, what kind? A symptom of the general panic of those fleeing Europe (Koestler 246-48)? Something born of utter exhaustion, or drug induced decision-making? Of the medically assisted kind, or the only other option after the absurdity of Benjamin's earlier attempt to escape the Nazis by stowing away on a freighter dressed as a French sailor (Fittko 947)? I could go on and in fact do go on and into some detail about Benjamin at the end of this issue and make a case that aligns with what Simon Critchley describes in his *Notes on Suicide* (2015) as trying to "open up a space for thinking about suicide as a free act" (9). Here I will merely say that alongside all the rest, for WB suicide is an antidote to capture, especially capture by identity, and further, that repeated suicide emerges as a political tactic in his late writing.

For now, allow me simply to introduce the real content of the issue with essays opening up the slippery relationship between suicide and death, the problems of writing and reading, the tenuous relationship forged between suicide and ethics, the questions of the death-drive, confessional literature, autobiography, repetition, creativity, self-sacrifice, entropy, autoimmunity, and lastly the nominal consolations of philosophy and theory, which lie so uncomfortably close to the pragmatic moment of suicide. Although most of the essays collected in *Suicides 1, 2,* and *3* were published under the editorship of Dawne McCance in an extraordinary series of special issues and conferences relating to Derrida, Freud, and Lifedeath held over the last twenty

years, two of the essays were published under the editorship of Evelyn J. Hinz in the early 1990s, one on film appeared under the guest editorship of Georges Toles in 1983, and one essay was published under the joint editorship of R.G. Collins and Kenneth McRobbie in 1972.

In the first essay featured in *Mosaic* 56.3, "The Werther Effect: The Esthetics of Suicide," Tobin Siebers explores the questions of mimesis and projection in Goethe's *Sorrows of Young Werther* (1774). Siebers focuses not so much on the copy-cat suicides that were spurred after its publication, but on the literary model and persecutory complex of Goethe's precursor, that most Romantic and modern subject, Jean-Jacques Rousseau. In this suicide pact where doubling is a constitutive fact of the subject and life constantly flirts with death, the absolute self emerges as both "savior and condemned," the gap between fact and fiction—whether the author is despairing, depressed, and has contemplated the act or not—is constantly sutured, and a kind of primal scene that pits the persecuted against persecutor, judge, and jury is never far away.

Two general points about suicide emerge here, and they are reflected in the essay's division between a Girardian literary theory and the sociology of Émile Durkheim (see Franco "Bifo" Berardi's *Heroes: Mass Murder and Suicide* [2015] for the 2.0 version). As in the establishing shots of any classic Western, the landscape is a mirror of the loner that rides through it: inside and outside are shot through with one another and we sense it. Thus, too, our identification with Werther, which despite obvious differences is smoothed over by the desire to live out the scene of death on one's own terms as a reader whose own victimization by one world takes precedence over the revenge reeked upon the tragic hero in another world. The transports between art and life and life and art are unstoppable here, and they foreground the complexity of all literature and art that borders on suicide. Second, and in more complex ways than projective identity negates the self, whether it is Vincent Van Gogh, Nicholas De Stael, or Mark Rothko, "life *produces*" the art, but art "may produce and determine" the life (de Man 69). The metaleptic twists and turns naturalized by the trope of autobiography are all a crux here. Rothko's last painting, left unfinished on his easel, the crumpled convergence of colours at what should be a vanishing point on the flat surface of De Stael's *Agrigente* (1954), and the birds of Van Gogh's *Wheatfield with Crows* (1890) all cast the longest of shadows, for ultimately the art as much as the life is rewritten from the perspective of suicide. The metaleptic reversals naturalized both here and in the foregoing by the trope of autobiography all point to the complexities of understanding suicide that is immanent to life, that pushes the limits of life into death, would have death fulfill a long life in service to it, or discover death amidst the living and even lurking at the very beginning of things.

