### Schopenhauer

**The plan inevitably brings suffering that will outweigh its benefits**

**Schopenhauer 1904** (Arthur, “THE ESSAYS OF ARTHUR SCHOPENAUER; STUDIES IN PESSIMISM”, <http://www.gutenberg.org/files/10732/10732-8.txt>)[rkezios]

Of every event in our life we can say only for one moment that it \_is\_; for ever after, that it \_was\_. Every evening we are poorer by a day. It might, perhaps, make us mad to see how rapidly our short span of time ebbs away; if it were not that in the furthest depths of our being we are secretly conscious of our share in the exhaustible spring of eternity, so that we can always hope to find life in it again. Consideration of the kind, touched on above, might, indeed, lead us to embrace the belief that the greatest \_wisdom\_ is to make the enjoyment of the present the supreme object of life; because that is the only reality, all else being merely the play of thought. On the other hand, such a course might just as well be called the greatest \_folly\_: for that which in the next moment exists no more, and vanishes utterly, like a dream, can never be worth a serious effort. The whole foundation on which our existence rests is the present--the ever-fleeting present. It lies, then, in the very nature of our existence to take the form of constant motion, and to offer no possibility of our ever attaining the rest for which we are always striving. We are like a man running downhill, who cannot keep on his legs unless he runs on, and will inevitably fall if he stops; or, again, like a pole balanced on the tip of one's finger; or like a planet, which would fall into its sun the moment it ceased to hurry forward on its way. Unrest is the mark of existence. In a world where all is unstable, and nought can endure, but is swept onwards at once in the hurrying whirlpool of change; where a man, if he is to keep erect at all, must always be advancing and moving, like an acrobat on a rope--in such a world, happiness in inconceivable. How can it dwell where, as Plato says, \_continual Becoming and never Being\_ is the sole form of existence? In the first place, a man never is happy, but spends his whole life in striving after something which he thinks will make him so; he seldom attains his goal, and when he does, it is only to be disappointed; he is mostly shipwrecked in the end, and comes into harbor with masts and rigging gone. And then, it is all one whether he has been happy or miserable; for his life was never anything more than a present moment always vanishing; and now it is over.

### Fear of Death

**Our aversion to death is irrationally rooted in the ego – our bodies are perpetually dying, and accepting that solves**

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What bothers people about losing the body is that it seems like a terrible break or interruption. This interruption is imagined as going into the void; it is total personal extinction. Yet that perspective, which arouses huge fears, is limited to the ego. The ego craves continuity; it wants today to feel like an extension of yesterday. Without that thread to cling to, the journey day to day would feel disconnected, or so the ego fears. But how traumatized are you by having a new image come to mind, or a new desire? You dip into the field of infinite possibilities for any new thought, returning with a specific image out of the trillions that could possibly exist. At that moment, you aren’t the person you were a second ago. So, you are clinging to an illusion of continuity. Give it up this moment and you will fulfill St. Paul’s dictum to die unto death. You will realize that you have been discontinuous all along, constantly changing, constantly dipping into the ocean of possibilities to bring forth anything new. Death can be viewed as a total illusion because you are dead already. When you think of who you are in terms of I, me, and mine, you are referring to your past, a time that is dead and gone. Its memories are relics of time passed by. The ego keeps itself intact by repeating what it already knows. Yet life is actually unknown, as it has to be if you are ever to conceive of new thoughts, desires, and experiences. By choosing to repeat the past, you are keeping life from renewing itself. Why wait? You can be as alive as you want to be through a process known as surrender. This is the next step in conquering death. So far the line between life and death has become so blurry that it has almost disappeared. Surrender is the act of erasing the line entirely. When you can see yourself as the total cycle of death within life and the life within death, you have surrendered – the mystic’s most powerful tool against materialism. At the threshold of the one reality, the mystic gives up all need for boundaries and plunges directly into existence. The circle closes, and the mystic experiences himself as the one reality.

### Baudrillard

**Upholding life as inherently valuable forces us into ontological slavery – instead we should embrace the liberation of sacrifice**

**Baudrillard 2** (Jean, “The Spirit of Terrorism: Hypotheses on Terrorism”, pg. 68-70)[rkezios]

All the same, we should try to get beyond the moral imperative of unconditional respect for human life, and conceive that one might respect, both in the other and in oneself, something other than, and more than, life (existence isn’t everything, it is even the least of things): a destiny, a cause, a form of pride or of sacrifice. There are symbolic stakes which far exceed existence and freedom - which we find it unbearable to lose, because we have made them the fetishistic values of a universal humanist order. So we cannot imagine a terrorist act committed with entire autonomy and ‘freedom of conscience’. Now, choice in terms of symbolic obligations is sometimes profoundly mysterious - as in the case of Romand, the man with the double life, who murdered his whole family, not for fear of being unmasked, but for fear of inflicting on them the profound disappointment of discovering his deception. 3 Committing suicide would not have expunged the crime from the record; he would merely have passed the shame off on to the others. Where is the courage, where the cowardice? The question of freedom, one’s own or that of others, no longer poses itself in terms of moral consciousness, and a higher freedom must allow us to dispose of it to the point of abusing or sacrificing it. Omar Khayyam: ‘Rather one freeman bind with chains of love than set a thousand prisoned captives free.’ Seen in that light, this is almost an overturning of the dialectic of domination, a paradoxical inversion of the master-slave relationship. In the past, the master was the one who was exposed to death, and could gamble with it. The slave was the one deprived of death and destiny, the one doomed to survival and labour**. How do things stand today?** We, the powerful, sheltered now from death and overprotected on all sides, occupy exactly the position of the slave; whereas those whose deaths are at their own disposal, and who do not have survival as their exclusive aim, are the ones who today symbolically occupy the position of master.

