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Ages of Learning . . . the Secular Today with Emerson and Nietzsche

. . . but in the solitude to which every man is always returning, he has a sanity and revelations, which in his passage into new worlds he will carry with him. Never mind the ridicule, never mind the defeat: up again, old heart!

EMERSON, "Experience"

Come on, old heart!

NIETZSCHE, *Thus Spoke Zarathustra*

He simply does not know how old he is already and how young he is still going to be.

NIETZSCHE, *Twilight of the Idols*

The intimate interplay between our immeasurable, archaic inheritance and our modern openness to novelty and its freedom—a freedom, as Ralph Waldo Emerson once put it, with respect even to the meaning of freedom—was already a theme in *The Indiscrete Image*. It begins to emerge in that work's early pages through a reading of Julio Cortázar's short 1956 text "Axolotl," named after a fresh water salamander native to Mexico. Unbeknownst both to Cortázar at the time of his writing and to me at the time of that reading, the axolotl today stands on the edge of extinction within its sole wild habitat—an uncannily suggestive fact, given that this very same salamander, through the persistence of its infantile traits throughout adulthood, gave to modern science an important clue about our human being's originary character as neotenic or pedomorphic. According to neotenic theory, as discussed in *The Indiscrete Image* and noted in the introductory chapter here, the human is born effectively premature and maintains its unfinished, indefinite character throughout its life. For this reason it both needs and proves capable of sociality, language, and the open-ended education and world building that are entailed in our linguistic and social being. Our power to learn and create, on this view, is grounded in a lack or poverty. We become and remain—each and all of us—students and poets because we find ourselves from the beginning at a bit of a loss. And while, as we also noted, the figure of the human as world-builder has played a central role both in religious studies broadly and in secularization debate more narrowly, a strikingly similar understanding of

human creative capacity as grounded in our incompletion and lack of definition finds suggestive expression also in theological traditions of mystical thought from Gregory of Nyssa through John Scotus Eriugena to Nicholas of Cusa—where the creativity of an indefinite and therefore incomprehensible humanity is thought to mirror the creative power of an indefinable and incomprehensible God.

As I worked to show in *The Indiscrete Image*, these traditional theological paths of thinking about creativity reappear in the late modern writing and thinking of figures like James Joyce and Jorge Luis Borges.[1] Borges's two-page 1958 text "Everything and Nothing," for example, imagines a meeting between the creator God and the poet Shakespeare that to my reading recalls the literary encounter between neotenic human and salamander in Cortázar: in coming face to face with that creator God, Shakespeare finds not the clear light of a first cause in relation to which all other beings are explained and made intelligible; he encounters, rather, a dark abyss of creative capacity that mirrors the indeterminate ground of Shakespeare's own creativity: Shakespeare "found himself in the presence of God," Borges writes, and said to him: "'I, who have been so many men in vain, want to be one and myself.' The voice of God answered him from a whirlwind: 'I, too, am not I; I have dreamed the world as you dreamed your work, my Shakespeare, and among the forms in my dream are you, who like I are many and no one.'"[2]

Much as this mirror relation between creator God and creative poet proves abyssal in Borges, so in Cortázar, the meeting of human narrator and axolotl involves a relation of such strange intimacy that each being slips almost imperceptibly into the other. In Cortázar's text, the story's narrator repeatedly and obsessively visits the axolotls who live in a glass tank in Paris's Jardin des Plantes (where they can still be found today), and in his face-to-face with this creature the narrator finds that they, human and salamander, are pulled together, made deeply familiar or intimate to one another, by "something infinitely lost and distant." The eyes of the axolotl speak to the narrator "of the presence," as Cortázar writes, "of a different life, of another way of seeing"; and while looking out "from an unfathomable depth which made me dizzy,"

1. On relations between Jorge Luis Borges and mystical thought, and attending to Jewish traditions that I have not, see Elliot R. Wolfson, "In the Mirror of the Dream: Borges and the Poetics of Kabbalah," *Jewish Quarterly Review* 104, no. 3 (Summer 2014): 362–79.

2. Jorge Luis Borges, "Everything and Nothing," from *El Hacedor* (1960), in Borges, *Obras Completas 2: 1952–1972* (Barcelona: Emecé Editores, 1996), 182. English translations available in Borges, *Everything and Nothing*, trans. James Irby (New York: New Directions, 1999), 77–78, and in Borges, *Collected Fictions* (New York: Penguin Books, 1999), 32. Cited and discussed in my *Indiscrete Image: Infinitude and Creation of the Human*, 34.

the narrator notes, while gazing at him from their "infinitely slow and remote world," the childlike creatures prove nonetheless disturbingly "close." A proximity or intimacy of the animal axolotl to the human narrator, then, and the inescapable claim that the axolotl makes upon him, are felt to be the function of distance and strangeness. "They were not human beings," the narrator says, "but I had found in no animal such a profound relation with myself."[3]

Against this background, and keeping in mind Nancy's Freudian reflections on the inheritance of drives in our modernity, I turn in the present chapter to Ralph Waldo Emerson, for whom the logic of our relation with nature resembles quite deeply that signaled by our human relation (both scientific and literary) to the neotenic salamander. Such a resemblance, we note, may have not only conceptual but also suggestive literary-historical dimensions, given that a good century before Cortázar writes "Axolotl," Emerson himself, on July 13, 1833, visits the same Parisian garden, the Jardin des Plantes, and in its Cabinet of Natural History the science of his day opens to Emerson an eye for which, as he writes in his lecture on "The Uses of Natural History" (1833, 1835), "the limits of the possible are enlarged, and the real is stranger than the imaginary."[4] As in "Axolotl," where we can read the adult, human narrator to find through his face-to-face with the childlike salamander an indiscrete image of his own neotenic indetermination, so Emerson finds in nature, as "face to face in a glass," not only an "image of the human Mind" but also the reminder of an essential youth: "In the presence of nature," Emerson writes, "man is a child." And the spirit of the child, he posits, in its incompletion and unknowing, is "the essential condition of all learning."[5]

While still not read as widely as he should be among scholars and philosophers of religion,[6] Stanley Cavell does more than any other thinker in the

3. Julio Cortázar, "Axolotl," in *End of the Game and Other Stories*, trans. Paul Blackburn (New York: Harper and Row, 1967), 4, 6, 7.

4. Ralph Waldo Emerson, "The Uses of Natural History," in *The Selected Lectures of Ralph Waldo Emerson*, ed. Ronald A. Bosco and Joel Myerson (Athens: University of Georgia Press, 2005), 4.

5. Emerson, "Uses," 14, 13.

6. A full study of the significance of religion in Cavell for continental philosophy, with an informative schematization of positions that have been taken on the question, can be found in Espen Dahl, *Stanley Cavell, Religion, and Continental Philosophy* (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 2014). See also Tyler Robert's fine chapter "Criticism as Conduct of Gratitude," in *Encountering Religion: Responsibility and Criticism after Secularism* (New York: Columbia University Press, 2013), and his brief but productive engagement with Cavell in *Contesting Spirit: Nietzsche, Affirmation, Religion* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1998); as well as Hent de Vries, "Stanley Cavell on Saint Paul," in *Modern Language Notes* 126, no. 5 (December 2011): 979–93, and "From Ghost in the Machine to Spiritual Automaton: Philosophical Meditation in Wittgenstein, Cavell, and Levinas," in *International Journal for Philosophy of Religion* 60, nos. 1–3 (December 2006): 77–97; and Ludger Viefhues-Bailer, *Beyond the Philosopher's Fear: A Cavellian Reading of Gender, Origins and Religion in Modern Skepticism* (Aldershot: Ashgate, 2007). For a theologically oriented Christian treatment, see Peter Dula, *Cavell, Companionship, and Christian Theology* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2011).

twentieth century not only to claim, as living and constructive philosophical resources, the distinctively American heritage of thought that he finds in Emerson and Henry David Thoreau but also to hear and to amplify the resonance between that heritage and the European, or so-called "continental," traditions of Heidegger and Nietzsche. In doing that invaluable work, Cavell helps us to appreciate in Emerson a thinking of the heart deeply akin to that which I have been tracing in these pages from Saint Augustine through his reception and revision in Heidegger to the world of French thinkers deeply shaped by Heidegger, such as Marion, Derrida, and Nancy.

It is the author—and teacher—of Heidegger's "What Is Called Thinking?" whom Cavell engages in one of his most important essays on the resonance he hears between Heidegger and Emerson, "Thinking of Emerson."[7] In the 1951–52 course from which that published text derives, Heidegger contends that the heart and its ground are essential to genuine thinking, and that such thinking entails at its core a thanking, and hence a form of memory. In response to his guiding question "What does the word 'to think' mean?" and in recalling the essential proximity he senses between *denken* and *danken*, to think and to thank, Heidegger writes that "the *thanc* means man's inmost mind, the heart, the heart's core, that innermost essence of man which reaches outward most fully and to the outermost limits, and so decisively that, rightly considered, the idea of an outer and an inner world does not arise [Der Gedanc bedeutet: das Gemüt, das Herz, den Herzensgrund, jenes Innerste des Menschen, das am weitesten nach Außen und ins Äußerste reicht und dies so entschieden, daß es, recht bedacht, die Vorstellung eines Innen und Außen nicht aufkommen läßt]."[8] Such a thinking of the heart in Heidegger, Cavell suggests, places the great German philosopher in a line of thought that ties

7. Stanley Cavell, "Thinking of Emerson," in *The Senses of Walden: An Expanded Edition* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1992); the essay was first published in 1979 but delivered as a talk in 1978.

8. Heidegger, *What Is Called Thinking?*, trans. J. Glenn Gray (New York: Harper and Row, 1968), 144; *Was Heißt Denken? Fünfte, durchgesehene Auflage* (Tübingen: Max Niemeyer Verlag,

him to the American thinker for whom the "genius" we each and all possess entails the belief about which Emerson speaks in "Self Reliance": that "what is true for you in your private heart, is true for all men," a belief bound in turn to the imperative to "speak your latent conviction and it shall be the universal sense; for always the inmost becomes the outmost." In calling attention in this way to a similar thinking of the heart in Emerson and Heidegger, Cavell interprets both thinkers to approach the work of thinking as a "task of onwardness," a work of being on the way, and of beginning anew, recurrently, without ever finally arriving. Not beyond tragedy, but demanding also our abandonment of despair, such a thinking aspires, as Cavell emphasizes, to "the sacred affirmative" from Emerson's "The Preacher," which Cavell glosses as the "heart for a new creation"—a heart whose thinking, and living, constitute an alternative to "the fixated conflict between solipsism and realism . . . or between subjectivity and objectivity, or the private and the public, or the inner and the outer."[9]

In underscoring this proximity between a thinking of the heart in Heidegger and a thinking of the heart in Emerson, and in understanding such thinking to involve an interplay between inward and outward so intimate that one could finally represent neither the one nor the other discretely, Cavell does not himself signal the proximity of this thinking to the claim of Augustine that the *interior intimo meo*, or that which is more interior to me that my most interior, is equally *superior summo meo*, or higher, more outward, than my highest or outermost. While abandoning, perhaps, or at least in altering, the theological reference that remains decisive for Augustine, both Heidegger and Emerson are attuned to the senses in which I receive myself, as a self, only through relation to the outward and the strange, which thus constitute and condition me intimately. While the names for this strangeness will vary—God for Augustine; world, Being, or death for Heidegger; nature, life, or vast-flowing vigor for Emerson—the core logic, and experience, of an intimate strangeness, or strange intimacy, can be strikingly similar from one thinker to the other.

The degree to which this construal of self is shared among these thinkers comes into greater focus if we notice their similar understandings of the self's alienation, that tendency we all have to lose or to forget ourselves: much as we've noted already in Augustine and Heidegger, where I can be most at risk of losing myself when I feel most comfortable in the habit and haste of my so-

1997), 157; Cavell abbreviates the passage in his citation—ending with "outermost limits"—in his "Thinking of Emerson," 138.