"Death to death"; "death, thou shallt die"; "I would not that death should take me asleep"; "that death which S. Paul died more than once"; "this *death* after *death*, nay this death after burial, this *dissolution* after dissolution"; and finally, "no remedy presents itself so soon to my heart, as mine own sword." These are among the dark galaxy of thoughts that Mark Allinson reminds us punctuate the poetry, sermons, and writings of John Donne, at the centre of which lies Donne's *Biathanatos* (1608). In "Re-Visioning the Death Wish: Donne and Suicide," Allinson treats Donne's thoughts on death and its intimate relation to suicide from the perspective of a "post-Jungian archetypal psychology." And despite this apparently dusty set of theories and the resistances to reading encountered in the archetype of the heroic character, we discover a theory of individuation where becoming will constantly re-invent being through ego death. Resistance on Donne's part to confront the Passion reveals a very different version of eternity: a "Goodfriday, 1613. Riding Westward," to quote the title of one of Donne's "religious" poems, where a new day will constantly dawn from the quest itself rather than the final act of surrender. No accident of history here, dropsy is refreshing.

For Donne, symbolic suicide is a choice that must be made in order to avert nature's ends. Of death he writes, "I would not have him meerly seise me, and only declare me to be dead, but win me and overcome me. When I must shipwrack, I would do it in a Sea, where mine impotence might have some excuse; not in a sullen weedy lake, where I could not have so much as exercise for my swimming." Here as elsewhere, Donne is pictured as the captain of his own ship who will go down with it again and again. For the true mariner, the captain always goes down with his ship and the only burial is not so much at sea, but burial by "Seas—vague, unnamed, plumbless." Like Kazmir Malevich or Søren Kierkegaard, Donne worked to script, plan, and time his own death. Why? To make death approximate his notion of suicide and thereby open it to a touch more willfulness. Death is an affront to the heroic ego that lives in anything but a heroic age. So, Kierkegaard who timed his death to the last penny of his inheritance, Malevich who lay in state beneath his Black Square, or Donne on his death-bed who writes the couplet:

> And thinke me well compos'd, that I could now
> A last sicke houre to syllables allow.

A final resting place is the fate awaiting all essays. "Order Catastrophically Unknown" by David Wills demands republication again and again even while finding its perfect state here in our present issue. Wills explores the unstable and shifting relationship between life and death in Freud's metapsychology between 1915-23—in particular,

how Freud's original "project for a scientific psychology" becomes a metapsychology, at moments moving beyond the psyche to bleed into biology, inorganic chemistry, and physical entropy. Thus, with special emphasis on "Beyond the Pleasure Principle," we learn that "the death-drive or the very inorganic origin that gives rise to it" might just motivate the life instincts. Of particular importance here are the insights psychoanalysis would uncover into metaleptic reversal, temporal delay, return, and the hermeneutic twists involved in understanding the past as future and future as past. The confounding of before and after with special emphasis on what transpires in or as life, and the causal relationships this range of time stamps complicate, turn the classification of life itself into a mixed salad that is given the name "lifedeath." For Wills, life as an "order catastrophically unknown" turns on the role of the death-drive: because there is allegorical agency attributed to it, Freud's proposition is that "an instinct is an urge inherent in organic life to restore an earlier state of things." In this context, life is borne along by death and the instincts are themselves suicidal, but because the one writing the life is inseparably co-relative to the other writing the death, they are in constant correspondence with one another, without so much as suspecting the other's presence. This is what turns the operational parameters of psychoanalysis inside out. And the very rocky ground on which this places the science of psychoanalysis has fallout for Freud, who will eventually retreat, as much as Wills who follows as well as mirrors the latter's advance to the point of paradoxical undoing. In each case, lifework and family plot bleed into one another. But before sketching out how Wills plumbs his own demise on the model Freud felt out, we should mark the grave of one more deconstructive enterprise that figures in Wills's essay.

Wills suggests that "To Speculate—On Freud," which Derrida does in *The Post Card,* one must follow the lead of this book that addresses the very form of correspondence which expects or receives no response in return. He suggests that "To Speculate—On Freud" after Derrida would be to identify the lifework of each and move beyond the limits of autobiography in each case. Finally, Wills suggests that "To Speculate—On Freud" after Derrida turns on something within and beyond both of the latter and particular to his life's work, precisely to stage an encounter with the repetitious pattern of the amoeba/pseudopodia at the origin of Freud's speculation, and the family plot Derrida perceives. This is an organism that develops in the direction of "self-exteriorization" by leveraging the "exigencies of life" over endogenous processes. An organism that develops through the process of cannibalization and incorporation and consequently stages, in the earliest form of life, a psychic operation through which consciousness develops out of animate matter into a dead crust, thereby reversing the process or force that produces life out of mineral silence. This is

an essay on multiple epitaphs, the last or first—depending on which way you look at it—that of Wills himself, whose own prosthetic reach extends and retracts as an echo of the game of Fort/Da played by Freud's grandson, little Ernst, and a logic that instances the compulsion to repeat. What Wills brings to the foreground is repetition, the repetition of prosthetic reach and retraction that Derrida minimizes at the expense of an arche-autobiography. Forgive me for the long, choking sentences, but it's slowly dawning on me that these thresholds formalize my epitaph as well.