#### The idea that we must reject death at all costs is the root cause of all exclusionary dichotomies

Baudrillard 76 **(Jean, “Symbolic Exchange and Death”, pg. 125-126)[rkezios]**

Racism is modern. Previous races or cultures were ignored or eliminated, but never under the sign of a universal Reason. There is no criterion of man, no split from the Inhuman, there are only differences with which to oppose death. But it is our undifferentiated concept of man that gives rise to discrimination. We must read the following narrative by Jean deLéry, from the sixteenth century: Histoire d'un voyage en la terre de Brésil ('The History of a Journey to the Land of Brazil') to see that racism did not exist in this period when the Idea of Man does not yet cast its shadow over all the metaphysical purity of Western culture. This Reformation puritan from Geneva, landing amongst Brazilian cannibals, is not racist. It is due to the extent of our progress that we have since become racists, and not only towards Indians and cannibals: the increasing hold of rationality on our culture has meant the successive extradition of inanimate nature, animals and inferior races 1 into the Inhuman, while the cancer of the Human has invested the very society it claimed to contain within its absolute superiority. Michel Foucault has analysed the extradition of madmen at the dawn of Western modernity, but we also know of the extradition and progressive confinement of children, following the course of Reason itself, into the idealised state of infancy, the ghetto of the infantile universe and the abjection of innocence. But the old have also become inhuman, pushed to the fringes of normality. Like so many others, the mad, children and the old have only become 'categories' under the sign of the successive segregations that have marked the development of culture. The poor, the under-developed, those with subnormal IQs, perverts, transsexuals, intellectuals and women form a folklore of terror, a folklore of excommunication on the basis of an increasingly racist definition of the 'normal human'. Quintessence of normality: ultimately all these 'categories' will be excluded, segregated, exiled in a finally universal society, where the normal and the universal will at last fuse under the sign of the Human.2Foucault's analysis, amongst the masterpieces of this genuine cultural history, takes the form of a genealogy of discrimination in which, at the start of the nineteenth century, labour and production occupy a decisive place. At the very core of the 'rationality' of our culture, however, is an exclusion that precedes every other, more radical than the exclusion of madmen, children or inferior races, an exclusion preceding all these and serving as their model: the exclusion of the dead and of death.

Baudrillard 76 **(Jean, “Symbolic Exchange and Death”, pg. 147-148)[rkezios]**

Our whole culture is just one huge effort to dissociate life and death, to ward off the ambivalence of death in the interests of life as value, and time as the general equivalent. The elimination of death is our phantasm, and ramifies in every direction: for religion, the afterlife and immortality; for science, truth; and for economics, productivity and accumulation. No other culture had this distinctive opposition of life and death in the interests of life as positivity: life as accumulation, death as due payment. No other culture had this impasse: as soon as the ambivalence of life and death and the symbolic reversibility of death comes to an end, we enter into a process of accumulation of life as value; but by the same token, we also enter the field of the equivalent production of death. So life-become­ value is constantly perverted by the equivalent death. Death, at the same instant, becomes the object of a perverse desire. Desire invests the very separation of life and death. This is the only way that we can speak of a death-drive. This is the only way we can speak of the unconscious, for the unconscious is only the accumulation of equivalent death, the death that is no longer exchanged and can only be cashed out in the phantasm. The symbolic is the inverse dream of an end of accumulation and a possible reversibility of death in exchange. Symbolic death, which has not undergone the imaginary disjunction of life and death which is at the origin of the reality of death, is exchanged in a social ritual of feasting. Imaginary-real death (our own) can only be redeemed through the individual work of mourning, which the subject carries out over the death of others and over himself from the start of his own life. This work of mourning has fuelled Western metaphysics of death since Christianity, even in the metaphysical concept of the death drive.