9. Cavell, "Thinking of Emerson," 138, 133, 138.

cial being, so in Emerson the danger of a forgetting or loss of self often threatens me the most—imperceptibly—when in my busyness and conformity I feel all too at home. As Heidegger suggests in *Being and Time*'s oft-referenced analysis of *das Man*, or "the they," and its falling—whose resemblance to Emerson's analysis of conformity in modern social life is striking—the threat of our being alienated from ourselves through the familiarity of a routine that grows thoughtless is a threat inherent to everyday life; and at stake in that everyday threat for Emerson is in fact the day itself, whose recurrent novelty and ever renewed possibility we tend in our thoughtlessness to forget. Along these lines, the challenge of the everyday in Emerson—the challenge of "making the day," or of renewing time creatively and thus awakening to the day, each day—is central to the task of genuine thinking, and it is tied intimately for him to the challenge of thinking nature, in which, as he puts it, "all is nascent, infant."[10]

An answer to the threat in our day, or age, to the singular time of each day—a threat to the "Deity" by virtue of which "thought renews itself inexhaustibly every day"[11]—cannot simply bypass the age but must work creatively with and through it. Such is a work that Emerson sees Shakespeare to do in exemplary fashion, renewing his day, and defining our age, through a genius that entails not the radical novelty of a romantically isolated individual, nor the kind of amnesiac "innovation" of today's TechCrunch disrupters, but instead the deepest temporal indebtedness of one whose genius consists in making the old new again (according to a definition of genius that Emerson inherits from Goethe, "the faculty of seizing and turning to account every thing that strikes us . . . every one of my writings has been furnished to me by a thousand different persons, a thousand different things"[12]). Like the creative God or poet in Borges who, as everyone and no one, is capable

10. Ralph Waldo Emerson, "The Method of Nature," in *The Collected Works of Ralph Waldo Emerson*, vol. 1: *Nature, Addresses, and Lectures* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1971), 126.

11. Ralph Waldo Emerson, "Literary Ethics," in *The Collected Works of Ralph Waldo Emerson*, vol. 1: *Nature, Addresses, and Lectures* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1971), 108–9.

12. Goethe, cited in Robert D. Richardson Jr., *Emerson: The Mind on Fire* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1995), 100. See also Richardson's discussion at 172: "Far from feeling a need to do nothing except what is completely original and novel, Goethe actually defines genius as 'the faculty of seizing and turning to account every thing that strikes us.' He protested that he himself would have got nowhere 'if this art of appropriation were considered as derogatory to genius.' It was enormously helpful to Emerson to hear Goethe committing himself so clearly to the extensive and frank use of others' material. This method Emerson already found congenial. 'Every one of my writings,' said Goethe, 'has been furnished to me by a thousand different per-

of becoming all, the poetic genius exemplified by Shakespeare is for Emerson far more the function of openness and reception than of grasping or imposition. A marked lack of egoism makes for creative expression that proves singular—because so seemingly universal. "Great genial power, one would almost say, consists in not being original at all," Emerson writes in "Shakespeare, or the Poet"; it consists "in being altogether receptive; in letting the world do all, and suffering the spirit of the hour to pass unobstructed through the mind."[13] Blessed with a "new joy" in the passing times and in the public mind, the creative genius is attuned to the details of the day and hour, while also indebted to a temporal immensity of human experience and experiment. "All originality is relative," Emerson asserts. "Every thinker is retrospective." The most private reality of the writer and thinker, the singularity of his or her genius, draws from the fountain of other minds and books; in a striking alternative to the thoughtless and sterile anonymity that can seem to define the "they" in Heidegger or the "public" in Kierkegaard, Emerson can see in and with Shakespeare that "what is best written or done by genius in the world, was no man's work, but came by wide social labor." As with the Bible, Emerson notes, or with liturgy, both of which collect long periods and comprise their anthology of the ages, so with genuine writing and thinking, "there never was a time when there was not some translation exisiting." In the "world books" that issue from the indebted originality of genius, it is the time itself that thinks, and the world—"the market, the mason, the carpenter, the merchant, the farmer, the fop." The one receptive to this thinking of the world and its times, however, does not only inherit; he also, inextricably, bestows (and in both cases more than he can comprehend). For just as to receive is already to respond or to give, so to inherit means already to pass on: "the generic catholic genius who is not afraid or ashamed to owe his originality to the originality of all, stands with the next age as the recorder and embodiment of his own."[14]

Emerson's Shakespeare "wrote the text of modern life," for he "drew the man and described the day, and what is done in it,"[15] and from this angle we might say that his writing constitutes a secular power—not so much, however, because it turns in notable ways from church to world, but more because

sons, a thousand different things. . . . My work is that of an aggregation of beings taken from the whole of nature: it bears the name of Goethe."

13. Ralph Waldo Emerson, "Shakespeare, or the Poet," in *The Collected Works of Ralph Waldo Emerson*, vol. 4: *Representative Men: Seven Lectures* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1987), 110.

14. Emerson, "Shakespeare," 114, 115.

15. Emerson, "Shakespeare," 121.

it is attuned both to modern life in its transience and everydayness and to the indeterminate temporal depths and human masses that yield such life. In this, the poetic genius of a Shakespeare resembles, in the register of culture, the nature in which all human creation already participates, the nature whose creative immensity Emerson figures explicitly in terms of the secular.

For Emerson "it is a mischievous notion that we are come late into nature; that the world was finished a long time ago,"[16] and if men are "ready to believe that the best age is gone," "the youth of Nature which astounds the imagination repudiates the thought."[17] But if indeed it is "the perpetual admonition of nature to us . . . [that] 'the world is new, untried. Do not believe the past. I give you the universe a virgin to-day,'"[18] it proves also the case for Emerson that the astounding youth of nature, its recurrent birth, and thus the perpetual infancy, or virginity, of today, issue (much like the renewing genius of a Shakespeare) from temporal depths, and hence from an age, that remain also beyond our clear grasp—a temporal immensity that exceeds the measures of our experience, of our thinking, and of our traditions (which themselves, in fact, always already exceed themselves).

Attending to what Nietzsche later evokes as "the ancient deep," Emerson explicitly associates such a temporal immensity with "secularity," noting in his essay "Nature" (1844), for example, that the science of geology teaches us the "secularity of nature" by exposing us to temporalities unimagined within the "dame school measures" of Ptolemaic and Mosaic tradition.[19] This sense of secularity, accessed and experienced by Emerson thanks notably to modern science and its institutions, entails nothing of the arrogantly self-assured

16. Ralph Waldo Emerson, "The American Scholar," in *The Collected Works of Ralph Waldo Emerson*, vol. 1: *Nature, Addresses, and Lectures* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1971), 64.

17. Ralph Waldo Emerson, *Journals of Ralph Waldo Emerson*, ed. Edward Waldo Emerson and Waldo Emerson Forbes (Boston: Houghton Mifflin, 1911), 6:112.

18. Emerson, "Literary Ethics," 105–6.

19. See also a more recent inheritance of this Emersonian attunement, in Annie Dillard's "Life on the Rocks," where she recalls the Charles Darwin who "gave us time. Before Darwin (and Huxley, Wallace, etc.) there was in the nineteenth century what must have been a fairly nauseating period: people knew about fossils of extinct species, but did not yet know about organic evolution. They thought the fossils were litter from a series of past creations. At any rate, for many, this creation, the world as we know it, had begun in 4004 B.C., a date set by Irish Archbishop James Ussher in the seventeenth century. We were all crouched in a small room against the comforting back wall, awaiting the millennium which had been gathering impetus since Adam and Eve. Up there was a universe, and down here would be a small strip of man come and gone, created, taught, redeemed, and gathered up in a bright twinkling," in *Teaching a Stone to Talk* (New York: Harper Perennial, 2013), 121.

and calculating scientism so often conjured under the heading of the secular and related terms. Indeed, it calls our attention instead to an unknowing condition of our thinking nature, whose experience for Emerson opposes the logic, and pretense, of expertise.

If the expert is known by the claim to effectiveness, itself the function of a calculative precision and its power to grasp and control, experience is grounded for this American thinker in a measureless reception thanks to which we always think without fully knowing or controlling, and surely without containing, the grounds and conditions of our thinking. To see the role that is played in such thinking by the intimate strangeness of nature is to see that, and how, Emerson deviates from influential modern conceptions both of nature (as realm of the calculable) and of thinking (as self-positing and calculating certainty). Nature hates calculators, Emerson contends, and we both misunderstand the nature of thinking and fail in our thinking of nature when we demand to see too quickly and too clearly our thinking's effects. "It is pitiful," Emerson contends in "Experience" (1844), "to demand a result" of one's thinking and writing "on this town and county, an overt effect on the instant month and year," and it is thus a "fruit" "that I should not ask for a rash effect from meditations, counsels, and the hiving of truths."[20] Much like Heidegger, Emerson takes genuine thinking—as reception and response and wonder more than as positing and grasping and controlling—to stand at odds with the calculating rationality that dominates modern metaphysics from Leibniz's principle of sufficient reason and Descartes's self-certain *cogito* through today's research universities and schools of engineering. The dream of a self-founding and self-certain thinking, like the dream of giving sufficient reasons, is countered by Emerson's contention (citing Sophocles's *Antigone*) that "neither now nor yesterday began these thoughts . . . nor yet can a man be found who their first entrance knew" (E 312).

While many today assume that "the secular" is fundamentally aligned or even identical with the calculating rationality and technological power that are fetishized in our cultures and cults of expertise, Emerson contradicts that assumption through his appeal to a secular thinking, and to a thinking of the secular, not characterized by effectiveness and control so much as conditioned by unknowing and the incalculable. It is pitiful to demand results, he contends, and a "hankering after an overt and practical effect" of thinking amounts to "apostasy" because "the effect" of thinking "is deep and secular

20. Emerson, "Experience," in *Emerson's Essays: First and Second Series Complete in One Volume*, intro. Irwin Edman (New York: Harper and Row, 1926, 1951), 321. Hereafter cited parenthetically as E, page number.

as the cause. It works on periods in which mortal lifetime is lost" (E 321). Far, then, from the self-assertive, scientistic, or even idolatrous arrogance of a closed world system with its buffered selves, the sense of the secular to which Emerson here appeals is the sense of a natural, temporal immensity and hence of an immeasurable strangeness in which we, living a mortal lifetime, nonetheless participate intimately—through movements, which we ourselves never fully comprehend, of reception and of bestowal. Resistant as much to providential fulfillments and world-historical recollections (from Augustine to his "secular" translation in Hegel) as it is to the masterful aspirations of modernity's calculating rationality and technoscience (secularity as science, and vice versa), this thinking of the secular in Emerson is rooted in an experience of our finitude that involves not simply our inevitable unknowing but the recurrent trial and acknowledgment of such unknowing as a condition of thought. "I know better than to claim any completeness for my picture," Emerson writes in opening the paragraph from "Experience" where he treats the cause and effect of thinking as secular. "I am a fragment, and this is a fragment of me. I can very confidently announce one or the other law, which throws itself into relief and form, but I am too young yet by some ages to compile a code" (E 321). By ages (saecula) I am too young, Emerson suggests, because, and insofar as, I receive and transmit, through my thinking, temporal depths and currents that I neither ground nor ever catch up with.

While framed in these temporal terms of a secular nature, the unknowing that Emerson here signals involves also gestures of thought and expression that are reminiscent of mystical theology and its attentiveness to the paradoxes of "unsaying" or apophasis. Within Emerson's apophatic secularity, the "baffled intellect," "kneeling before this cause, which refuses to be named," must pass, just because of such refusal, through an open multiplicity of names and symbols—"Fortune, Minerva, Muse, Holy Ghost," water, air, thought, fire, love—eventually to arrive at "Being." The name of Being, Emerson holds, amounts not to an idol of the cogitating ego, nor to some highest because most adequate name where essence and existence coincide, but to an avowal wherein we "confess that we have arrived as far as we can go" before the "vast-flowing vigor" (whose naming in this latter case Emerson borrows from Mencius) (E 313). If the name of Being involves a confession, however, such confession is less the admission of a morally charged shortcoming or failure, and it is more the expression—and experience—of a finite being's wonder and joy before the immeasurable power that gives, by invisible channels, ever more life: "Suffice it for the joy of the universe," he writes, "that we have not arrived [with our confession of unknowing] at a wall, but at inter-

minable oceans. Our life seems not present, so much as prospective; not for the affairs on which it is wasted, but as a hint of vast-flowing vigor" (E 313).

