

the Romantic fragment

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life would want to die, a little

pain itself is the meaning, in Nietzsche

martyrs do not underrate the body

inwardly, an Actor prepares

brother, bro: it's only you that overhears you

J is like Hamlet / Herzog / Holden Caulfield / Raskolnikov

they take him to a basement & they feed him METH

a surface is revealed / the depths are all inferred

my Self is all depth: a long internal vertical

Joyce knows not the inside of ideas

perception of depth is maladaptive

by knowing Death, humans are the Woken Ones

all as straw, or graphomania

i tend to write thru / tho unless i'm imitating English

Finnegans Wake as Literature's endgame

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duḥkha is uh-hukha: the gut's double throb

the Romantic fragment

the Romantic fragment: by Poet's wit & idio-logic, chained into essays; these then bound in a volume to advertise

a self that has been sundered in advance of the work. And this divided self is experienced as both pain and pleasure: it is the vexing consequence of encroaching modernity, for instance, in English Romantic poetry. But that also means it's an opportunity to remake or remodel the writing "I" with each fragment, each "psychological experiment" (as Samuel Taylor Coleridge called his definitively unfinished fragment of his poem "Kubla Khan").¹

¹ Brian Dillon: **Essayism: on Form, Feeling, and Nonfiction** [NYRB: 2017], p 80 -81

what is, then, this Unity i sense in two dozen essays of five thousand apothegms - a Unity thru my twenty-plus years of scatterling stanzas?

it may be simply **me** - the persistent & familiar I that thought them: the I that has - for me & me only - phenomenal continuity.

life would want to die, a little

desire is always desire **of**.

even when it warps or lies, desire discloses **an object**.

Life found a potent new fuel in **desire**, an inner motivation.

but **desire is awareness** - thus cannot wholly obfuscate.

to sum: life let in desire, and thereby gained a death-drive.

1. life is struggle.
2. desire brings awareness.
3. awareness cannot wholly lie,

thus

4. life would want to die, a little.

our **fear of heights** is of something inside: our **yearning to jump**, that may leap into impulse, then to action, at the precipice.

pain itself is the meaning, in Nietzsche

the solemn old religion endures, deep in our Psychology. the blood-rites of old, the oaths made good with sacrifice instilled in us that

authentic meaning is painful, and [] the pain is itself the meaning. Between pain and meaning comes memory, a memory of a pain that then becomes a memorable meaning.²

² Bloom, in **Essayists and Prophets**, p 164

pain is the most powerful aid to mnemonics, says Nietzsche.³ fear & pain, the amygdala training: a standard of lab Psychology.

he hesitates to name this as Nietzsche's key insight, "but I myself always remember it first when I think of Nietzsche", Bloom writes⁴ - he remembers *because* the insight is *painful*, "distressing":

since I was a small boy, I have judged poems on the basis of just how memorable they immediately seemed. It is distressing to reflect that what seemed inevitable phrasing to me (and still does) was the result of inescapable pain, rather than of what it seemed to be, bewildering pleasure. But then the Nietzschean sublime, like the Longinian and the Shelleyan, depends upon our surrendering easier pleasures in order to experience more difficult pleasures. Strong poetry is difficult, and its memorability is the consequence of a difficult pleasure, and a difficult enough pleasure is a kind of pain.⁵

³ **On the Genealogy of Morals**

⁴ Bloom, 163

⁵ Bloom, 168

still, Nietzsche doesn't say the pain *is* the meaning. the pain *burns* meaning into memory, so meaning mixes, in memory, with pain. yet the meme *for which* the rite was underwent: this could be a *happy* thought; the thought e.g. that **i am a god and may grow wings whenever i want**; a gospel truth we've had ourselves crucified to keep in the midst of our Incarnation.

if the meaning *is* the pain, then every tattoo's meaning is the pain of being tattooed.

by this example, actually: i come around to Bloom's view, a few degrees.

martyrs do not underrate the body

martyrs do not underrate the body. they allow it, on the cross, to be elevated.

in this, martyrs are at one with their antagonists . . .⁶

at one, e.g. with the beefy Centurion, with the dark young Prince of the Temple.