**Confronting the inevitability of death solves**

Baudrillard 76 **(Jean, “Symbolic Exchange and Death”, pg. 158-160)[rkezios]**

The irreversibility of biological death, its objective and punctual character, is a modern fact of science. It is specific to our culture. Every other culture says that death begins before death, that life goes on after life, and that it is impossible to distinguish life from death. Against the representation which sees in one the term of the other, we must try to see the radical indeterminacy of life and death, and the impossibility of their autonomy in the symbolic order Death is not a due payment [echeance], it is a nuance of life; or, life is a nuance of death. But our modern idea of death is controlled by a very different system of representations: that of the machine and the function. A machine either works or it does not. Thus the biological machine is either dead or alive. The symbolic order is ignorant of this digital abstraction. And even biology acknowledges that we start dying at birth, but this remains with the category of a functional definition.25 It is quite another thing to say that death articulates life, is exchanged with life and is the apogee of life: for then it becomes absurd to make life a process which expires with death, and more absurd still to make death equivalent to a deficit and an accelerated repayment. Neither life nor death can any longer be assigned a given end: there is therefore no punctuality nor any possible definition of death. We are living entirely within evolutionist thought, which states that we go from Life to death: this is the illusion of the subject that sustains both biology and metaphysics (biology wishes to reverse metaphysics, but merely prolongs it). But there is no longer even a subject who dies at a given moment. It is more real to say that whole parts of 'ourselves' (of our bodies, our language) fall from life to death, while the living are subjected to the work of mourning. In this way, a few of the living manage to forget them gradually, as God managed to forget the drowned girl who was carried away by the stream of water in Brecht's song: Und es geschah, dass Gott sie allmiihlich vergass, zuerst das Gesicht, dann die Hiinde, und zuletzt das Haar [It happened (very slowly) that it gently slid from God's thoughts: First her face, then her hands, and right at the end her hair.] ('The Drowned Girl' in Bertolt Brecht: Poems and Songs, ed and tr John Willett, London: Methuen, 1990, p. 14] The subject's identity is continually falling apart, falling into God's forgetting. But this death is not at all biological. At one pole, biochemistry, asexual protozoa are not affected by death, they divide and branch out (nor is the genetic code, for its part, ever affected by death: it is transmitted unchanged beyond individual fates). At the other, symbolic, pole, death and nothingness no longer exist, since in the symbolic, life and death are reversible. Only in the infinitesimal space of the individual conscious subject does death take on an irreversible meaning. Even here, death is not an event, but a myth experienced as anticipation. The subject needs a myth of its end, as of its origin, to form its identity In reality, the subject is never there: like the face, the hands and the hair, and even before no doubt, it is always already somewhere else, trapped in a senseless distribution, an end­ less cycle impelled by death. This death, everywhere in life, must be con­ jured up and localised in a precise point of time and a precise place: the body In biological death, death and the body neutralise instead of stimulating each other The mind-body duality is biology's fundamental presupposi­ tion. In a certain sense, this duality is death itself, since it objectifies the body as residual, as a bad object which takes its revenge by dying. It is according to the mind that the body becomes the brute, objective fact, fated for sex, anguish and death. It is according to the mind, this imaginary schizz, that the body becomes the 'reality' that exists only in being condemned to death. Therefore the mortal body is no more 'real' than the immortal soul: both result simultaneously from the same abstraction, and with them the two great complementary metaphysics: the idealism of the soul (with all its moral metamorphoses) and the 'materialist' idealism of the body, pro­ longed in biology Biology lives on as much by the separation of mind and body as from any other Christian or Cartesian metaphysics, but it no longer declares this. The mind or soul is not mentioned any more: as an ideal principle, it has entirely passed into the moral discipline of science; into the legitimating principle of technical operations on the real and on the world; into the principles of an 'objective' materialism. In the Middle Ages, those who practised the discourse of the mind or soul were closer to the 'bodily signs' (Octavio Paz, Conjunctions and Disjunctions [tr Helen Lane, New York: Arcade, 1990] ) than biological science, which, techniques and axioms, has passed entirely over to the side of the 'non-body'

### Bataille

#### Second, we’ll Impact turn your death bad arguments. Just like Perseus looking at Medusa in the mirror, sacrificing the affirmative even in the face of extinction causes an intimate encounter with death that is critical to affirming life.

Razinsky 9 (Liran, University of Wisconsin, “How to Look Death in the Eyes: Freud and Bataille”)[rkezios]