The coimplication of (kataphatic) naming and of (apophatic) unnaming, or of dissemination and erasure, corresponds in Emerson—as well before him in the traditions of Dionysius, Eriugena, Eckhart, and Cusa—to a coimplication of immanence and transcendence, according to which the infinite proves to be transcendent, or distinct, thanks to its incomprehensible immanence, or absolute indistinction. It is always elsewhere, never captured here, because so excessively present everywhere. "The method of nature," Emerson writes, in his address of that title to the Society of Adelphi at then-Waterville (now Colby) College,

> who could ever analyze it? We can never surprise nature in a corner; never find the end of a thread; never tell where to set the first stone. The bird hastens to lay her egg: the egg hastens to be a bird. The wholeness we admire in the order of the world is the result of infinite distribution. Its smoothness is the smoothness of the pitch of the cataract. Its permanence is a perpetual inchoation. Every natural fact is an emanation, and that from which it emanates is an emanation also, and from every emanation is a new emanation.[21]

In a nature where all is nascent and infant, "all seems just begun; remote aims are in active accomplishment. We can point nowhere to anything final."[22] A perpetual birth and infancy, then, an ever open anticipation, are tied to the immemorially profound age, or secularity, of nature; and just as the effect of my thinking is "deep and secular as the cause," so I am constituted by, and recurrently refashioned through, movements of receiving and transmitting, of recollecting and anticipating, that are conditioned by insurmountable unknowing. In the "secret of our being," as Emerson signals in his "Literary Ethics," we issue from "secular darkness."[23] Neither wholly active nor wholly passive, the human self here is, as Branka Arsić puts it in her illuminating reading of Emerson, "medial."[24] Like the human as indiscrete image, the medial self in Emerson inherits, and passes on, both more and less than it can ever determine or delimit. The self's unknowing of its own ground, which unknowing itself we ignore in our tendency toward the estrangement of familiarity, involves a coincidence of excess and indetermination that falls

21. Emerson, "Method of Nature," 124.

22. Emerson, "Method of Nature," 124.

23. Emerson, "Literary Ethics," 110.

24. See Branka Arsić, *On Leaving: A Reading in Emerson* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 2010).

between the intimately strange and the strangely intimate. Construed in temporal terms, this coincidence recalls the neoteny wherein our deepest age and endless youth coincide. The child in Emerson (as in Nietzsche) is never simply young without being, through its secular inheritance, always already immeasurably aged. Or as Emerson writes, "an individual man is a fruit which it cost all the foregoing ages to form and ripen. The history of the genesis or the old mythology repeats itself in the experience of every child."[25]

Emerson appeals recurrently to the child, and the spirit of the child is essential to his understanding of the student, whose capacity for learning—something inherent to thinking itself for Emerson—depends on the student's indetermination and incompletion. As Cavell emphasizes in "An Emerson Mood," the 1980 Scholar's Day address that he delivered at Kalamazoo College, and which he frames in relation to the address Emerson himself delivered—as "The American Scholar"—to an audience of graduating Harvard students that included Thoreau, the "young scholar or student" constitutes for Emerson both "his immediate and constant audience" and the "best part, even the essential, of the human being." The condition of the student, in her youth, is not a stage we pass through, in order eventually to exit; it is rather "a capacity residing in each human being,"[26] a potentiality integral to our nature, which means our ongoing birth. However, while we are each and all by nature students and children, we can, and we do, tend at the same time to flee or to forget that nature and its openness. Emerson describes and understands such a tendency most notably in terms of our loss or failure of heart.

The fainting heart of men seems clearly for Emerson one of the spreading ailments of modern life in its tendency toward the busy habits of mass society. A loss of heart, and thus of the individual, in the crowd, furthermore, leaves at stake nothing less than the world and its ongoing renewal or recreation, for "we see young men who owe us a new world," as Emerson writes in "Experience," "so readily and lavishly they promise, but they never acquit the debt; they die young and dodge the account: or if they live, they lose themselves in the crowd" (E 297). We who are students, and young, the suggestion seems to be, owe to our teachers and elders a new world, or the new-

25. Emerson, "Method of Nature," 122, cited in Graham Parke's illuminating essay, "'Floods of Life' around 'Granite of Fate': Emerson and Nietzsche as Thinkers of Nature," in *Emerson/Nietzsche*, ed. Michael Lopez, a number of *ESQ: A Journal of the American Renaissance* (Pullman, WA, 1998): 237, n. 9.

26. Stanley Cavell, "An Emerson Mood," in *The Senses of Walden: An Expanded Edition* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1992), 159.

ness that makes for a world; and if we have not met or even acknowledged our debt, instead losing ourselves in the crowd, this likely stems from our lack or failure of heart (which can surely burden or break a teacher's heart). And we who are teachers, and older, holding such an expectation of the young (if we still have the heart to do so), also owe them a teaching that might quicken and lift the heart that a new world calls for—"the sacred affirmative" (as Emerson calls it), "the heart for a new creation" (Cavell).[27]

Emerson speaks on these matters of student and teacher, significantly, in contexts of address to actual college and divinity students, perhaps most famously in "The American Scholar" (1837) and "Divinity School Address" (1838) at Harvard but also in multiple other texts such as "Literary Ethics" (Dartmouth, 1838), "Method of Nature" (Waterville, 1841), "Address to the Adelphic Union of Williamstown College" (1854), and "Address to the Social Union of Amherst College" (1855). In these relations of address Emerson speaks not only on or about the heart, and not only from it, but also to the heart. Because our flight from the student in us is a matter of the heart, Emerson takes the fundamental work of a true teacher as identical to that of a true preacher: not to instruct but to provoke, not to impart information but to raise and to cheer, literally to encourage "the waiting, fainting hearts of men with new hope and new revelation."[28] Such work of encouragement, while put into textual operation here in the academic context, is for Emerson a work that can, and should, take place most anywhere; and the assumption that such work is limited to recognizable schools, or pulpits, is not only misguided, but it can tend toward just the thoughtlessness that the work in question is meant to avert. Hence Emerson frames the matter of the teacher in the form of a question, and the question of the teacher as one of seeking; for if we knew too fully ahead of time just who the teacher is, where the teacher is to be found, and what he or she has to teach, then we would have fallen short already of what learning entails. "What hinders that now, everywhere, in pulpits, in lecture-rooms, in houses, in fields, wherever the invitation of men or your own occasions lead you, you speak the truth, as your life and conscience teach it, and cheer the waiting, fainting hearts of men with new hope and a new revelation . . . I look for the new Teacher."[29] If such an effort to cheer and raise the heart is for Emerson a fundamental task of teaching, such teaching

27. Cavell, "Thinking of Emerson," 133.

28. Ralph Waldo Emerson, "The Divinity School Address," in *The Collected Works of Ralph Waldo Emerson*, vol. 1: *Nature, Addresses, and Lectures* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1971), 92.

29. Emerson, "Divinity School Address," 92.

is called for exactly because the heart is prone to loss or failure, especially in a modernity whose principles of management can leave the young in disgust (itself, perhaps, at least a small sign of hope, and heart). This is why Emerson will insist that colleges serve us "highly" only "when they aim not to drill but to create; when they gather from far every ray of various genius to their hospitable halls, and, by the concentrated fires, set the hearts of their youth on flame."[30]

This work of teaching, we should note, is for Emerson one that nature also can do, if we can hear its "perpetual invitation to the study of the world."[31] While the scholar "in the right state" is "man thinking,"[32] it is first of all nature that calls to him—through its beauty and its mystery, and thereby through its "perpetual admonition to us" that "the world is new, untried,"[33] and hence ever still unknown and to be learned. Nature thus speaks in Emerson much like the call of God in Dionysius, which operates in and through the beauty of a cosmos that paradoxically reveals that God's concealment (Dionysius plays in this direction on the resonance in Greek between the beautiful, *to kalon*, and the verb to call, *kaleō, kalein*). Thus reminding us that we are by nature students, nature thereby opens us anew to the mystery that we also remain to ourselves. Reminiscent too, then, of the interplay between mystical theology and mystical anthropology in the traditions of Gregory, Eriugena, and Cusa, the mystery of nature in Emerson can serve as the luminously obscure mirror of our own mystery:

> In this view of him, as Man Thinking, the whole theory of his office is contained. Him nature solicits, with all her placid, all her monitory pictures. Him the past instructs. Him the future invites. Is not, indeed, every man a student, and do not all things exist for the student's behoof? . . . The first in time and the first in importance of the influences upon the mind is that of nature. Every day, the sun; and, after sunset, night and the stars. Ever the winds blow; ever the grass grows. Every day, men and women, beholding and beholden. The scholar must needs stand wistful and admiring before this great spectacle. He must settle its value in his mind. What is nature to him? There is never a beginning, there is never an end to the inexplicable continuity of this web of God, but always circular power returning into itself. Therein it resembles his own spirit, whose beginning, whose ending, he can never find—so entire, so boundless. Far too, as her splendors shine, system on system shooting like rays, upward, downward, without center, without circumference,—in the

30. Emerson, "American Scholar," 58.

31. Emerson, "Uses," 2.

32. Emerson, "American Scholar," 52.

33. Emerson, "Literary Ethics," 105.

> mass and in the particle nature hastens to render account of herself to the mind.[34]

"And, in fine," Emerson writes a page after this evocation of mystical tradition's infinite sphere,[35] "the ancient precept, 'Know thyself,' and the modern precept, 'Study nature,' become at last one maxim." The thinker's mind, to draw out the implication, finds its image or mirror in nature (or vice versa) only insofar as the mind thinks its own incomprehensible character. And in the degree that the thinker is able to think his own boundless spirit in a thinking of nature, he is "the world's eye. He is the world's heart." Nothing less than the world is at stake in this thinking of the heart; and such thinking calls for the kind of heart—or self-trust—for which "the deeper he dives into his privatest secretest presentiment—to his wonder he finds, this is the most acceptable, most public, and universally true."[36]

To be a student calls for readiness to be born or to feel a new heart beating, and we therefore confront a threat to the student dwelling essentially in all of us through that loss of heart we can suffer in the weariness (or jadedness or disappointment or despondency) not simply of age but of the routine, and the crowd, and their expert management, whatever one's age. Much like Weber after him, Emerson clearly sensed in the students of his day, and no doubt suffered himself, a loss of heart in face of the "principles by which the world is managed," a faintness that deprives one of the energy—and the time—to resist, or to interrupt, the automatic march, and thereby to keep open or to reopen the time we'd need for the reticence and quiet, patience and unknowing, not to mention the stumbling and self-doubt and the trouble of heart that learning and thinking entail. And like the Weber who will highlight a scientist's need for the passion that alone will carry him through

34. Emerson, "American Scholar," 54.

35. Along lines resembling Umberto Eco's reading of *Finnegans Wake*, Cavell takes the infinite circle (which he misattributes to Augustine) to be a self-image for the Emersonian essay as such: "a something 'whose center is everywhere and whose circumference is nowhere'. . . . a finite object that yields an infinite response"; in Stanley Cavell, "Finding as Founding," in *This New Yet Unapproachable America: Lectures after Emerson after Wittgenstein* (Albuquerque: Living Batch Press, 1989), 101. For informative studies of the infinite sphere's history, see Dietrich Mahnke, *Unendliche Sphäre und Allmittelpunkt* (Stuttgart-Bad Cannstatt: Friedrich Frommann Verlag, 1966; Faksimile-Neudruck der Ausgabe Halle, 1937), and Georges Poulet, *Les Métamorphoses du cercle* (Paris: Plon, 1961); and for my own take on its relation to theological and technological perspectives on creativity, broadly, and in *Finnegans Wake*, specifically, see my *Indiscrete Image*.