⁶ Kafka's **Blue Octavo**

at one, e.g.: **locked in agon**; competing with, & winning, perhaps:

What does the Man of Renunciation do? He strives after a higher world, he wants to fly longer and further and higher than all men of affirmation. He throws away many things that would impede his flight, and several things among them that aren't valueless, things not unpleasant to him: he sacrifices them to his desire for elevation. This sacrificing, this casting away, is the very thing which becomes visible in him: on that account one calls him a Man of Renunciation, and as such he stands before us, enveloped in his cowl, and as the soul of a hair-shirt. With this effect, however, which he makes upon us, he is well content: he wants to keep concealed from us his desire, his pride, his intention of flying above us. Yes! He is wiser than we thought, and so courteous towards us his affirmer! For that is what he is, like us, even in his self-renunciation.⁷

courteous to his affirmer, we who crucify him!

in crucifying him, we affirm him, give him victory!

⁷ Nietzsche, **The Gay Science** s. 27

inwardly, an Actor prepares

Smile, never force me from my high brahmin style.

-a brahmin, to his Smile

a boy who stuttered, him they gave a stuttering part

-only on **the Dumont Network**: America's *other* Network

PAGE 1, FRAME 1 Perhaps I had **shifty eyes** . . .

PAGE 1, FRAME 2 so I webcammed my face,
made intimacies with the lens
for several seconds -

PAGE 1, FRAME 3 steady, yep -
it must be **my breath**.

brother, bro: it's only you that overhears you

- there is no **Assembly of Souls**
- no one listens in on your in-head skits & disputations
- no audience whatsoever for your existential crises & intimacies
- brother, bro: it's you *yourself* that overhears you
- the laughter is canned, a bicameral echo. it's all **a complex privacy**
- brother, bro: **thou art That**. the elevated Self was you all along, laughing at your in-jokes
- this is you, too: these bullet-lines that chastize

J is like Hamlet / Herzog / Holden Caulfield / Raskolnikov

- an ardent young seeker
- a wounded star of the world
- the world his own *bildungsroman*

- he pre-empts the Revenge Plot, prevents his father's death by his prescient sense of Castle politics
- a poet-prince who - younger than the gloomy Dane - comes into alertness re Palace politics
- he's not quite Tammujin, clutching in-womb a bloodclot!
- a Dickensian Adept, a wonder-child forced into a warrior's readiness

i call you, Reader, to *will your own reading*, to skew J's sketches by your own *high urgencies*, by your own *unbearable present* - where J's fate occurs incessantly!

they take him to a basement & they feed him METH

guy emails his friends he's gonna off himself: any last words or objections?

they quickly plan an Intervention. await him in the shadows of his sad little low-rise foyer. they tackle him & take him to a basement where they feed him CRYSTAL METH. they send him on **a life-affirming bender.**

three days in 90 minutes: an Apatow raunch-Com or a dismal Nordic verité. three days to his death and/or redemption.

a surface is revealed / the depths are all inferred

you can't judge a book by its cover.

the cover's not *enough* of the surface.

a book's full surface is:

- the surface of each page
- impingement of the text on my retina
- my "reflections" on its meaning
- et cetera

you can't judge a person by the headshot clipped to their résumé.

yet what they say hits my inner tympani.

& their face, while they say it, is a surface.

the depths are all inferred. contact *is* with surfaces, there's no other way.

digging, we unearth another surface. a depth is *seen* when brought to the surface.

even my soul, i infer from the surface of my self-reflection. i see it when i put it on a page.

*my Self is **all** depth: a long internal vertical*

or my Self is *all* depth: a long internal vertical.

my Self is my *spinal* self: a precipitous drop, from cerebrum down to the sensory depths of anal/genital throb.

my Self is my spinal self: always behind me, never seen.

my spinal self: a form that reiterates Phylogeny. a spine holds Life's historic depth: throbbing far below my thoughts, i'm ever feeling life's **volitional genesis**; and meditation, self-reflection, tends to trigger **past-life regression**.