Thus we see that the stakes are high. What is at stake is the attempt of the subject to grasp itself in totality. This attempt necessitates bringing death into the account, but death itself hampers this very attempt. One never dies in the first person. Returning to Bataille, why does he believe sacrifice to be a solution to Hegel’s fundamental paradox? For him, it answers the requirements of the human, for Man meets death face to face in the sacrifice, he sojourns with it, and yet, at the same time, he preserves his life. In sacrifice, says Bataille, man destroys the animal within him and establishes his human truth as a “being unto death” (he uses Heidegger’s term). Sacrifice provides a clear manifestation of man’s fundamental negativity, in the form of death (Bataille, “Hegel” 335-36; 286). The sacrificer both destroys and survives. Moreover, in the sacrifice, death is approached voluntarily by Man. In this way the paradox is overcome, and yet remains open. We can approach death and yet remain alive, but, one might ask, is it really death that we encountered, or did we merely fabricate a simulacrum? Bataille insists elsewhere, however, that sacrifice is not a simulacrum, not a mere subterfuge. In the sacrificial ritual, a real impression of horror is cast upon the spectators. Sacrifice burns like a sun, spreading radiation our eyes can hardly bear, and calls for the negation of individuals as such (“The Festival” 313; 215). We did not fool death; we are burned in its fire. Bataille’s idea of the sacrifice also addresses Freud’s paradox. It might be impossible to imagine our own death directly, but it is possible to imagine it with the aid of some mediator, to meet death through an other’s death. Yet on some level this other’s death must be our own as well for it to be effective, and indeed this is the case, says Bataille. He stresses the element of identification: “In the sacrifice, the sacrificer identifies himself with the animal that is struck down dead. And so he dies in seeing himself die” (“Hegel” 336; 287). “There is no sacrifice,” writes Denis Hollier, “unless the one performing it identifies, in the end, with the victim” (166). Thus it is through identification, through otherness that is partly sameness, that a solution is achieved. If it were us, we would die in the act. If it were a complete other, it would not, in any way, be our death. Also noteworthy is Bataille’s stress on the involvement of sight: “and so he dies in seeing himself die” (“Hegel” 336; 287), which brings him close to Freud’s view of the nature of the problem, for Freud insists on the visual, recasting the problem as one of spectatorship, imagining, perceiving. Bataille’s description recapitulates that of Freud, but renders it positive. Yes, we remain as a spectator, but it is essential that we do so. Without it, we cannot be said to have met death. Significantly, meeting death is a need, not uncalled-for. We must meet death, and we must remain as spectators. Thus it is through identification and through visual participation in the dying that a solution is achieved, accompanied by the critical revaluation of values, which renders the meeting with death crucial for “humanness.” Note that both possibilities of meeting death—in the sacrificial-ritual we have just explored, and in theatre or art, to which we now turn—are social. In Hegel and in Freud the problem was stated as relevant to the individual alone, whether facing reality or within the cosmos of his thought. Bataille’s solution is achieved through an expansion of the horizons into social existence. The two modes through which the contradiction can be avoided involve the presence of other people.8 A Visit to the Theater We have seen that Freud argues that death is ungraspable, and that in his struggle with a related paradox, Bataille offers a solution applicable to Freud’s argument. We shall now see ambiguous hints in Freud’s own text toward a similar solution, and examine the issue of the possible encounter with death in a more modern context than that of sacrifice, perhaps one that is closer to us. Let us first return to Freud’s argument of the impossibility of the representation of death. The point in the argument is that we remain spectators. Not specters, as one could imagine one should be, having survived one’s own death, but spectators. Speculation or thought about death fails because of the position of the spectator. Having tried to mirror ourselves in a specular way and failed, we note that we are still in there, watching. But more than the visual, the use of the term of spectators (Zuschauer) carries us swiftly into the domain of the theater. Less than two pages later, Freud stumbles on the idea of theater more directly. Having described our tendency to push death away from life and thus to live an impoverished life, Freud continues: It is an inevitable result of all this that we should seek in the world of fiction, in literature and in the theatre compensation for what has been lost in life. There we still find people who know how to die— who, indeed, even manage to kill someone else. There alone too the condition can be fulfilled which makes it possible for us to reconcile ourselves with death: namely that behind all the vicissitudes of life we should still be able to preserve a life intact. For it is really too sad that in life it should be like it is in chess, where one false move may force us to resign the game, but with the difference that we can start no second game, no return-match. In the realm of fiction we find the plurality of lives which we need. We die with the hero with whom we have identified ourselves; yet we survive him, and are ready to die again just as safely with another hero. (“Thoughts” 291) Although the passage is compelling, one should note that it is marginal in Freud’s text, with much poetic force yet of little relevance to the entire article. Freud does not return to it, does not treat it in depth; neither do those who have studied the question of death in Freud (Rank, Schur, Becker, Lifton, Hoffman, Yalom and Piven, among others). In any event, it is not in relation to the problem of the representation of death that he pens this passage that looks, at least at first, like a burst of literary imagination rather than a serious discussion. More important than the question of its marginality, attention should be given to what Freud does in this passage. For Freud, as can be seen from the context of this passage, what takes places in the theater belongs to the cultural-conventional attitude to death, which tries hard to ignore it. In his description theater is a sort of bourgeois solution, superficial and limited, that replaces meeting death in person. More lip-service to death than a true encounter, it is, again as the context shows, the solution of the coward. He who is unwilling to risk his life, being controlled by fear (Freud’s point in the passage that precedes the one on the theater) finds some surrogate satisfaction, a mild compensation, by proxy, in seeing others pretend to die. Freud’s description stresses another point: the survival of the spectator and the necessary detachment implied by the possibility of replacing one hero for another. Theater does not reveal anything to us about death, for “behind all the vicissitudes of life we should still be able to preserve a life intact.” Thus not only do we survive the hero, we even benefit from his death: this is what we seek, our own survival. In that description, we come to the theater in order to make sure that we keep death away. We come to meet our “aliveness” again, once again to confirm ourselves in our complete rejection of death. Night after night in the theater, we convince ourselves of our immunity and invulnerability. The entire artistic setting helps us: we can always step out of the enchanted dream, out of the willing suspension of disbelief, and tell ourselves: “After all, it is only a show, only a story.”9 Thus there is no real danger, no real undermining of our security. Theater, Freud seems to suggest, is just a play. But is theater really that meaningless? Is the encounter with death there really a missed encounter? We shall now turn to Bataille, who offers an alternative view, where theater is regarded as much more serious. Theatrical art, Bataille reminds, is the heir to religion. Theatrical representation evolved from the sacrificial rite and still maintains its essence, which is, as we have seen, to enable us to come close to death (La Littérature 214; 69). Theater, literature in general, and the sacrificial rituals are essential to us: through