36. Emerson, "American Scholar," 55, 62, 63.

the countless hours and inevitable disappointment, Emerson understands well the prices paid by the scholar, for

> he, in his private observatory, cataloguing obscure and nebulous stars of the human mind, which as yet no man has thought of as such,—watching days and months, sometimes, for a few facts; correcting still his old records;—must relinquish display and immediate fame. In the long period of his preparation, he must betray often an ignorance and shiftlessness in popular arts, incurring the disdain of the able who shoulder him aside. Long must he stammer in his speech; often forego the living for the dead. Worse yet, he must accept—how often! poverty and solitude. For the ease and pleasure of treading the old road, accepting the fashions, the education, the religion of society, he takes the cross of making his own, and of course the self-accusation, the faint heart, the frequent uncertainty and loss of time which are the nettles and tangling vines in the way of the self-relying and self-directed; and the state of virtual hostility in which he seems to stand to society, and especially to educated society.[37]

A crucial mediator between Emerson and Weber (who are not all that often mentioned in the same breath) is surely Nietzsche, who as Cavell convincingly suggests, is a decisive link also between Emerson and Heidegger. And the indebtedness and kinship of Nietzsche to Emerson are perhaps nowhere more striking than in the role that both attribute to the heart in education and, hence, in genuine thinking. This thinking about the heart's role in education, furthermore, is developed by Nietzsche as much as by Emerson from within a worry that in the habit and haste of our age, we tend to lose the singularity of our time and life: our essential youth, and its openness to the new day, or dawn, and to their creative possibility. For Nietzsche and Emerson both, indeed, a signal danger of our modern time is its tendency not to see that "this time, like all times, is a good one, if we but know what to do with it."[38] Can it be that our heart's education to time, or to the day, today, will have been foremost among the stakes of Nietzsche's thinking about the death of God, and subsequently in our experience of the secular today?

Much as Weber's "Science as a Vocation," in its diagnosis of modernity and its theses surrounding "disenchantment," is a text central to secularization debate while proving to be also, fundamentally, a text about teaching and learning, so Nietzsche's early text on education, "Schopenhauer as Educator," is one whose critical diagnosis of modern secularization [Verweltlichung] frames a treatment of education's affective stakes—while doing so

37. Emerson, "American Scholar," 62.

38. Emerson, "American Scholar," 67.

along lines bearing fundamentally on later texts concerning the death of God. The symptoms to which "Schopenhauer as Educator" points in its diagnosis of a modern secularization—not only that the "waters of religion are ebbing away and leaving behind swamps or stagnant pools" but also that the sciences are being "pursued without any restraint and in a spirit of the blindest *laissez faire*" and that "the educated classes and states are being swept along by a hugely contemptible money economy"[39]—are understood by Nietzsche, as by Emerson before him, in terms of the heart's orientation. Even more pointedly, Nietzsche sees in this modernity a thoughtlessness that stands in equivalence with a poverty of love: "The world has never been more worldly," he writes, "never poorer in love and goodness [nie ärmer an Liebe und Güte]. The educated classes are no longer lighthouses or refuges in the midst of this turmoil of secularization; they themselves grow daily more restless, thoughtless, and loveless [sie selben werden täglich unruhiger, gedanken- und liebeloser]" (SE 148; 362).

A paradox of this restless age's haste, Nietzsche contends, is that the age "kills time," and in doing so, it stifles the youthful heart in its singularity, or what Emerson and Nietzsche both might call its genius. A fundamental work of the educator, then, will be to liberate, or awaken, or enliven, that youthful heart of genius:

> And if it is true to say of the lazy that they kill time, then it is greatly to be feared that an era which sees its salvation in public opinion, that is to say private laziness, is a time that really will be killed: I mean struck out of the history of the true liberation of life. . . . On the other hand, how right it is for those who do not feel themselves to be citizens of this time to harbour great hopes; for if they were citizens of this time they too would be helping to kill their time and so perish with it—while their desire is rather to awaken their time to life and so live on themselves in this awakened life. (SE 128; 334–35)

In sharp distinction from the Augustine for whom life is truly life only if lived in the present assurance of a future security in eternal beatitude, and by contrast likewise with the Tolstoy who may despair before modern time's never-ending forward passage, Nietzsche affirms here the singularity of a lifetime precisely in its finitude and transience. For "even if the future gave us no cause for hope—the fact of our existing at all in this here-and-now must

39. Friedrich Nietzsche, "Schopenhauer as Educator," in *Untimely Meditations*, ed. Daniel Breazeale, trans. R. J. Hollingdale (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1997), 148; "Schopenhauer als Erzieher," in *Nietzsche Werke, Kritische Gesamtausgabe*, ed. Giorgio Colli and Mazzino Montinari, Dritte Abteilung (Berlin: Walter de Gruyter, 1972), 1:362. Hereafter cited parenthetically as SE, English page number; German page number.

be the strongest incentive to us to live according to our own laws and standards," he writes, then elaborating along lines that resonate with Emerson's thinking both about our emergence from secular darkness and about our transience: "the inexplicable fact that we live precisely today, when we had all infinite time to come into existence, that we possess only a shortlived today in which to demonstrate why and to what end we came into existence now and at no other time" (SE 128; 335). The singular wonder of our existence, bound to this time and no other, and threatened by the thoughtless haste and habit of a loveless modernity that kills time, calls, then, for a sense of responsibility in just the measure that we are attuned to its inevitable passing and loss: "We are responsible to ourselves for our own existence; consequently we want to be the true helmsman of this existence and refuse to allow our existence to resemble a mindless act of chance. One has to take a somewhat bold and dangerous line with this existence: especially as, whatever happens, we are bound to lose it" (SE 128; 335).

Our awakening to the inevitable loss of a singular, finite, and transient existence is for Nietzsche, or at least should be, not a threat to the fullness and meaning of life but instead a liberation from the chains of fear and convention, an awakening to, and from, our flight from ourselves. "The man who does not wish to belong to the mass needs only to cease taking himself easily; let him follow his conscience, which calls to him: 'Be your self! All you are now doing, thinking, desiring, is not you yourself'" (SE 127; 334). We can note here that the voice of conscience speaking to the alienated self speaks the intention of love as we saw Augustine define it: that the self be itself. And likewise the alienation to which that voice speaks is a matter of the heart's misdirection. The alienation to which Nietzsche here points recalls, indeed, and notably in its doubled character, both the alienation we've explored in precursors like Emerson and Augustine and the alienation of an heir like Heidegger—for all of whom the bind of alienation is, exactly, that it does not recognize itself. For Nietzsche, it is not simply that in my busy haste and conformity I hide from myself, but also that I hide that very haste, in which I give my heart away to that which is not my self:

> In individual moments we all know how the most elaborate arrangements of our life are made only so as to flee from the tasks we actually ought to be performing, how we would like to hide our head somewhere as though our hundred-eyed conscience could not find us out there, how we hasten to give our heart away to the state, to money-making, to sociability or science merely so as no longer to possess it ourselves, how we labour at our daily work more ardently and thoughtlessly than is necessary to sustain our life because to us it is even more necessary not to have leisure to stop and think. Haste is universal

> because everyone is in flight from himself; universal too the shy concealment of this haste . . . (SE 158; 375; translation modified)

Just as our hasty flight-from-self appears here as a function of the heart's giving itself too quickly away, so the heart and its love will play a critical role in returning the self to itself, for "in his heart every man knows quite well that, being unique, he will be in the world only once and that no imaginable chance will for a second time gather into a unity so strangely variegated an assortment as he is: he knows it but he hides it like a bad conscience—why? From fear of his neighbor, who demands conventionality and cloaks himself with it" (SE 127; 33). Articulating inchoately the life test that might be occasioned by thought of the eternal return, Nietzsche notes that for the self to acknowledge itself and eventually discover its "law," the self's youthful soul should reflect upon the course of its loves, from within the agedness of whatever life it has lived: "Let the youthful soul look back on life with the question: what have you truly loved up to now, what has drawn your soul aloft, what has mastered it and at the same time blessed it? Set up these revered objects before you and perhaps their nature and their sequence will give you a law, a fundamental law of your own true self" (SE 129; 336).

Far from a simple return to the closed interior of an authentic self discretely possessing itself, the return to self that may be prompted by this inquiry of the youthful soul into the past of its loves, and hence into its age, is a return only to a *movement* that defines the self as self, a movement of love through which the self finds or becomes itself only by passing or standing-out beyond itself, in a kind of exposure to the outward that alone gives one inwardly to oneself here and now. Nietzsche's formulations on this interplay of inward and outward, while presaging his later understandings of the overman, recall strikingly also the logic of heart we've been tracing from Augustine through Heidegger and his readers: "Compare these objects one with another, see how one completes, expands, surpasses, transfigures another, how they constitute a stepladder upon which you have clambered up to yourself as you are now; for your true nature lies, not concealed deep within you, but immeasurably high above you or at least above that which you usually take yourself to be" (SE 129; 336–37).

While my true nature is to be found high above—beyond and outside—myself, my self-loss can also entail a bind to the outside, but in the mode of addiction to the superficiality of public opinion. "There exists no more repulsive and desolate creature in the world," Nietzsche writes, "than the man who has evaded his genius and who now looks furtively to left and right, behind him and all about him. In the end such a man becomes impossible to get

hold of, since he is wholly exterior, without kernel" (SE 128; 334). While my preoccupation with the externality of public opinion leaves me "in" myself without kernel, the liberation of self at stake in education for Nietzsche is a liberation that gives me some kernel, or a genuine interiority, only insofar as it binds me to an outside and beyond that cuts across me in a singular way. It frees me up from the "I" that I all too easily accept as myself, under the pressure and opinionated gaze of others: "there are moments and as it were bright sparks of the fire of love in whose light we cease to understand the word 'I,' there lies something beyond our being which at these moments moves across into it, and we are thus possessed of a heartfelt longing for bridges between here and there" (SE 161; 378–79).

If it is the heart that presses me toward, and binds me inwardly to, what is high above me, the educator, as liberator, speaks fundamentally to that heart, and thus does the work both of nature and of culture. For while my "nature" stands high above me, it is "culture" that provokes and sustains the dissatisfaction that drives me beyond myself—but in what is, again, strikingly, a movement of love. To have a self is to move beyond oneself, and the liberation of self to itself is liberation to the self's own self-surpassing. "And the young person," Nietzsche writes in a tone rather foreign to dominant trends of education today,

> should be taught to regard himself as a failed work of nature but at the same time as a witness to the grandiose and marvelous intentions of this artist: nature has done badly, he should say to himself; but I will honour its great intentions by serving it so that one day it may do better.
>
> By coming to this resolve he places himself within the circle of *culture*; for culture is the child of each individual's self-knowledge and dissatisfaction with himself. Anybody who believes in culture is thereby saying: "I see above me something higher and more human than I am; let everyone help me to attain it, as I will help everyone who knows and suffers as I do: so that at last the man may appear who feels himself perfect and boundless in knowledge and love, perception and power, and who in his completeness is at one with nature, judge and evaluator of things." (SE 162–63; 381)

If we read these couples in apposition—knowledge and love, perception and power—then the key to power is less knowledge than love. Increase in power, from this perspective, would mean above all increase in love, itself understood, and lived, as involving essentially our creative, and growing, capacity for self-surpassing or recurrent birth. Much as Emerson holds that the teacher can only provoke, not instruct, Nietzsche suggests that it remains "impossible to teach" love—because learning already requires love; for it is "love alone" that "can bestow on the soul, not only a clear, discriminating

and self-contemptuous view of itself, but also the desire to look beyond itself and to seek with all its might for a higher self as yet still concealed from it" (SE 163; 381).