Joyce knows not the inside of ideas

He knows the brutalities of theology, the beauty of its pageantry, the fearfulness of its fanaticism, but not its internal intellectual power.⁸

William Gass alleges: Joyce knows not the inside of ideas.

a sweeping allegation, and maybe anti-Irish. a libel of those frivolous kids on the edge of Empire: of those poor & unserious, those unserious *thus* poor, beyond English Conscription; whose blarney & charm are their *luxuries*.

⁸ William Gass, **A Temple of Texts** [Dalkey / Knopf, 2007], p. 40.

perception of depth is maladaptive

So there could be a colossally complex nine-dimensional - let's go String Theory for a moment and imagine the universe exists in nine dimensions - there could be this colossally complex nine-dimensional **predatory force** that's out there; and my great-great-great-great-grandfather had some distortion in his brain that caused him to perceive it as **giant cat**. And it's no more **giant cat** than these bitters are a bucket of ivy. But boy did he survive; while his cousin, who was gazing in awe at this nine-dimensional spectre, got devoured. And that simplification got handed down.⁹

⁹ Rob Reid summing Don Hoffman's non-Realism. **After ON podcast**: ep 26: Reality Isn't (?) (!)

by knowing Death, humans are the Woken Ones

humans are the Buddha of the Biosphere, the woken Ones:

the most “conscious” animal is the most motivated animal. The most motivated animal lives in apprehension of the ever-present possibility of the greatest possible threat (that of its own demise) and in eternal desire for rectification of this threat—in hope, in consideration of the possibilities of the dangerous unknown for generation of “redemptive” information. It is clear apprehension of the mortal danger and infinite possibility lurking everywhere that has boosted human consciousness far beyond that of its nearest kin, in a process that extended over eons.¹⁰

¹⁰ Jordan Peterson, **Maps of Meaning**, p 305

motivation can't be pried from consciousness. yet who is more conscious: me or my rabbit?

he's always set to bolt, poised for a nameless danger. he sleeps ears-up, ready to stott from dreams he's practicing stotting in. anxiety powers his awareness.

his danger goes unnamed. it won't reduce to **fox** or **hawk**. his killer is amorphous till it enters his field & localizes.

we call it **Death**, so infinitize it. we, through language, *dissipate* its power, dissipate the darkness by the light of comprehension.

yet Death shall be the end of all we know; of knowing itself, of all naming.

we *have been* the super-conscious animal;

humans *have* ascended by the difference-engine Peterson identifies:
anxiety of death, conjoined to infinite ambition.

yet what is the entropic cost? perhaps our **sense of death** now
dissipates. eons deep in the cortical layering, we turn unserious, go
easy & complacent in the City. we're less into life, & less aware of
death, than the Queen's Park squirrels we pass on the way to the
office.

even as the City ends, we keep our equilibrium - emotively, we're after-life already. we outsource the screaming to Apocalypse melodramas. our sexual ambition is raised into vacuous icons, up into the billboard idols we mutely pass under.

our **models** are decreasingly **models for life** - are more & more insentient vestiges of it.

all as straw, or graphomania

late in life, in morning chapel, Aquinas was rewarded with a surge of grace/bliss that made his life's work seem "as straw" - all the paper theory *we still read*.

Dick, after Zebra, wrote non-stop. was diligent scribe to his own divine mania.

*i tend to write **thru** / **tho** unless i'm **imitating** English*

i tend to write **thru** / **tho** unless i'm *imitating* English, aping a Polonius prolixity.

my **tho**, i know, rankles readers as a precious provocation; and **tho** i have interest in Germanic morphology, i am not *slave* to it: i release the ugly relict **ugh** from my **tho**, from from my sentence. i release this persistence in the script that surprises me.

i even drop the **ugh** in **thought**: write **thot** here & there.

i'm not convinced - it looks too cutesy / texty. yet nicely aligns with **phon** and **phot**, i.e. with other **atomic perceptions**.