Be worried. We are all vulnerable; exposure is imminent and not because we lack immunity. "There is something terrifying about life after Derrida," Elizabeth Rottenberg tells us, because we lack autoimmunization. In "The Legacy of Autoimmunity," Rottenberg explores the "suicidal" impulse that Jacques Derrida looked towards in his late work. In an account which is deeply indebted to psychoanalysis, trauma studies, and biology—specifically Derrida's reference to the body's antibodies produced "against foreign antigens"—Rottenberg discusses autoimmunity as an issue that turns ethics on its head to confront the central problem of self-sacrifice. Through chiasmic turn after chiasmic turn, she upends and reverses our basic valuations of life and death, time, and ethics. Future and past are inextricably tangled. Death is rolled up into life, and care for the self courts a limit condition where care for the other risks "the worst." In the wake of Jacques Derrida's death and confronted by his dwindling legacy among theorists, Rottenberg makes the counter-intuitive suggestion that, if his legacy is to be kept alive, one must commit to the suicidal logic of autoimmunity. Rottenberg's claim is that we commit "intellectual and academic suicide" in not doing so, that regression and narcissism are more than small beer at the faculty club but an auger of a mass mortality event awaiting theoreticians in the humanities. For Rottenberg the event of all events that is most worth contemplating is one that takes place over time, far below constative exchanges, and within and beyond the level of performatives. Within and beyond performatives, because these lie in state but are always ready for the call up. Over time, because this conscription overwrites the event, which is not unlike a kind of Braille whose markings gain in roughness only as the subject's defences or resistances to immunity give way to corporeal thresholds that admit the foreign body and its affective charge.

With recourse to the slipperiness of translation from German to French, into English and back again, Samuel Weber's "Sidestepping: Freud After Derrida" takes the reader on a remarkable step "beyond the pleasure principle" to a *pas "au-delà du principe de plaisir"* through an emphasis on the *Andere seite* of Freud's *"Jenseits des Lustprinzips."* Along the way and bracketing these linguistic crossings, Weber plays the frozen time of structuralist closure off closure in post-structuralism in such a way that

the tension between image and text—as much as the breaching of a threshold, glimpse of the primal scene, or a *carte de visite* engraved with the scene of writing—reads as a contingency of time. Threaded through this, Weber narrates the early history of the pleasure principle as a "displeasure principle" (*Unlustprinzip*), tracks Freud's move beyond the pleasure principle through his encounters with the night terrors suffered by survivors of WWI, and begins to consider the compulsion to repeat, especially in such cases of dreams or memories devoid of pleasure. He argues these are an originary means by a more originary self—"a proto-I (an *Ur Ich*)"—to master the true shock and surprise of terror, by substituting *Schreck* for the lesser worry of anxiety. "Schreck," or terror, as Freud puts it in *"Jenseits des Lustprinzips,"* "names the state in which one arrives when one comes into danger without being prepared for it." We learn that this "'stable binding' of energy" is done on behalf of the *Ich,* translated as I rather than Ego on the one hand, and on the other hand on behalf of "objects: visual, acoustic, or linguistic." And with reference again to the question of time, "Anxiety," as Weber puts it, "prepares the psyche to bind energies by mobilizing 'stable cathexes.'" But these processes, little less than the resistances of *"dasselbe System,"* are less Weber's interest than what has been called "the last iteration of deconstruction: namely, the notion of autoimmunity." For Derrida, Weber tells us, "autoimmunity […] is not a pathological or abnormal process, but a structural tendency of every organized system, insofar as the notion of systematicity implies duration and therefore the ability to *survive* over time." Ultimately, I come away with the notion that autoimmunization is "the effort to protect and to safeguard the singular living being," which "necessarily involves an acknowledgment of its heterogeneity, with the result that 'the loss of singularity' becomes 'the experience of singularity itself.'" In this regard, the universal implications of Freud's speculations on the "death drive" as the "goal of all life" become another kind of universal that are "*sui generis* in their irreducible singularity."