The claim that love plays a singular and indispensable role in the educative work of liberation and creative self-surpassing is one we can read also, practically word for word, in *Thus Spoke Zarathustra*, whose chapter on "The Way of the Creator" has Zarathustra tell the "lonely one" or "solitary" that "you are going the way of the lover: yourself do you love, and therefore you despise yourself, as only the lover can despise. The lover wants to create because he despises! What does he know of love who has not had to despise precisely what he loved! With your love go into your isolation, and with your creating, my brother . . . With my tears go into your isolation, my brother. I love him who wants to create beyond himself and thereby perishes."[40] The one famous for pronouncing the death of God in *Thus Spoke Zarathustra* is one who speaks as teacher and lover. Indeed, while perhaps most famous as one of Nietzsche's richest and the most extended explorations of the untimely news that God is dead, *Thus Spoke Zarathustra* is also, along lines tied essentially to that news, fundamentally a treatment of awakening to the day through teaching, learning, and their ground in love. Zarathustra's teaching, we should note, entails a love speaking to love, and thus a wanting to create that speaks to, or awakens, a wanting to create. And if the self-surpassing entailed in creation demands a measure of self-despising, such despising, as Nietzsche understands it already in "Schopenhauer as Educator," involves little of the suffocating, paralyzing, or castrating feelings of self-hatred—or judgmental no-saying—that he associates with Christianity's metaphysics of the hangman. The despising intends not to distress the self, or the beloved other, but to encourage;[41] it draws one out of one's own narrowness, and into

40. Friedrich Nietzsche, *Thus Spoke Zarathustra*, trans. Graham Parkes (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2005), 205.

41. "Thus only he who has attached his heart to some great man receives thereby the *first consecration to culture*; the sign of that consecration is that one is ashamed of oneself without any accompanying feeling of distress, that one comes to hate one's own narrowness and shriveled nature, that one has a feeling of sympathy for the genius who again and again drags himself up out of our dryness and apathy and the same feeling in anticipation for all those who are still struggling and evolving, with the profoundest conviction that almost everywhere we encounter nature pressing towards man and again and again failing to achieve him, yet everywhere succeeding in producing the most marvelous beginnings" (SE 163; 381). Emerson seems surely to have been such an educator for Nietzsche, as he was also, we might note, for James A. Garfield, perhaps here appearing for the first time in such proximity to the great German thinker: as Garfield remarked after hearing Emerson speak on "the scholar" at Williamstown College, this "most startlingly original thinker" that Garfield had ever heard made him "feel small and insignificant to hear *him*"—but from that feeling "he dated his intellectual life"; editors' introduction to Emerson, "An Address to the Adelphic Union of Williamstown College, 15 August 1854," in *The Later Lectures of Ralph Waldo Emerson*, vol. 1: *1843–1854*, ed. Ronald A. Bosco and Joel Myerson (Athens: University of Georgia Press, 2001), 348.

sympathy with the spirit of openness, hope, and awakening to the new that Nietzsche, like Emerson, understands as genius (and as something we are all endowed with). As Cavell puts it with respect to the world, so we can put it with respect to the self: the perfectionism shared by Nietzsche with Emerson both wants the self and wants it to change.[42]

If one can be struck here in Nietzsche by the intimate interplay—found also in Emerson—of nature and culture in the movement whereby self comes to itself, or becomes itself, in passing beyond itself, or comes to itself by passing toward another instantiation of its own ongoing self-surpassing, one can be struck in similar ways by the resonance of this thinking with a construal of nature—or more exactly *phusis*—that one finds in Heidegger and his reading of Aristotle. Much like the Dasein who comes to itself or has itself only in ex-isting, and thus only in standing out beyond itself toward a possibility of itself, so *phusis*, Heidegger suggests in a text from 1939, "is a 'going' in the sense of a going-forth towards a going-forth, and in this sense it is indeed a going *back* into itself, i.e., the *self* to which it returns remains a going-forth. The merely spatial image of a circle is essentially inadequate because this going-forth that goes back into itself precisely lets something go forth from which and to which going-forth is in each instance on the way [Die phusis ist Gang als Aufgang zum Aufgehen und so allerdings ein In-sich-*zurück*-Gehen, zu *sich*, das ein Aufgehen bleibt. Das nur räumliche Bild des Kreisens reicht wesenhaft nicht zu, weil dieser in sich zurückgehende Aufgang gerade aufgehen läßt Solches, von dem, zu dem der Aufgang je unterwegs ist]."[43] While Heidegger signals elsewhere that "being on the way" finds an essential name in love, or eros, he suggests here that being on the way—toward a being on the way—is named also by *phusis*, which he reads in turn as another name for the Being of beings. Such a proximity of Being and loving Heidegger

42. See Stanley Cavell, *Cities of Words* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 2004), 18: "What I call Emersonian perfectionism I understand to propose that one's quarrel with the world need not be settled, nor cynically set aside as unsettlable. It is a condition in which you can at once want the world and want it to change."

43. Martin Heidegger, "On the Essence and Concept of *Phusis* in Aristotle's *Physics* B, I," trans. Thomas Sheehan, in Martin Heidegger, *Pathmarks*, ed. William McNeill (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1998), 224; *Wegmarken*, ed. Friedrich-Wilhelm von Herrmann (Frankfurt am Main: Vittorio Klostermann, 2013), 293.

himself highlights within the Heraclitean thought that *phusis*/Being "loves to hide" or loves to conceal itself (*phusis kruptesthai philei*). The self-hiding of Being, he will say in reading the famous Heraclitean fragment, is not to be overcome, as if behind or beyond the hiding we would somehow find Being in itself; instead, self-hiding is inherent to the self-disclosing movement of *phusis*/Being, and that movement belongs to what Heidegger calls the predilection or the fore-love, that is, the *Vor-liebe*, of Being.[44] Like the culture, then, that realizes nature in Nietzsche, or that brings us more truly into nature in Emerson, the culture, that is, whose basic movement is one of love; so *phusis* for Heidegger, which brings the mystery of Being to light, includes the anticipatory movement of love at its core. If nature consists in the things to be born (*natura*, future participle of *nasci*, to be born) it remains essentially pregnant (likely from *prae-*, before, and, *gnasci*, to be born), and the love that ever anticipates such birth is a predilection.

Are such a love and its anticipation not inherent to the work and movement of education? Nietzsche and Heidegger both give us ground to think so (as does already, I'd insist, any genuine experience of education). Much as in Nietzsche, where the education essential to culture liberates me to be myself—by passing to my own self-surpassing—so in Heidegger teaching will be understood as a "letting" or enabling whose logic seems equivalent to that of the letting-be that Heidegger also names, following Augustine, love. Noting the sharp difference between the famous professor and the genuine teacher (a difference whose analogues we can note already in Emerson's distinction between the pedant and the scholar as man thinking, or Nietzsche's between the philosophy professor and the philosopher), Heidegger emphasizes—in his first course taught after his engagement with Nazism—that the real difficulty of teaching has to do not with the accumulation, retention, and transmission of information, or knowledge as "content" (about which

44. "Self-hiding belongs to the predilection [*Vor-liebe*] of Being; i.e., it belongs to that wherein being has secured its essence" (*Pathmarks*, 229; *Wegmarken*, 300). In *Mindfulness* (*Besinnung*), a text from the same period (1938–39), Heidegger makes, within a discussion of philosophy as love of wisdom, a similar appeal to the fore-loving of Being: "'*Wisdom*' is foundational knowing-awareness [das wesentliche Wissen]; is in-abiding the truth of be-ing [die Inständigkeit in der Wahrheit des Seyns]. Hence that 'love' loves be-ing in a unique 'fore-loving' [*Vor-liebe*]. This: that be-ing 'be' is this love's beloved. What matters to this beloved, to its truth and its grounding, is the will to foundational knowing-awareness" (*Mindfulness*, 52; *Besinnung*, 63). For an excellent study of the long, rich history of reflection on the self-hiding of nature, see Pierre Hadot, *Le voile d'Isis: Essai sur l'histoire de l'idée de nature* (Paris: Gallimard, 2004); *The Veil of Isis: An Essay on the History of the Idea of Nature*, trans. Michael Chase (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 2008).

educators today can speak with as little irony as the entrepreneurs), but with the capacity of the teacher to learn. If, as Heidegger claims, "to learn" means, and calls us, "to make everything we do answer to whatever essentials address themselves to us at a given time [Lernen heißt: das Tun und Lassen zu dem in die Entsprechung bringen, was sich jeweils an Wesenhaftem uns zuspricht]," then the essential task of the teacher is to learn one thing: to let learn. "Teaching is even more difficult than learning," he writes. "We know that; but we rarely think about it. And why is teaching more difficult than learning? Not because the teacher must have a larger store of information, and have it always ready. Teaching is more difficult than learning because what teaching calls for is this: to let learn. The real teacher, in fact, lets nothing else be learned than—learning [Das Lehren ist noch schwieriger als das Lernen. Man weiß das wohl; aber man bedenkt es selten. Weshalb ist das Lehren schwerer als das Lernen? Nicht deshalb, weil der Lehrer die grössere Summe von Kenntnissen besitzen und sie jederzeit bereit haben muß. Das Lehren ist darum schwerer als das Lernen weil das Lehren heißt: lernen lassen. Der eigentliche Lehrer läßt sogar nichts anderes lernen als—das Lernen]."[45]

If teaching entails at bottom a learning that is itself a learning to let learn, we should read in the logic—and practice—of such a "letting" that form of care, or love, analyzed in *Being and Time* as the solicitude, or care for others, that "leaps ahead." Such solicitude, recall, does not leap in for the other, to take over her position and deal with her concerns for her, in order then to hand them back to her as already dealt with and thus as readily available or on hand; the solicitude that leaps ahead aims not to put at the other's disposal some actuality that she might readily use or exploit. Rather it aims to enable in the other her own possibility, a being-able that the other might take up and inhabit as distinctively her own; such enabling aims to cultivate in the student the possibility of her own existence, according to which she comes to herself, as herself, by standing out beyond herself, in relation to a further possibility of herself, or to another being-able that is (or can be) distinctively hers.

While the existential weight of Heidegger's distinction between leaping-in and leaping-ahead can be intuited especially well in relation to teaching—as seen both here in Heidegger and also, as we noted in our introduction, in Weber—it can likewise be sensed in especially illuminating ways with respect to parenting. And it is surely Emerson the parent, as much as Emerson the teacher, preacher, or writer, who speaks to us of the heart's education. More pointedly, it is Emerson the bereaved parent.

45. Heidegger, *What Is Called Thinking?*, 14, 15; *Was Heißt Denken?*, 49, 50.

Cavell has richly underscored the senses in which thinking, for Emerson, means being at a loss, such that the essential awakening, or morning, to which thought aspires would be tied intimately to mourning as grieving. Insofar as thinking is for Emerson inseparable from learning, this tie Cavell suggests between thinking and grieving would be deeply consistent with Emerson's two claims that the spirit of the child is the spirit of all learning and that "sorrow makes us all children again,—destroys all differences of intellect. The wisest knows nothing."[46] At one level we might first see in Emerson's grief a resistance to thinking, and precisely in its tie to learning, insofar as Emerson grieves "that grief can teach me nothing, nor carry me one step into real nature" (E 296), or insofar as he grieves chiefly that he cannot grieve (as he suggests in a letter written shortly after son Waldo's death). At another level, and on the closer consideration that Cavell encourages, the *not* of Emerson's inability to grieve, or the *nothing* he grieves that grief can teach him, or the *nothing* that the wisest knows when sorrow makes him again a child, is exactly what calls for thinking—in the sense that Heidegger gives to this question (*Was heißt Denken?*) when he emphasizes that what is most worthy of thought, or most thought provoking (*bedenklich*, which means also "troubling" or "worrisome"), is that we are *not yet* thinking. This "not yet," Heidegger leads us to see, is inherent to thinking; it is not to be annuled or overcome by thinking.[47] Hence, when we too readily or too clearly or too assuredly assume ourselves to be thinking (as we might tend to do, for example, in the busyness of our university research programs, or in our TED talks), then we are not—because we have missed the effectively apophatic logic (not Heidegger's terminology) that defines that thinking of the heart which grieving surely must be.