them we become human, for we can familiarize ourselves with death and distance ourselves from our animal nature. Theater, according to Bataille’s description, overcomes Hegel’s paradox: “In tragedy, at least, it is a question of our identifying with some character who dies, and of believing that we die, although we are alive (Bataille, “Hegel” 337; 287). Bataille’s phrasing is almost identical to that of Freud. But the perspective differs. It is a delicate yet crucial nuance. Bataille, in contrast with Freud (under the above reading), stresses that we really do get a glimpse of dying there, that it is not merely a game. He also views the encounter with death as an existential necessity, crucial for Man to be human, not as some entertainment. And third, there is a twist of value: for Bataille we actively try to bring death closer, trying to force ourselves to represent it, in various cultural ways (sacrifice, art). Theater, be it tragedy or comedy, is very serious for Bataille, and he attempts to explain why: if, he says, the goal of all life is to push death aside, to head away from it, theater offers an element in life that goes in the opposite direction. Instead of moving us away from death, it brings us nearer. It serves a deep need in us. “…Just as certain insects, in given conditions, flock towards a ray of light,” Bataille writes, “so we all flock to an area at the opposite end of the scale from death. The mainspring of human activity is generally the desire to reach the point farthest from the funeral domain.” Yet it is sometimes necessary for life not to “flee from the shades of death,” but to “allow…them to grow within it” (La Littérature 212-13; 66-67). Moreover, this should not be done passively, in spite of ourselves: “we must,” Bataille insists, “revive [the shades of death] voluntarily.” One of our ways to do so is art. “The arts […] incessantly evoke these derangements, these lacerations, this decline which our entire activity endeavors to avoid,” and it is done in order to arouse anxiety in us. Sacrifice is of the same nature (213-14; 67-68). Not that we die in the theater. Bataille is aware, as is Freud, that by surviving the protagonists we only affirm life once again. Our laughter or our tears signify that for a moment, “death appears light to us” (La Littérature 214; 68). Yet if it appears light, it is because for a moment it is as though we have risen beyond the horror, for a moment we are not busy fearing death: at that moment we come to understand something about the presence of death. It teaches us that “when we flee wisely from the elements of death, we merely want to preserve life,” whereas, by entering those “regions that wisdom tells us to avoid, we really live it.” By coming close to death, to the symbols of its emptiness, we get “a heightened consciousness of being.” When we laugh in the theater, such laughter “brings us out […] from the impasse in which life is enclosed by those whose only concern is to preserve life” (214; 68, italics in original). Theater thus has a liberating power. It frees us from the concern of pushing death aside, it brings us into contact with it and thus illuminates the rest of our life, constantly busy with fleeing death, in a peculiar light. For a moment we are, as it were, free from that compulsive need, and can have a different perspective on life. Returning to Freud, we can try to read his passage through Bataille’s lens and ask whether the theatrical-artistic possibility is really so superficial. Reading against the grain, we can see that Freud does actually offer something there. Even if what we wish in theater is to “be able to preserve a life intact,” it is noteworthy that we seek it. Although the result is similar to that described in the paradox of the impossibility of the representation of death, namely our survival after the representation, there is a difference. There, it was a limitation we encountered, that we remained alive (or was it? We shall see later), whereas here, concerning the theater, it is something we seek: to meet death and yet “preserve a life intact.” Even if only to reaffirm our “aliveness,” we do display a certain magnetic attraction towards death. We might have remained alive, but with some integration of death into this “aliveness.” Theatrical representation, according to Freud’s text, also provides us with a model for another approach to death, one that does not shun it. “There we still find people who know how to die – who, indeed, even manage to kill someone else.” Those people do not embrace our own cowardly evasive attitude to death, they are not obsessed with keeping themselves at a distance from death. They approach it. Theater may not represent death, but it does manage to present us with a model of how to approach it. The crucial element here is that death, in the theater, is the death of an other. Blind as we are to our own death, and in other circumstances blind to the death of the other, in theater we manage in some way, albeit limited, to experience death. For if we identify, as Freud says, with the hero, it means that there is a certain link between him and us. It means that although the overall outcome is that we are only reassured during the spectacle itself, we might still be temporarily seized with apprehension of death. Although turning to the other looks protective at first, it might still shake our affirmation of ourselves to a certain degree. In part this seems due to the hybrid status—split between otherness and sameness—of the hero in the theatrical representation or the literary work: on the one hand, different, estranged from ourselves; on the other hand, close to us through our identification with him. In a sense, we are the same. This hybrid position seems to be the opening through which recognition of death might enter our sheltered, protective person.10 Thus Freud’s text, although it insists on the irrepresentability of death, actually offers, unintentionally perhaps, a possible way out of the paradox through turning to the other. Death perhaps cannot be looked at directly, but it can be grasped sideways, indirectly, vicariously through a mirror, to use Perseus’s ancient trick against Medusa. The introduction of the other, both similar to and different from oneself, into the equation of death helps break out of the Cartesian circle with both its incontestable truth and its solipsism and affirmation of oneself. The safety that theater provides, of essentially knowing that we will remain alive, emerges as a kind of requirement for our ability to really identify with the other. In that, it paradoxically enables us to really get a taste of death. Bataille radicalizes that possibility. Although Freud deems the estrangement of death from psychic life a problem, as we have seen and shall see, theater is not a solution for him. With Bataille however, theater emerges as a much more compelling alternative. Again, it is a matter of a delicate nuance, but a nuance that makes all the difference. The idea common to both authors—that we can meet death through the other and yet remain alive—is ambiguous. One can lay stress on that encounter or on the fact of remaining alive.11 Freud tends to opt for the second possibility, but his text can also be read as supporting the first. The benefit in bringing Freud and Bataille together is that it invites us to that second reading. An Encounter with Death Death in Freud is often the death of the other. Both the fear of death and the death wish are often focused on the other as their object. But almost always it is as though through the discussion of the other Freud were trying to keep death at bay. But along with Bataille, we can take this other more seriously. Imagining our own death might be impossible, yet we can still get a glimpse of death when it is an other that dies. In one passage in his text, the death of the other seems more explicitly a crucial point for Freud as well—one passage where death does not seem so distant. Freud comments on the attitude of primeval Man to death, as described above—namely that he wishes it in others but ignores it in himself. “But there was for him one case in which the two opposite attitudes towards death collided,” he continues. It occurred when primeval man saw someone who belonged to him die—his wife, his child, his friend […]. Then, in his pain, he was forced to learn that one can die, too, oneself, and his whole being revolted against the admission. (“Thoughts” 293) Freud goes on to explain that the loved one was at once part of himself, and a stranger whose death pleased primeval man. It is from