"I am the fragmented symbol of Quebec's revolution, its fractured reflection, and its suicidal incarnation." Thus, the hero of Hubert Aquin's novel *Prochaine Episode,* which centrally figures in Gary Sherbert's "Canadian Cultural Autoimmunity: Derrida and the Essence of a Culture." That the theme of suicide "saturates" Aquin's "critical and creative corpus" is no coincidence either. With special emphasis on the aporetic fortunes of *Dasein* through recourse to Derrida's reading of *Being and Time,* Sherbert gives us an existential analytic to understand developments in the Democratic crucible. If I am understanding correctly, crossing the threshold of death is the impossible passage underwriting *Dasein's* "self-identity." As an ultimate "cultivation of self," immunity from culture is at the essence of *Dasein's* trajectory towards death, but this process is hard wired into an encounter with culture that lies on the far

side of that threshold. Reorienting Derrida's critique into the arena of Canadian politics, ontology's perspective from a primordial inside and before is exchanged for the perspective from an outside after the fact. In the end, we confront 'our' culture as one long accumulation of funerary practices. In short form, politics is one event in the unfolding of this history, cultural politics, identity politics, and the singular example of multiculturalism in the Canadian context, yet more.

With the openness of liberal multiculturalism figured as "a culture of death," Sherbert argues that both the experience of French-Canada and that of First Nations peoples poses a special kind of limit case to the ethical reach of democracy. Suicide rears its head here because no logical extension of the extant form of democratic citizenship is afforded. The symmetrical relationship of "mutual recognition" is caught in an aporetic movement for inclusion in an extant system that is already closed. He suggests both examples instance successive events in the history of the "ambivalent status" of the supplement and occupy the place of "an unnecessary surplus" as well as the "necessary compensation for [that] lack." Consequently, each "exposes […] the definition of the citizen as a political concept of universal equality" to what he calls the "unpredictable outside" of autoimmunity. Alongside a running commentary on the pact Slavoj Žižek sees between multiculturalism and global capitalism, we glimpse the emptying out of national culture less as a dialectic forged in the name of universalism (giving voice at the same time as taking it away) and more as a function of a limit crossed for an unfolding "messianic without messianism." With as keen a sense for the migratory paths of Derridean terminology from essence to supplement and autoimmunity as his knowledge of Canadian politics, or shifting relations between singular ego and collective subject, it is the sequential nature of unfolding events that makes the essay. For Sherbert the years that bracket the Canadian centenary in Montreal are the crux. He marks the emergence of Canadian cultural autoimmunity first to the bids for Quebec sovereignty in 1971, when Pierre Eliott Trudeau proclaimed that, "although there are two official languages, there is no official culture, nor does any ethnic group take precedence over any other." And second to earlier events (read: obstacles) in the prehistory of Indigenous sovereignty with the so-called "White Paper" of 1969 and when the notion of "citizens plus" was introduced by the Hawthorne Report (1966-67) to "improve the position of Aboriginal peoples." Reiterating "the self-limiting, double bind of cultural autoimmunity," Sherbert quotes Derrida saying, "pure unity or pure multiplicity […] is a synonym of death," which suggests a rather more complex condition where life is haunted by suicide.

"The subversion of every kingdom," this is what Elisabeth Weber reminds us was the work Derrida attributed to the so often misinterpreted, over-used, and unduly