Some readers find the coldest of claims in Emerson's suggestion that grief can teach him nothing, or in his preceding assertion that in the death of his son Emerson seems to have lost no more than "a beautiful estate" and that, "not touched or scarred by the calamity," he "cannot get it nearer" to himself (E 295). Rather than as a sign of some shocking coldness or deplorable lack of tragic sense, however, we can well read this claim according to the (apophatic)

46. Emerson, *Journals*, 6:153.

47. This is central to Heidegger's construal of thinking as a being "on the way," itself a decisive element of Heidegger for Cavell. See, e.g., *What Is Called Thinking?*: "The assertion says, what is most thought-provoking is that we are still not thinking. The assertion says neither that we are no longer thinking, nor does it say roundly that we are not thinking at all. The words 'still not,' spoken thoughtfully, suggest that we are already on our way toward thinking, presumably from a great distance, not only on our way toward thinking as a conduct some day to be practiced, but on our way *within* thinking, on the way of thinking" (30).

logic of heart—and of nature—that we've been tracing in these pages. For what, to the loving parent, could be more inward, more piercingly evident and unavoidable, what could be more intimate, than his or her grieving the beloved child now lost? And yet, at the same time, and for the same reasons, what must remain more terribly strange, more inaccessible, unbelievable, or simply unthinkable, than the child's death? As the matter of heart that it surely is ("you have my whole heart," the father says in McCarthy), the child's death would thus prove inexpressibly intimate and penetrating, piercing and marking the parent more deeply and inwardly than could be measured, conceived, or spoken (which it does, in fact, from the moment of birth, or even conception, itself); and that death would thus prove also, in that measureless measure, inaccessibly distant.

An interpretation of Emerson's troubling (and thought-provoking) lines on grief according to this paradoxical logic of the heart is enhanced by Sharon Cameron's astute and influential reading of the whole text of Emerson's "Experience": while it can seem that the text opens with a shocking disavowal of grief, Emerson's setting the son and his mourning apart, as if they touch Emerson no more than some lost property, grief fails to appear distinctly in the text much rather because it is so pervasively, and thus indistinctly, present; it generates—like the indistinct God his world—all of the essay, in its each and every topic. Reading "Experience" as elegy, Cameron argues that "grief is the essay's first cause," the begetter of all its other subjects. The perception and subsequent charge that grief does not register in it, then, stem in fact from grief's ubiquity. The overwhelming and pervasive grief that does befall Emerson upon Waldo's death—which his journals poignantly attest—thus actually yields "the perception of all experience" as marked by loss and grief, a feeling so extensive that it "overwhelms the bounds of the personal" to the point that grief and experience appear equivalent, and death teaches us "our relation to *every* event."[48]

Both less and more than the mind could have expected, the death of such a beloved touches me more inwardly, and remains more terribly strange and inaccessible, than I might ever conceive or imagine beforehand (or after the fact). In this, my grieving obeys well that logic according to which what is more interior to me than my innermost (*interior intimo meo*) is at the same time, in the same sense, more outward than my most outermost (*superior summo meo*). So discerning our logic of the heart in the logic of grief, we can not only register a condition of sorrow in love, and of love in sorrow, but also

48. Sharon Cameron, "Representing Grief: Emerson's 'Experience,'" in her *Impersonality: Seven Essays* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2007), 65, 69, 58, 68.

appreciate the strangeness and unsettled character of the heart to which one often appeals for the assurance of intimacy. Like Augustine with his God, but in the inescapably mortal register, Emerson attests that we can be, and are, "in [the] presence [of grief] without feeling our relation to it," and, because we are so, "we must imagine even it."[49] Our "contact" with grief is its "absolute inseparability from every conceivable aspect of experience," and thus what is closest to us, most deeply "within" us, or pervasively "around" us in our grieving, proves most strange and elusive—inconceivable, unintelligible, and hence demanding that we somehow imagine it. "The essay is," Cameron elucidates, "a testament to the pervasiveness of a loss so inclusive that it is inseparable from experience itself."[50]

In light especially of our engagement in previous chapters with the question of love and mortal singularity in McCarthy, Heidegger, and Heidegger's readers, I imagine that this inseparable character of Emerson's grief—its pervasiveness to, or even its in-distinction from, experience itself—may best be understood as stemming from the fact of his child's insurmountably separated being, a separation that no dialectic overcomes, and which we should see to condition what Emerson describes as the child's "generous" nature. "The child cannot now be experienced apart from his death," Cameron lucidly notes, "and, as the essay in its entirety is at pains to inform us, it is just in his death that he cannot be experienced at all."[51] The child is accessible now only through that which is not accessible. Were it possible to stand in for the child in her dying; or were it possible to stand with the child, united, in one and the same death; then things might be otherwise. But as we saw earlier in light as much of McCarthy as of Heidegger, and as Emerson learns through experience and recounts through "Experience," our access to the mortal and now lost beloved, here the child Waldo, is an access without access. "I have no skill," Emerson writes to Sarah Clarke a month or two after Waldo's death, "no 'nearness' to the power which has bereaved me of the most beautiful of the children of men. I apprehend nothing of the fact but its bitterness. . . . It is nothing to me but the gloomiest sensible experience to which I have no key, and no consolation, nothing but oblivion and diversion."[52] Referencing the deeply sensible, indeed bodily strain that mourning entails, Emerson's noting his failure to achieve any nearness to the bitter fact of Waldo's death signals emphatically the insuperable separation of his own child. Such an emphasis

49. Cameron, 59.
50. Cameron, 57.
51. Cameron, 270.
52. Emerson, quoted in Richardson, 369.

on the separated being of the child, crucial to Cameron's interpretation and illuminated well, in its ineffaceable opacity, by the analysis of mortal singularity that we've carried out in our previous chapters with McCarthy and Heidegger, resonates also with Cavell's insightful effort to make sense of Emerson's shocking claim—that Waldo's death is caducous—by suggesting that it stems from Emerson's learning, to his shock, that the child can die and the parent survive. Like Derrida, or any other parent, who thought that he (or she) could not survive the death of his son (or daughter), so perhaps thought Emerson. Had Waldo been who Emerson thought Waldo was, the thinking goes, then surely Waldo's death would have meant also Emerson's own. But Waldo died, and Emerson survived, and the fact of his writing attests to that second, unbelievable, fact.[53]

In light of this latter fact, we might further imagine that the present absence or absent presence of Waldo in the text of "Experience" involves a response to the impossible question (a version of which is posed also by Derrida, in relation to his mother's dying, while he is writing "Circumfession") concerning whether and how such writing might betray, or convey, the father's faithfulness to the child in the child's death. How, after all, in my faithfulness to what the child's life meant and to what her death thus now means, could I go on to write or say anything at all about either—as if I could make the inaccessible accessible, the inconceivable conceived, or the measureless measured? By writing or speaking anything at all about losing the child whose life and love meant more to me that I could say, do I not thus obscure, by dint of too much (apparent) light, the thing I should have meant to communicate—something incommunicable? But an opposite question presses with equal validity: given all that the child meant and thus what her death now means, how could I not write or speak about it? How could I write or speak about anything else? To what else of more significance or weight could I possibly give my words—and my time? Much as in the paradoxical bind of the apophatic theologian, so here, my response to the loss seems to demand expression or imagination, even as any word or image falls far short of the omnipresent excess of the loss; every word and image betrays or conceals as much as it conveys or reveals. I must answer responsibly to the loss—and to the person I've become through the loss—even as responsibility must acknowledge the shortcoming of every response.

This apophatic demand of grief, both to speak and to keep silent, or in Cameron's language to avow and disavow, can be read to correspond fairly directly to Emerson's sense of the child's generosity of nature. "It seems as if

53. See Cavell, "Finding as Founding," 106.

I ought to call upon the winds to describe my boy, my fast receding boy, a child of so large and generous a nature that I cannot paint him by specialties, as I might another."[54] Naming in its multiple and varied detail the everyday world that he shared with Waldo, Emerson at the same time appeals to the wind, whose resistance to containment or location suggests not only the expansive character of the boy's generous nature but also thereby the pervasiveness of the grief answering to that nature. In this, Emerson's grief, like the love at its source, follows the logic of power such as Emerson, like Nietzsche, understands it, insofar as power "comes from the inability to nail it down anywhere" (Cameron, 73). Like the vast-flowing vigor that we name faithfully only in avowing the betrayal spoken by its every name, including the final or first name of Being, so too our grief is spoken only as unspoken—because it, along with the death and love at its heart, is inherent to that vigor.

The boy whose description in specialties would amount to a betrayal proves generous in the measureless measure of Emerson's world, and he does so in death as much as in life. By contrast, however, to the Augustine for whom the beloved's death either (as with his friend) wholly darkens and empties the world or (as with his mother) renders its singular places indifferent or insignificant (thanks to a love turned toward God beyond the world), Emerson comes to find the world illuminated and rendered handsome wherever, and insofar as, his beloved son lived his life and spent his time there. "What he looked upon is better," Emerson writes just two days after Waldo "ended his life," and "what he looked not upon is insignificant."[55] From the everyday details of home economics and the toy house that Waldo (with Thoreau) built and lived in imaginatively, to heavenly measures and the day itself, the world and its time—in all their transient and shaded light—appear to Emerson, and are beautiful, for having been shared with this child:

> For this boy, in whose remembrance I have both slept and awaked so oft, decorated for me the morning star, the evening cloud, how much more all the particulars of daily economy; for he had touched with his lively curiosity every trivial fact and circumstance in the household, the hard coal and the soft coal which I put into my stove, the wood, of which he brought his little quota for grandmother's fire; the hammer, the pincers and the file he was so eager to use; the microscope, the magnet, the little globe, and every trinket and instrument in the study; the loads of gravel on the meadow, the nests in the henhouse, and many and many a little visit to the dog-house and to the barn.[56]

54. Emerson, *Journals*, 6:153.
55. Emerson, *Journals*, 6:150.
56. Emerson, *Journals*, 6:151.

The day itself, then, along with the world, both in its broad sweep and in its fine detail, with its equipment and projects and people, the home of daily life and the toy house within—all appear for Emerson, as world and *domus* did for Augustine, in light of the beloved's present absence and absent presence. They do so for Emerson, however, more in terms of beauty and affirmation than in terms of a darkness or emptiness that pushes one to some other world beyond. For, as Emerson comes to hold, "there is no other world; here or nowhere is the whole fact."[57]

The world-illuminating power of grief—along with that power's essential tie to the day—appears at the heart of Emerson's lamentation in "Threnody." The child there appears, in his absence, through the emptiness of the house, the revival of spring, and the now unmet eye of a loving day that was once answered by that child:

> I see my empty house,
> I see my trees repair their boughs;
> And he, the wondrous child,
> . . . . . .
> The hyacinthine boy, for whom
> Morn might well break and April bloom,—
> The gracious boy, who did adorn
> The world whereinto he was born,
> And by his countenance repay
> The favor of the loving Day,—
> Has disappeared from the Day's eye;
> Far and wide she cannot find him;
> My hopes pursue, they cannot bind him
> (lines 9-23)

Much as with the dark and empty world of the bereaved Augustine in *Confessions* book 4, or as with the devastated world of *The Road*, the appearance of world and time here in the child's absence is grounded in a hope not only disappointed but disrupted at its core, shorn of its ground. Emerson construes that deprivation, however, in terms not of an ownership or an authorship violated but in terms of a love that must finally receive even loss and its grief as inherent to the gift that had been received. In resonance, I think, with his contention in "Experience" that from the first day our debt outruns the merit, Emerson highlights that the loss is inflicted on love, not on any possession:

57. Emerson, quoted in Richardson, 382.

Not mine,—I never called thee mine,
But Nature's heir,—if I repine,
And seeing rashly torn and moved
Not what I made, but what I loved,
Grow early old with grief that thou
Must to the wastes of Nature go,—
'T is because a general hope
Was quenched, and all must doubt and grope.
(lines 126–33)

Grounded in love, and never owned or authored by him, the singular hope of which Emerson finds himself bereft entails at bottom not a determinate expectation of this or that eventual actuality but the anticipation, opened by the child, of more life and a world to come. Because the hope at stake is hope of and for a new world within this, the only world, a hope for world's renewal or rebirth or re-creation in and through the child, the death of the child can seem a failure of the world itself:

It was not yet ripe to sustain
A genius of so fine a strain,
Who gazed upon the sun and moon
As if he came unto his own.
And pregnant with his grander thought,
Brought the old order into doubt
(lines 140–46)

The child's eyes had opened the promise, or pregnancy, of a new world such as that which the young are said, in "Experience," to owe us. The child had opened a time to come, the possibility of new possibility, a birth to new birth, and the loss therefore demands the world's resignation, both in the sense of giving up and in the sense of a resignification. The parent undergoes, in the losing—the "largest part of me" taken (l. 161)—a "true dying" that is world's resigning. ("For this losing is true dying; / This is lordly man's down-lying. / This his slow but sure reclining, Star by star his world resigning," ll. 162–65). The father's home had been made dear by the eyes in which "men read the welfare of the time to come" (l. 170), and what is thus lost is not an object or possession, not this or that discrete actuality, but the singular coming of a time, and a world, opened and sustained by the anticipation of the child—which means both the child's own anticipation of her coming world and our anticipating in and through, for and with, the child, which includes our anticipating the child's anticipation. A poignant material expression of this lost anticipation appears in Emerson's journals, immediately before Emerson writes that he "comprehend[s]s nothing of this fact but its bitterness": "The chrysalis which he brought in with care and tenderness and gave to his mother to keep is still alive, and he the most beautiful of the children of men, is not here."[58]

The loss thus makes evident—at least experientially—the mortal asynchrony that lends to love's pregnant anticipation its poignancy. In suffering the loss of the child, or any beloved, I experience the impossibility of sharing with her the loss itself and the transformations—of self and world—that the loss brings about. In Emerson's writing, and surely in his experience, these transformations are figured in the temporal terms of age and aging—which can tend in two seemingly different directions. On the one hand, as "Threnody" notes, the parent grows "early old" when his child to the wastes of nature goes. The parent, who has surely hoped, anticipated, that he would grow old in company with the child, and die before him, now undergoes an aging, intensified, that the child will never know. But on the other hand, like nature, grief makes us all children again; Emerson thus becomes, through his child's death, himself a child that his own child will never know, and never could have. In either direction, whether growing old too soon or becoming again a child, Emerson in his grieving lives through the poignant asynchrony that marks all of our mortal loves. We can thus read in Emerson's loss of Waldo the unsettling mirror of the love relations, and temporality, that structure Wendell Berry's 2000 Sabbath Poem XII, where the younger, still living, calls out to the elder, now dead, "wait, I am older now." We cannot meet one another—we cannot catch up to, or slow down for, one another—in the alterations of time and the transformations of age, and world, that we undergo through the beloved's death.[59] The beloved's death transforms me, in my age and time, in my world, in ways the beloved will never witness. I lose thus not only the beloved but also the possibility of sharing with her the transformation itself, the person I've become, and the experience of bearing, and surviving, these.

Growing old too soon, or becoming unexpectedly again a child, or doing both simultaneously and holding the two in tension, appear to be for Emerson at the heart of mortal, as of secular, experience. While Emerson can experience the tension in terms of a disappointment, he seems also to live the tension affirmatively, coming to receive grief as inherent to life's gift and its love.

58. Emerson, *Journals*, 6:166.

59. This is also a central theme of Derrida's *Aporias*, whose subtitle is "Mourir—s'attendre aux 'limites de la vérité,'" or "To die—to await one another (or oneself) at the 'limits of the truth.'"

Line 175 of "Threnody"—"Born for the future, to the future lost!"—is often said to mark a break in the chronology of the poem's composition as well as a change in its voice, suggesting both that the writing of the poem, or of grief, required time for its completion and, according to some readings, that we find in the second half of the poem a refutation of the grief and mourning that determine the first half.[60] It seems equally possible, however, that the affirmative voice in the second half does not "come to terms" with grief by overcoming it, but only highlights what the first half already entails, and what the journals can be read to signal only days after Waldo's death: that the loss must be affirmed as inherent to this exact life and its singular, inherently mortal, birth.

> Light is light which radiates,
> Blood is blood which circulates,
> Life is life which generates,
> And many-seeming life is one,—
> Wilt thou transfix and make it none?
> (lines 242–46)

The "deep Heart" that speaks from line 176 forward to these concluding lines can be read not as marking a change, in which grief is resolved or overcome, but as speaking the affirmation Emerson himself already voices in his journals, just days after the death, when he notes that "the boy had his full swing in this world; never, I think, did a child enjoy more."[61] The heart reminds the grieving voice of what its eyes already knew through the eyes of the child: that beauty and joy are not canceled but conditioned by transience and loss. In this light, the second half, and the poem's conclusion, can be read to acknowledge and affirm that tomorrow is necessarily watered with tears, that hope and sorrow share the same root. Rainbow and sunset are "built of tears and sacred flames" (l. 278), Emerson writes, and love's "tidal flow" lives only by circulation. Life's generation, which, by nature, includes the loss, is itself lost if and when we try to fix it.

60. For an astute reading that sees refutation of mourning in Emerson (and Nietzsche), see Mark Edmundson, *Towards Reading Freud: Self-Creation in Milton, Wordsworth, Emerson, and Sigmund Freud* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1990), chap. 4.

61. Emerson, *Journals*, 6:152; January 30, 1842.

Last Look

5
If one day it happens
you find yourself with someone you love
in a café at one end
of the Pont Mirabeau, at the zinc bar
where wine finds its shapes in upward opening glasses,

and if you commit then, as we did, the error
of thinking,
one day all this will only be memory,

learn to reach deeper
into the sorrows
to come—to touch
the almost imaginary bones
under the face, to hear under the laughter
the wind crying across the black stones. Kiss
the mouth
that tells you, *here,*
here is the world. This mouth. This laughter. These temple bones.

The still undanced cadence of vanishing.

6
In the light the moon
sends back, I can see in your eyes

the hand that waved once
in my father's eyes, a tiny kite
wobbling far up in the twilight of his last look:

and the angel
of all mortal things lets go the string.

7
Back you go, into your crib.

The last blackbird lights up his gold wings: *farewell.*
Your eyes close inside your head,
in sleep. Already
in your dreams the hours begin to sing.

Little sleep's-head sprouting hair in the moonlight,
when I come back
we will go out together,
we will walk out together among
the ten thousand things,
each scratched in time with such knowledge, *the wages of dying is love.*

GALWAY KINNELL

From "Little Sleep's-Head
Sprouting Hair in the Moonlight"

*

"Every lament is a love-song," asserts philosophical theologian Nicholas Wolterstorff in the final two lines of the preface to *Lament for a Son*, a rending meditation on the loss of his beloved son Eric, who died at age twenty-five while mountain climbing in the Kaisergebirge. But then he asks, "Will love-songs one day no longer be laments?"[1] The Augustinian line of Christian thinking that I have explored in the studies here reaching their end seems fairly clearly to hold that our love-songs, if true, not merely will be but must be, one day, or even already, no longer laments. That one day will be, and already is, and ever was, the day that never passes, the one about which Augustine can say to his God, "your day does not come daily but is always today, because your today does not give place to any tomorrow nor does it take the place of any yesterday" (C 11.13). Only in that day, Augustine insists, only in the "eternal present" where "both the past and the future have their beginning and their end" (C 11.11), is our love true, and happy, because then it suffers no loss or sorrow; with assured security, it reaches its end and fulfillment.

1. Nicholas Wolterstorff, *Lament for a Son* (Grand Rapids, MI: William B. Eerdmans Publishing, 1987), 6.

The power and radiance of Wolterstorff's meditation stem in no small part from its resistance to the Augustinian thinking and sensibility that take our sorrow to signal a perverse misdirection of our love. In his lament, Wolterstorff evokes a Jesus who says—quite unlike the Augustine who chastises his own son for weeping over grandmother Monica's death—"be open to the wounds of the world, mourn humanity's mourning, weep over humanity's weeping."[2] Elsewhere, in a more academic essay, "Suffering Love," he differs pointedly from what he sees, in ways coming close to those I've worked out here, to be Augustine's condemnation of our love's temporal suffering: "In short," he writes,

> what one finds in Augustine and in that long tradition of Christian piety which he helped shape is a radical and comprehensive lowering of the worth of the things of this world. In the presence of all those griefs which ensue from the destruction of that which we love, Augustine pronounces a "No" to the attachments rather than a "No" to the destruction—not a "No" to death but a "No" to love of what is subject to death. Thereby he also pronounces a "Not much" concerning the worth of the things loved. Nothing in this world has worth enough to merit an attachment which carries the potential of grief—nothing except the religious state of souls. The state of my child's soul is worth suffering love; the child's company is not.[3]

What Wolterstorff learns through parental experience sets him at odds with the Augustine who condemns the mortal sorrow of our love, and it opens him to the truth conveyed in a letter of consolation from his friend (and Dutch Catholic priest) Henri Nouwen, which is worth citing here at length for its acknowledgment of death's inherence to life and hence of the loss inherent to life's gift:

> Mortification—literally, "making death"—is what life is all about, a slow discovery of the mortality of all that is created so that we can appreciate its beauty without clinging to it as if it were a lasting possession. Our lives can indeed be seen as a process of becoming familiar with death, as a school in the art of dying. I do not mean this in a morbid way. On the contrary, when we see life constantly relativized by death, we can enjoy it for what it is: a free gift. The pictures, letters, and books of the past reveal life to us as a constant saying of farewell to beautiful places, good people, and wonderful experience. . . . All these times have passed by like friendly visitors, leaving [us] with dear memo-

2. Wolterstorff, *Lament for a Son*, 86.

3. Nicholas Wolterstorff, "Suffering Love," in *Augustine's* Confessions*: Critical Essays*, ed. William E. Mann (New York: Rowman and Littlefield Publishers, 2006), 137.

> ries but also with the sad recognition of the shortness of life. In every arrival there is a leavetaking; in each one's growing up there is a growing old; in every smile there is a tear; and in every success there is a loss. All living is dying and all celebration is mortification too.[4]

We can be struck by how well these words might fit among even those of a thinker like Derrida in his speaking—as in *Learning to Live Finally*, for example—of how he is "never more haunted by the necessity of dying than in moments of happiness and joy," and Nouwen articulates well the reasons for which Derrida might say that "to feel joy and to weep over the death that awaits are . . . the same thing."[5] Like the Derrida who notes during the final course he teaches before dying that "to become mortal" is "the great lesson to be learned, for the deaf, like me, who keep trying to learn how to become immortal,"[6] Nouwen appreciates the deep sense in which life is a school in dying, the study of becoming familiar with the strangeness of death.

To the perspective I have worked to open in the pages gathered here, the core curriculum of such a school adheres to a pedagogy of estrangement; this involves a learning, and a teaching, that cannot end, or reach completion, because they entail our becoming familiar with what is finally an ineradicable strangeness at the heart of our existence: our being touched ever more inwardly by that which remains insurmountably outward. If we ever come to believe that our learning is done, then we have not quite learned—much as in Heidegger, where what is most to be thought, or most thought provoking, is that we are not yet thinking. The *not yet* is inherent to a thinking and learning of the heart; it is not to be overcome by them. This is true also for the experience of grief, and the grief of experience. In such experience, as Emerson might teach us when he writes, "I grieve that I cannot grieve," the *not (yet)* of our grieving, our never being done with it—because it is never fully or exhaustively within our grasp or capability—expresses in its negative mode the anticipation inherent to the love from which grief stems. All love, we might say, is also fore-love, or predilection: the anticipation in which love loves the beloved only in also loving the love still to be shared. In a similar way, and contrary to common assumption, birth does not end pregnancy but gives birth to it: to be born is to enter pregnancy (*prae-*, before, *gnasci*, to be

4. Henri Nouwen, "A Letter of Consolation," cited in Wolterstorff, *Lament for a Son*, 95.

5. Jacques Derrida, *Learning to Live Finally: The Last Interview*, trans. Pascale-Anne Brault and Michael Naas (Hoboken, NJ: Melville House Publishing, 2007), 51–52; *Apprendre à vivre enfin: Entretien avec Jean Birnbaum* (Paris: Éditions Galilée, 2005), 55.