this point, Freud continues, that philosophy, psychology and religion sprang.12 I have described elsewhere (Razinsky, “A Struggle”) how Freud’s reluctance to admit the importance of death quickly undermines this juncture of the existential encounter with death by focusing on the emotional ambivalence of primeval man rather than on death itself. However, the description is there and is very telling. Primeval man witnessed death, and “his whole being revolted against the admission.” ”Man could no longer keep death at a distance, for he had tasted it in his pain about the dead” (Freud, “Thoughts” 294). Once again, it is through the death of the other that man comes to grasp death. Once again, we have that special admixture of the other being both an other and oneself that facilitates the encounter with death. Something of myself must be in the other in order for me to see his death as relevant to myself. Yet his or her otherness, which means my reassurance of my survival, is no less crucial, for if it were not present, there would be no acknowledgement of death, one’s own death always being, says Freud, one’s blind spot.13 I mentioned before Heidegger’s grappling with a problem similar to Bataille’s paradox. It is part of Heidegger’s claim, which he shares with Freud, that one’s death is unimaginable. In a famous section Heidegger mentions the possibility of coming to grasp death through the death of the other but dismisses it, essentially since the other in that case would retain its otherness: the other’s death is necessarily the other’s and not mine (47:221-24). Thus we return to the problem we started with—that of the necessary subject-object duality in the process of the representation of death. Watching the dead object will no more satisfy me than imagining myself as an object, for the radical difference of both from me as a subject will remain intact. But the possibility that seems to emerge from the discussion of Freud and Bataille is that in-between position of the person both close and distant, both self and other, which renders true apprehension of death possible, through real identification.14 As Bataille says, regarding the Irish Wake custom where the relatives drink and dance before the body of the deceased: “It is the death of an other, but in such instances, the death of the other is always the image of one’s own death” (“Hegel” 341; 291). Bataille speaks of the dissolution of the subject-object boundaries in sacrifice, of the “fusion of beings” in these moments of intensity (“The Festival” 307-11; 210-13; La Littérature 215; 70). Possibly, that is what happens to primeval man when the loved one dies and why his “whole being” is affected. He himself is no longer sure of his identity. Before, it was clear—there is the other, the object, whom one wants dead, and there is oneself, a subject. The show and the spectators. Possibly what man realized before the cadaver of his loved one was that he himself is also an object, taking part in the world of objects, and not only a subject. When he understood this, it seems to me, he understood death. For in a sense a subject subjectively never dies. Psychologically nothing limits him,15 while an object implies limited existence: limited by other objects that interact with it, limited in space, limited in being the thought-content of someone else. Moreover, primeval man understood that he is the same for other subjects as other subjects are for him—that is, they can wish him dead or, which is pretty much the same, be indifferent to his existence. The encounter made primeval man step out of the psychological position of a center, transparent to itself, and understand that he is not only a spirit but also a thing, an object, not only a spectator; this is what really shakes him.16 The Highest Stake in the Game of Living Thus far we have mainly discussed our first two questions: the limitation in imagining death and the possible solution through a form of praxis, in either a channeled, ritualized or a spontaneous encounter with the death of an other, overcoming the paradox of the impossibility of representation by involving oneself through deep identification. We shall now turn to our third question, of the value of integrating death into our thoughts. We have seen that Bataille’s perspective continuously brings up the issue of the value of approaching death. The questions of whether we can grasp death and, if we can, how, are not merely abstract or neutral ones. The encounter with death, that we now see is possible, seems more and more to emerge as possessing a positive value, indeed as fundamental. What we shall now examine is Freud’s attempt to address that positive aspect directly, an attempt that betrays, however, a deep ambivalence. As mentioned, Freud’s text is very confused, due to true hesitation between worldviews (see Razinsky, “A Struggle”). One manifestation of this confusion is Freud’s position regarding this cultural-conventional attitude: on the one hand he condemns it, yet on the other hand he accepts it as natural and inevitable. For him, it results to some extent from death’s exclusion from unconscious thought (“Thoughts” 289, 296-97). Death cannot be represented and is therefore destined to remain foreign to our life.17 But then Freud suddenly recognizes an opposite necessity: not to reject death but to insert it into life. Not to distance ourselves from it, but to familiarize ourselves with it: But this attitude [the cultural-conventional one] of ours towards death has a powerful effect on our lives. Life is impoverished, it loses in interest, when the highest stake in the game of living, life itself, may not be risked. It becomes as shallow and empty as, let us say, an American flirtation, in which it is understood from the first that nothing is to happen, as contrasted with a Continental love-affair in which both partners must constantly bear its serious consequences in mind. Our emotional ties, the unbearable intensity of our grief, make us disinclined to court danger for ourselves and for those who belong to us. We dare not contemplate a great many undertakings which are dangerous but in fact indispensable, such as attempts at artificial flight, expeditions to distant countries or experiments with explosive substances. We are paralyzed by the thought of who is to take the son’s place with his mother, the husband’s with his wife, the father’s with his children, if a disaster should occur. Thus the tendency to exclude death from our calculations in life brings in its train many other renunciations and exclusions. Yet the motto of the Hanseatic League ran: ‘Navigare necesse est, vivere non necesse.’ (“It is necessary to sail the seas, it is not necessary to live.”) (“Thoughts” 290-91) Readers unfamiliar with Freud’s paper are probably shaking their heads in disbelief. Is it Freud who utters these words? Indeed, the oddity of this citation cannot be over-estimated. It seems not to belong to Freud’s thought. One can hardly find any other places where he speaks of such an intensification of life and fascination with death, and praises uncompromising risk-taking and the neglect of realistic considerations. In addition to being unusual, the passage itself is somewhat unclear.18 The examples—not experimenting with explosive substances—seem irrelevant and unconvincing. The meaning seems to slide. It is not quite clear if the problem is that we do not bring death into our calculations, as the beginning seems to imply, or that, rather, we actually bring it into our calculations too much, as is suggested at the end But what I wish to stress here is that the passage actually opposes what Freud says in the preceding passages, where he describes the cultural-conventional attitude and speaks of our inability to make death part of our thoughts. In both the current passage and later passages he advocates including death in life, but insists, elsewhere in the text, that embracing death is impossible. In a way, he is telling us that we cannot accept the situation where death is constantly evaded. Here again Bataille can be useful in rendering Freud’s position more intelligible. He seems to articulate better than Freud the delicate balance, concerning the place of death in psychic life, between the need to walk on the edge, and the flight into normalcy and safety. As I asserted above, where in Freud there are contradictory elements, in Bataille there is a dialectic. Bataille, as we have seen, presents the following picture: It might be that, guided by our instincts, we tend to avoid death. But we also seem to have a need to intersperse this