restricted notion of *différance*. More to the point, in "Ages of Cruelty: Jacques Derrida, Fethi Benslama, and their Challenges to Psychoanalysis," Weber focuses on why *différance* is "infallibly dreaded by everything within us that desires a kingdom." From the mutated (and we should assume greatly sharpened) optic that follows, and with helpful excurses on the term "hauntology" and the question of the "death penalty" along the way, Weber's ultimate goal is to think the two sides of the "war on terror" as it crystallized almost a decade ago: on one hand as the cruelty of a "techno-scientific [drone warfare], from which the 'cruor' of blood seems to have been wiped away, and another, bloodily 'archaic,' [war] reacting savagely to the first." To think this massive rift, Weber brings on a set of chiasmic resources that leverages the work of Derrida against the Tunisian-based psychoanalytic work of Fethi Benslama. And through an exchange of positions and properties that turns the bloody violence of Terror into a property of Counter Terrorism and the bloodless violence of technics into a possession of Terror—making each part of the same body, making the valuation of one over the other difficult if not impossible—she constructs an analytic of sameness and difference within each body. Distinctions between Islamic and Western philosophical traditions fall away as contingencies on either side of the chiasm (><), and we are asked to plumb the "structural limits of mastery." The tremors of these "seismic places where sovereignty quakes," as Derrida frames it through his idea of Geopsychoanalysis, happen both between kingdoms and deep within them. The two worlds articulated are antinomies. Each is a law unto itself, and though they make a whole, the whole they make is undiscernible as a concept. They are separated by an unbridgeable gap, which might as a well be the thrust fault between two continental plates, and what's more the seismic fault lines that course through the subjects on either side. Thus, the challenge to psychoanalysis, which in the cases of both Derrida and Benslama not only invoke absolute limits but appeal to an expanded metapsychology that would prohibit the "disassociation of psychic life from the political." What is called for is neither psychoanalysis as an institution that might aid, abet, or become one more functioning component of the state apparatus, nor even a normative therapeutic to absolve or "anesthetize" difference in the same. Rather, both Benslama and Derrida demand of psychoanalysis the most "monstrous" and "ghastly deformity." Thus, on the one side there is talk of "autoimmunity" and on the other there is the example of self-immolation. Self-sacrifice in both cases, then, but given the different order of "kill chain" in each case, also the undermining of sovereignty through different absolutes.

[There is both an early Walter Benjamin and a late Walter Benjamin. The latter will be known as Benjamin, Walter. A reversal of his first and last name on the death certificate issued 28 September 1940 for the burial of the former's body at Port Bou, Spain, is

testament to that—the makings of a book written from citations alone is yet another—but why foreground these distinctions and substitutions, why substitutions of the proper name matter, and what comes before and after is confusing here to say the least.] In "'And yet': Derrida on Benjamin's Divine Violence," Robert Zacharias confronts a sequence of two lectures Derrida delivered on Walter Benjamin's 1921 essay "Critique of Violence." The second of these was published as Derrida's *Force of Law: The Mystical Foundation of Authority* (2002). The main text, titled "First Name of Benjamin," is bracketed by a "prolegomena" and a "post-scriptum" that are marked by incompatible readings and distinguished by italics and square brackets. As a heuristic to understand this incompatibility, Zacharias keys his reading to Derrida's various scenes of address, the second being a conference titled "Naziism and the 'Final Solution.'" If in "First Name of Benjamin," delivered as a keynote at a conference on "Deconstruction and the Possibility of Justice," Derrida follows Benjamin's "Critique" to the letter, then in the "prolegomena" and especially the "post-scriptum," he puts his foot down. Although willing to move with Benjamin on the distinction between the "founding violence," which establishes the state, and the "preserving violence," which maintains the state, as well as the lack of distinction between the two when the founding moment is repeated in and as the reproduction of the same, Derrida draws the line when Benjamin introduces a shattering force he names, in quick secession, "mythical violence" and "divine violence." The one is bloody, with all the intrigue and power-plays of Greek cosmogony, the other is "lethal without spilling blood," an Old Testament destroyer of worlds. To quote Zacharias quoting Derrida, this is "'*too Heideggerian, too messianico-Marxist or archeo-eschatological*' for him to bear." To paraphrase a wide-ranging commentary punctuated by insights on justice, the Law, means and ends, the general strike, and politics: "pure language" and "pure means" are the grave upshot.

Apparently, the force of history is accelerating as the object of Derrida's inquiry gains in mass. The true gravity of the situation is that Benjamin's text from 1921 gains traction in the same soil that leads inevitably to the "final solution." What gives special pause for thought here is how this provides Derrida the leverage to showcase an analytic of sorts: that there is divine violence that is originary, and also that "evil" comes late to language, arriving by way of representation, as mediation, or relation—say, in the *Trauerspiel* (1924) from "contemplation." Thus, Benjamin can write, "There is no evil in the world. It arises in man himself, with the desire for knowledge, or rather for judgment" (233). The supplanting of words by *logos*, or, if you wish, the primacy given speech and orality in "Task of the Translator," will not be where Derrida finds fault with Benjamin. Moving in the wake of Benjamin's apocalyptic theology turns on its

untimely, or premature nature. Following both Derrida and Zacharias, the problem lies in "the word that comes before the words," and this happens at the very end. "In the beginning there will have been force," Derrida says. The proper name Walter and its German cognate *Walten*, sieze the day. "The worst?" ["*The very worst.*"