Finnegans Wake as Literature's endgame

Finnegans Wake as **literature's endgame**. a **terminus of wordsmiths** who won't do Physics. who won't learn to code. of genius who'd master Finnish rather than attempt to solve the latest findings from Göttingen. who'd memorize every arbitrary waterway loconym rather than contend with Gödel.

Murray Gell-Mann admired Joyce. his naming of the **quark** is fondly thought a tribute to the Poet's prescience.

whatever his intent, it strikes me as a joke at Joyce's expense. a pre-emptive diss of Terence McKenna, who'll read **Discover** cover to cover but laze, a bit, as a Berkeley undergrad.

from his 60,000 distinct words, from hundreds of neologisms, Physics takes a syllable. Gell-Mann's dubbing is a Reductionist trick: where Joyce's map of all Myth, his thousand-page dream-song condenses to a word, and we don't really *need* it, but it's cute: "quark".

without *trying* to poetize, machines now do, in concert. the functional talk of Comp Sci outstrips Joyce's jokey mythopedia.

any whiteboard full of Math is interesting as *the Wake*, graphically. i understand neither but am skeptical that Joyce's book could repay the work he's set for me.

that was his snarky aim: to keep scholars busy for *centuries*. i'd rather learn to weld.

a Poet's last hurrah. the solitary Nobel-seeker, singing forth his idioverse, advertising himself.

the Wake is silly, obviously: a parody of Joyce's own genius. a reduction to absurdity of and by those who won't track Nature in a team.

the Devil grants a marked-off self, but wins the deal: his goods are obsolescent.

the Devil is a prophet: he gives you what you want, but sees that what you want is waning, just beyond the roll of your horizon.

Hard Realism: Hemingway, Knausgård

Hard Realism - Hemingway, Knausgård. a virility dance, a virtue display.

we read these men & trust the man himself has been shown. we judge the man, when judging their work, and they brave this.

Hemingway wanted to write adventures, *and* about himself - so he went on adventures.

the cause of pain, in Buddhism

Antoine Panaioti sums a standard objection to the Second & Third Noble Truths:

The pain I feel when I burn my hand has nothing to do with desire. . . . [E]ven if I had no desires whatsoever - not even the desire to live by escaping the fire - flames would hurt me. The Buddha's account of suffering, then, is unsatisfactory.¹¹

¹¹ Antoine Panaioti, **Nietzsche and Buddhist Philosophy**. [Cambridge University Press, 2013], p 134

Panaioti replies: *bodily* pain is not implied by **duḥkha**.

the suffering the Buddhist seeks to bring to cessation is something slightly more specific than what falls under the scope of the generic notion of pain, or suffering. . . . [I]t specifically stands for the vast family of torments - big and small - that afflict people when they suffer from the fever of thirsting. As such, the second noble truth is not designed to explain why the flame hurts my finger, or the splinter my foot.

tṛṣṇā / **taṇhā** is thirsting, the Cause: whose Effect is **duḥkha**, the feverish torment.

four more Replies, to add to Panaioti's:

r1. **nirvanic bliss may dwarf / subsume the pain.**

the throbbing hand registers yet is relativized to nil by my ananda. **the pain is infinitesimalized.**

r2. **the pain is made alien in Liberation.**

bliss aside, the Wise may note the throbbing hand, *unbothered* for they don't identify. the Wise is divested from the grasper.

Asian hagiographies are full of sages superior to pain. the epics tell of voluntary sati. we also have the immolating monks, on recent record:

As he burned he never moved a muscle, never uttered a sound, his outward composure in sharp contrast to the wailing people around him.¹²

pain is **a motivating message**. pain says **my hand is in trouble** - yet i don't share my nerves' presumption, that the hand is *vital*.

my hand, i see from high: the hand is a kid, crying for something trivial.