flight with occasional peeps into the domain of death. When we invest all of our effort in surviving, something of the true nature of life evades us. It is only when the finite human being goes beyond the limitations “necessary for his preservation,” that he “asserts the nature of his being” (La Littérature 214; 68). The approaches of both Bataille and Freud are descriptive as well as normative. Bataille describes a tendency to distance ourselves from death and a tendency to get close to it. But he also describes Man’s need to approach death from a normative point of view, in order to establish his humanity: a life that is only fleeing death has less value. Freud carefully describes our tendency to evade death and, in the paragraph under discussion, calls for the contrary approach. This is stressed at the end of the article, where he encourages us to “give death the place in reality and in our thoughts which is its due” (“Thoughts” 299). Paradoxically, it might be what will make life “more tolerable for us once again” (299). But since Freud also insists not only on a tendency within us to evade death, but also on the impossibility of doing otherwise, and on how death simply cannot be the content of our thought, his sayings in favor of bringing death close are confusing and confused. Freud does not give us a reason for the need to approach death. He says that life loses in interest, but surely this cannot be the result of abstaining from carrying out “experiments with explosive substances.” In addition, his ideas on the shallowness of a life without death do not seem to evolve from anything in his approach. It is along the lines offered by Bataille’s worldview that I wish to interpret them here. Sacrifice, Bataille says, brings together life in its fullness and the annihilation of life. We are not mere spectators in the sacrificial ritual. Our participation is much more involved. Sacrificial ritual creates a temporary, exceptionally heightened state of living. “The sacred horror,” he calls the emotion experienced in sacrifice: “the richest and most agonizing experience.” It “opens itself, like a theater curtain, on to a realm beyond this world” and every limited meaning is transfigured in it (“Hegel” 338; 288). Bataille lays stress on vitality. Death is not humanizing only on the philosophical level, as it is for Hegel or Kojève. Bataille gives it an emotional twist. The presence of death, which he interprets in a more earthly manner, is stimulating, vivifying, intense. Death and other related elements (violence) bring life closer to a state where individuality melts, the mediation of the intellect between us and the world lessens, and life is felt at its fullest. Bataille calls this state, or aspect of the world, immanence or intimacy: “immanence between man and the world, between the subject and the object” (“The Festival” 307-311; 210-213). Moments of intensity are moments of excess and of fusion of beings (La Littérature 215; 70). They are a demand of life itself, even though they sometimes seem to contradict it. Death is problematic for us, but it opens up for us something in life. This line of thought seems to accord very well with the passage in Freud’s text with which we are dealing here, and to extend it. Life without death is life lacking in intensity, an impoverished, shallow and empty life. Moreover, the repression of death is generalized and extended: “the tendency to exclude death from our calculations in life brings in its train many other renunciations and exclusions.” Freud simply does not seem to have the conceptual tools to discuss these ideas. The intuition is even stronger in the passage that follows, where Freud discusses war (note that the paper is written in 1915): When war breaks out, he says, this cowardly, conservative, risk-rejecting attitude is broken at once. War eliminates this conventional attitude to death. “Death could no longer be denied. We are forced to believe in it. People really die. . . . Life has, indeed, become interesting again; it has recovered its full content” (“Thoughts” 291). Thus what is needed is more than the mere accounting of consequences, taking death into consideration as a future possibility. What is needed is exposure to death, a sanguineous imprinting of death directly on our minds, through the “accumulation of deaths” of others. Life can only become vivid, fresh, and interesting when death is witnessed directly. Both authors speak of a valorization of death, and in both there is a certain snobbery around it. While the masses follow the natural human tendency to avoid death, like the American couple or those who are busy with the thought of “who is to take our place,” the individualists do not go with the herd, and by allowing themselves to approach death, achieve a fuller sense of life, neither shallow nor empty.19 Yet again, Freud’s claims hover in the air, lacking any theoretical background. Bataille supplies us with such background. He contests, as we have seen, the sole focus on survival. Survival, he tells us, has a price. It limits our life. As if there were an inherent tension between preserving life and living it. Freud poses the same tension here. Either we are totally absorbed by the wish to survive, to keep life intact, and therefore limit our existence to the bare minimum, or else we are willing to risk it to some extent in order to make it more interesting, more vital and valuable. Our usual world, according to Bataille, is characterized by the duration of things, by the “future” function, rather than by the present. Things are constituted as separate objects in view of future time. This is one reason for the threat of death: it ruins value where value is only assured through duration. It also exposes the intimate order of life that is continuously hidden from us in the order of things where life runs its normal course. Man “is afraid of death as soon as he enters the system of projects that is the order of things” (“The Festival” 312; 214). Sacrifice is the opposite of production and accumulation. Death is not so much a negation of life, as it is an affirmation of the intimate order of life, which is opposed to the normal order of things and is therefore rejected. “The power of death signifies that this real world can only have a neutral image of life […]. Death reveals life in its plenitude” (309; 212). Bataille’s “neutral image of life” is the equivalent of Freud’s “shallow and empty” life. What Freud denounces is a life trapped within the cowardly economical system of considerations. It is precisely the economy of value and future-oriented calculations that stand in opposition to the insertion of death into life. “Who is to take the son’s place with his mother, the husband’s with his wife, the father’s with his children.” Of course there is an emotional side to the story, but it is this insistence on replacement that leaves us on the side of survival and stops us sometimes from living the present. “The need for duration,” in the words of Bataille, “conceals life from us” (“The Festival” 309; 212). For both authors, when death is left out, life “as it is” is false and superficial. Another Look at Speculation Both authors, then, maintain that if elements associated with death invade our life anyway, we might as well succumb and give them an ordered place in our thoughts. The necessity to meet death is not due to the fact that we do not have a choice. Rather, familiarization with death is necessary if life is to have its full value, and is part of what makes us human. But the tension between the tendencies—to flee death or to embrace it—is not easily resolved, and the evasive tendency always tries to assert itself. As seen above, Bataille maintains that in sacrifice, we are exposed through death to other dimensions of life. But the exposure, he adds, is limited, for next comes another phase, performed post-hoc, after the event: the ensuing horror and the intensity are too high to maintain, and must be countered. Bataille speaks of the justifications of the sacrifice given by cultures, which inscribe it in the general order of things. Thus, sacrifice is said to foster more rain, to appease the gods, or to help in war. These explanations, he insists, are always secondary (“Hegel” 342-3; 291-2), contrary to the very essence of sacrifice, which entails a glimpse into the intimate order of the world, characterized by intensity, lack of distinctions and “immanence between man and the world, between the subject and the object” (“The Festival” 307; 210). And still, the explanations are essential and cannot be eliminated.20