¹² David Halberstam, at Thích Quảng Đức's iconic immolation. [**The Making of a Quagmire**, Random House, 1965]

yet the monk's apparent stoicism may, like pain, be **reflexive**:

Topp ... suggested that such individuals . . . have some capacity for splitting off feelings from consciousnessOne imagines that shock and asphyxiation would probably occur within a very short space of time so that the severe pain . . . would not have to be endured for too long. [Herschel Prins, **Offenders, Deviants or Patients? Explorations in Clinical Criminology** [Taylor & Francis, 2010] p 291. as cited in **Wikipedia: Self-immolation**]

r3. **the cause of pain, historically, is Life's own "thirsting" to replicate.**¹³

zoom out from the solo seeker to *all animal history* - to half a billion years of the Nervous System. *Life* selects pain: to motivate Life's own spread & consumption.

the cause of pain, in the history of Life, is **ṭṭṣṣṣṣā / taṣṣṣṣā**. there's nothing that the meditating aspirant can do with this, admittedly. it's a Transhumanist dictum, a motto for our bio-engineering.

¹³ i scare-quote **thirsting**, a term that would psychologize the **reflexes**: the organic *behaviors* whose primitive versions may lack vivid qualia. thirsting is, functionally, life's *directedness* - which may not *feel* like much, till later.

when **feeling** evolves, it tells Life the striving was intense, all along. when the pains & pleasures first arose, Life, as it were, said to the Organism: "FEEL how bad i want to spread". Life's objective drive is *felt* intensely.

Life is a "craving for becoming". it trains the body with pain & pleasure. it rewards our thriving, punishes our deviations.

take the central pleasure: an orgasm is what grasping *feels* like: a convulsive *clenching* at the body's core - coded to feel good, so to motivate.

pain lets us know our continuance is being thwarted. the Drive *is* energy, is felt *intensely* - thus *accurately*.

his hand in the flame, pain tells the aspirant his move is maladaptive to his *spreading*. and spreading is the outward form of *craving*: spreading is what one predicts of a *motivated* populace.

r4. from Sam Harris:

If you're suffering, you're lost in thought. To some degree this is true even of extreme physical pain. The experience of *pain being unbearable* is a kind of illusion where, because - the pain that has arrived in the present moment, you've already borne. *What you're actually experiencing here is your massive resistance to the pain*, and all the cognition is going toward "How do I get rid of this, How do I change this, What does this mean?" And there are massive framing effects, as you know, with pain. . . . Just imagine the physical sensations of the hardest workout you've ever done, right? If you woke up in the middle of the night feeling those sensations with a different frame, you'd call 911, you'd get the ambulance there, right. So, the meaning you attach to it does a tremendous amount . . . ¹⁴

¹⁴ a point he made while trying to convert Adam Grant to Mindfulness. [**Making Sense Podcast** Ep 158, May 30 2019] Harris concedes he's unconvinced by **the science on meditation's benefits** - yet he evangelizes, still: convinced by **personal experience** that mindfulness is a key to ending suffering.

Life is duḥkha, all of it - so says the Buddha. our pleasures & our triumphs included.

the cause of *pleasure*, even of bliss, is **our thirsting or grasping**. and pleasure, like pain, is intrinsically **perturbing**. pleasure & pain **are what grasping feels like, from within** - a clenching that, wearily, at last we seek relief from.

the bliss of Nirvana is the bliss of release - from Life.

i think of Nietzsche's comment, his complex nod to India, that Buddhism is a *late* religion, the doctrine of a people who have lived, and now are *tired*.

a late phase of life itself - emergent in an avant garde animal.

duḥkha is uh-hukha: the gut's double throb

duḥkha is *uh-hukha*: the gut's double throb, thus a **sonolog**.¹⁵

duḥkha sounds sad: by the belly sob inscribed in the **visarga**, in the word's central colon:

दुःख

¹⁵ it **sounds** like what it **names**.

duḥkha

- : the **k** is an anchoring grapheme. it centers **kha** & **kḥu**
- : the **kha** & **kḥu** are syllables crossing, outward bisymmetric from the anchor **k**
- : the **kha** & **kḥu** are scanned from the anchor **k**: rightward [**kha**], then left [**kḥu**]

tṛṣṇā / taṇhā: cause of **duhkha**

tṛṣṇā / taṇhā are the twins who draw Danny down the hall, into death-play; who jolt the ephebe into sexual awareness & pain.

[**Danny** is **life**, and i mean no misogyny.]