### Biocentrism

#### Death is just a anthropologic construct to interpret reality – science and biology proves

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We all know the biological reason we age and die. Our bodies break down and are discarded like an old car or a worn-out pair of jeans. No one escapes the ravages of time. Or do they? The big question is why is the universe this way to begin with? Of all of the possible ways the universe could be structured, why are the laws of nature the way they are? Why do things become less ordered (second law of thermodynamics), rather than more ordered? Why do systems deteriorate -- and life die -- rather than stay the same? Equally relevant, is the question of why out of all of existence -- out of everything possible in the universe -- all you get to be is, say, a plumber or a hairdresser. And that's it! -- followed by nothingness for the rest of eternity. You'll never get to travel in a spaceship to distant stars, or to live in a world without cancer or war. Scientists say it's all an accident. If you're dealt a bad hand, oh well, it's just tough luck. You'll die soon enough. Our inability to comprehend the true nature of life shouldn't come as a surprise, considering our DNA differs from apes and monkeys by less than 2 percent. We primates -- whether scientist or macaque -- have significant cognitive limitations. Like a mouse or a gerbil, we open our eyes and the world −- as if by magic -- is just there. We think it's a thing, a hard object. But this is inconsistent with hundreds of experiments carried out in the last century. Reality is observer-determined -- it's a spatio-temporal process, which fortunately, means that things must change. Could you imagine always and forever being a toddler? Diapers and lollipops would grow tiresome. Or forever being a senior? The laws of nature are structured so that we grow and change, and get to experience the full spectrum of biological existence. That part of the equation is easy to understand: First we experience life as children, then as middle-aged adults, and finally, as senior citizens. But we can't connect the dots beyond that. You're a shoe-maker for a few years and then it's into the void of nothingness forever. Stephen Hawking summed this viewpoint up quite accurately: "I regard the brain as a computer which will stop working when its components fail. There is no heaven or afterlife for broken down computers." This is the limit of our primate comprehension. Still, at some point, virtually everyone has wondered: "Is this all we are, is there nothing more?" Fortunately, there is more. In Immanuel Kant's "Critique of Pure Reason," the great philosopher explained how space and time are forms of human intuition. Indeed, everything you see and experience is information in your mind. If space and time are tools of the mind, then we shouldn't be surprised that at death there's a break in the connection of time and place. Without consciousness, space and time are meaningless; in reality we can take any time -- or any spatial plane -- and estimate everything against this new frame of reference. Death is simply a break in our linear stream of consciousness. Indeed, biocentrism suggests it's a manifold to all dimensional potentialities (see "What Happens When You Die?). Time is the inner sense that animates existence, not just our thoughts and feelings, but the spatial representations we experience from birth until death. It's just the way we connect things, not an invisible, continuous matrix with people and particles bouncing around in it. Consciousness isn't created or destroyed -- it only changes forms. It's like a bubble machine that creates spheres -- spheres of space and time, which we carry around with us like turtles with shells. Physics tells us observations can't be predicted absolutely. Rather, there's a range of possible observations each with a different probability. According to one interpretation, each of these possible observations corresponds to a different universe (the "multiverse"). There are an infinite number of universes (including our own) that comprise everything that can possibly happen. Thus, death doesn't exist in any real sense, since all possible universes exist simultaneously regardless of what happens in any of them. True, you age and die, but there are always bubbles (universes) spanning the breadth of eternity. Some may not travel very far, but others will float off into the horizon. Perhaps you'll get that space-trip to the stars after all. "The first step to eternal life," said Chuck Palahniuk "is you have to die." ously intensively pursuing that scholarship. In debate, the fruits of critical theory and persistent interrogation are **not intellectual paralysis or withdrawal from political advocacy**, but more often than not **a reciprocal engagement with creative experimentation.**

**Their indicts are just pandering for funding, Lanza is just politically unpopular but not incorrect**

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And what is their underlying thesis? They present it as a long list of Principles of Biocentrism that have no individual value, in my opinion––but the heart of it, collectively, is correct. On page 15 they say “the animal observer creates reality and not the other way around.” That is the essence of the entire book, and that is factually correct. It is an elementary conclusion from quantum mechanics. So what Lanza says in this book is not new. Then why does Robert have to say it at all? It is because we, the physicists, do NOT say it––or if we do say it, we only whisper it, and in private– –furiously blushing as we mouth the words. True, yes; politically correct, hell no! Bless Robert Lanza for creating this book, and bless Bob Berman for not dissuading friend Robert from going ahead with it.