6. Jacques Derrida, *The Beast and the Sovereign*, vol. 2, trans. Geoffrey Bennington (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2011), 186.

born) because we are born to the open and ongoing possibility of birth; birth is, by nature, birth to yet more birth (for *natura*, the future participial form of *nasci*, to be born, means the things to be born; it therefore lives through the *not yet* of all birth). The stunning proximity of birth and death, which we learn through experience, has everything to do with the possibility signaled by this *not*. The joyful tears we shed at a moment of birth, for example, have the power they do because death is so clearly present as a possibility inherent to, and threatening, the birth itself;[7] and to witness the labor of dying can overwhelm us, and often likewise with tears, in just the measure that it resembles the labor of birth—but is not. The poignancy of my beloved's death may be just this: it is here that I see her birth coming finally to its end; for she is no longer yet to be born, she no longer has the possibility of being still yet to be. The end of her birth thus means that I can no longer anticipate her anticipation; I can anticipate only that I will remember it.

By contrast to the interplay of anticipation and memory that we traced in Augustine, where, as with the recitation of a psalm, anticipation is realized or fulfilled (or exhausted, consumed) in the plenitude of memory and the closure of a meaningful whole, the movement of a secular love as we have sketched it here entails the impossibility that anticipation and memory should ever fully meet thus to consummate one another, thereby overcoming or annuling through some fully present actuality the *not yet*, through which anticipation and memory live, and love. And here we might note, despite the shared resistance to Augustine, a significant difference that likely arises between the understanding of mortality, love, and learning that I have worked to develop with thinkers and writers such as Derrida, Heidegger, Emerson, and McCarthy, and the understanding of these being worked out by Wolterstorff or Nouwen: for at the end of the day, the school of which Nouwen speaks, and which Wolterstorff seems to attend, is not like ours a secular one; it is rather one that offers—through "the third day"—an education to the peace that is promised, after all, in Augustine's eternal day: a "something more," without which "this" life and world, with their inevitable death, seem hopeless. While Wolterstorff affirms, in resistance to Augustine, our mortal loves in "this" world, his love wants to say "yes" to the child but not to the death, as if the death were not inherent to the child's life; his love wants, therefore, the "something more" that another epistolary passage from Nouwen points to, suggesting that our hope, finally, must be a resurrection to life beyond "this" inevitably short life:

7. For an insightful treatment of this and related issues, see Colleen Windham-Hughes, "The Horizon of Birth," PhD diss., University of California, Santa Barbara, 2010.

> If the God who revealed life to us, and whose only desire is to bring us to life, loved us so much that he wanted to experience with us the total absurdity of death, then—yes, then there must be hope; then there must be something more than death; then there must be a promise that is not fulfilled in our short existence in this world; then leaving behind the ones you love, the flowers and the trees, the mountains and the oceans, the beauty of art and music, and all the exuberant gifts of life cannot be just the destruction and cruel end of things; then indeed we have to wait for the third day.[8]

The heritage of learning to which a sorrowfully joyful love like Derrida's belongs, and which I have essayed to trace constructively in these past pages, from Emerson and Nietzsche through Heidegger to Cavell and McCarthy, is one that, while affirming that "here or nowhere is the whole fact," and while thereby letting go of hope for the peace of an eternal day, does not for all that fall into the despair implied by Nouwen's "just" (destruction and cruel end). For this "just" suggests that our mortal finitude is a failure to be corrected and overcome rather than the gift itself. In a school of secular studies, it is an error to think (as one does in light of the third day that yields an eternal day) that "one day this will *only* be memory," for it is a mortal love, in the anticipation of memory, and in the reach of sorrow, whose kiss gives to me, here, the world.

A question that I have explored in other work concerning Jean-Luc Marion's compelling construal of the self as *adonné*—given to itself as a self only in being given over first, in and as response, to that which it receives as given—is whether and how he may end up counting finitude itself as failure, which can seem to be the case at points in his characterization of the inevitable limitation and delay of my every response to the givenness that gives me to myself. While that limitation and delay are constitutive and insurmountable, they appear often to be couched in a language or logic of inadequacy, humiliation, and remonstration.[9] While Marion intends, even in his reading of Augustine, to affirm the temporality of deferral as inherent to selfhood, one can sense in the language of failure something of the ideal that Augustine associates with the angels whose response to God's Word, recall, is full and immediate (rather than inescapably partial and delayed). The logic of this angelic ideal surely stands behind Augustine's own sorrow over the delay of his conversion—as if he had learned to love a bit too late, or as if we are not always, in some sense,

8. Nouwen, 87.

9. For a fuller development of this question, worked out prior to Marion's book on Augustine, see my "Blindness and the Decision to See: On Revelation and Reception in Jean-Luc Marion," in *Counter-Experiences: Reading Jean-Luc Marion*, ed. Kevin Hart (Notre Dame, IN: University of Notre Dame Press, 2007).

late in our learning. But if love and its learning call necessarily, inevitably, for time, then delay in itself is no failure but a condition of their experience.

In the poem of Galway Kinnell that I have excerpted in opening these concluding pages, he recalls the last look of his now-dead father while speaking to his daughter, who cannot yet hear or understand what he is saying—not only because she is an infant or toddler, and sleeping, but also because she has not yet followed her father to his grave. Within the mortal asynchrony that punctuates all of our love, and here especially the intergenerational, he anticipates walking out together with his daughter to find in the world, and thus to learn, a knowledge: that dying is not a payment we earn for sin but rather that through which, or thanks to which, we receive our loves as we do.[10] We should note a slight but significant revision within the poem's history: in its first appearance in 1971, within *The Book of Nightmares*,[11] the "ten thousand things" that teach us are scratched "too late" with the knowledge that the wages of dying is love. In the version I have cited, as it appears in 2001, the learning, though inherently delayed, is no longer "too late" but has become "in time."[12] The revision seems to me right, for what else does love do, or learn, if not to receive our being ever too late as being also just in time? (Is there anything, after all, more fundamental, or more challenging, for the teacher, parent, or lover to give to the student, child, or beloved, than time?)

While thus diverging sharply from the angelic ideal of Augustine, the secular studies I have pursued in these pages, in their thinking about the world at heart, owe no less a decisive debt to Augustinian thinking about the constitution of the self through a movement of love that binds me inwardly to the outward, and so intimately that the inward and the outward prove indiscrete. Building on the heritage traced, I have proposed an understanding of secular existence in terms of the love that bears it, and likewise an understanding of world and time as opened and sustained, carried, by love. Heidegger himself, whose analysis of worldly existence remains among the singular achievements of twentieth-century philosophy, learned fairly directly from Augustine to understand the temporalizing of our existence as a form of affection, and from out of such temporalizing, he was able to see love as a fundamental mood of philosophy.

10. Contrast Augustine, citing Paul (Romans 6:23): "and death is evil because it is the wages of sin" (*City of God* 13.5).

11. Galway Kinnell, *The Book of Nightmares* (Boston: Houghton Mifflin, 1971).

12. Galway Kinnell, *A New Selected Poems* (Boston: Houghton Mifflin, 2000; First Mariner Books edition, 2001).

This debt to Augustine can be seen, among other places, in a seminar that Heidegger dedicates in 1930–31 to the question of time as explored by Augustine in book 11 of his *Confessions.*[13] Much as *Being and Time* attends to the world-disclosing role both of mood and of practical life, which Heidegger takes to precede and found any (hence derivative) theoretical or scientific cognition of the world and its various ontic regions, so this 1930–31 seminar on time in Augustine highlights the priority of affection and everyday life in grounding our experiential understanding of time, which is an understanding that we successfully deploy prior to—and despite the eventual stumbling of—our theoretical attempt to define time. As Heidegger emphasizes in the seminar, Augustine works toward this affective construal of time through a mode of questioning that is itself driven by affection, in at least two senses. First, Augustine *feels* that he knows what time is insofar as, in the practices of his everyday life, he does effectively, and indispensably, measure it, even though he is at a loss when, upon reflection, he cannot define time theoretically. Augustine's questioning into time is driven by the "and yet" that persists in the gap between his failure to define time theoretically when he reflects upon it and the feeling he has that he already understands time in his practical everyday life.

The central paradox that checks Augustine when he reflects upon time is its seeming nonbeing and, hence, the question of *what* we measure *when* we measure, as we seem in fact to do, various durational spans or intervals of time. The paradox appears when, in his reflective effort to define time, Augustine notes that its main modes or tenses—past, present, and future—are all marked by some not or negation. For the future time is defined, precisely, as the time that is not yet. The past time is defined as the time that is no longer. And the present time, which by definition now is, can be—as time—only insofar as it passes away or tends toward not being. For if the present time, now, did not pass away and cease to be, if it persisted forever in the present presence of its being, then it would not be time but eternity. What, then, do we measure when we measure times, if the future is not yet, and past is no longer, and the present in its definitive passing has no duration? Augustine's famous response to this question, itself already driven by feeling, is found likewise in the realm of affection. Because the times themselves seem in fact not to provide the durational length or stretch that any measurement of "longer" and "shorter" time periods would require, Augustine reasons,

13. Martin Heidegger, *Seminare Platon-Aristoteles-Augustinus,* in *Gesamtausgabe,* vol. 83 (Frankfurt am Main: Vittorio Klostermann, 2012). Hereafter cited parenthetically as GA 83, page number.

temporal measurement must consist in a stretching out or distention of his own mind or soul, a *distentio animi.* As he writes in book 11, "it seems to me that time is nothing else than a stretching out in length, but of what, I know not . . . if it be not of the mind itself" (C 11.26). Because it is affected by things in their passing, the mind can register or retain such passing in memory, even as it anticipates what will come to pass from the future and as it attends to the present in its definitive coming and going. Stretching out in this way through the interplay of anticipation, attention, and retention, it is, at bottom, the mind in its affection that temporalizes—in a manner, as Heidegger makes clear, closely akin to the threefold ecstasy of Dasein's primordial temporality in *Being and Time* (where I stand out temporally both from myself and in relation to myself through the inextricable interplay of my having-been or past-ness, my futurity as the yet-to-be or not-yet, and the presence of my present, which emerges in and through these two).

Attentive to the confessional character of Augustine's text, according to which its main aim is not to convey knowledge but to turn the one who writes and speaks through it toward God, Heidegger highlights the fact that Augustine's persistence in a questioning driven by feeling not only leads to an insight about the affective ground and character of lived temporality; it also, along the way, turns Augustine affectively toward the God he is addressing in and through the questioning. Underscoring the role of affection both in Augustine's questioning about the nature of time and in his response to that questioning, wherein he comes to suspect that time *is* affection, Heidegger arrives with Augustine at an understanding both of time and of philosophical questioning—which unavoidably takes time—as movements not only of affection but indeed of love, which Heidegger will thus name and understand as a fundamental mood of philosophy.

If Augustine's asking after time, his questioning, is driven by the persistence of a feeling in the face of theoretical enigma, that feeling turns him affectively toward God in a movement where questioning coincides with requesting, a movement of (Augustine's) love for (God's) love. That questioning itself, Heidegger rightly notes, and the request it entails, both stem, furthermore, from the experience of the self itself as question—Augustine's famous *mihi quaestio factus sum,* "I have become a question to myself." Augustine does not really begin to question until he becomes a question to himself; and thus the questioning movement of loving affection is conditioned by the self's opaqueness to itself.

The centrality of questioning to Heidegger's interpretation of Augustine on time is set into relief by Heidegger's judging at several points in his seminar notes that chapter 22 of *Confessions* book 11 is the book's most decisive

chapter. This judgment is significant because that chapter actually says little, or even nothing, explicitly about time; it involves instead one of Augustine's requests to God that God aid Augustine in his questioning. Heidegger describes the chapter as yielding a "new expression *of the* fundamental experience as such [*der* Grunderfahrung schlechthin], not in relation to the time-relation, but now with regard to myself as questioning" (GA 83, 54), here citing, as a gloss on chapter 22, Augustine's request to God in chapter 18, "*sine me [. . .] amplius quaerere*," "let me question more fully," which Heidegger translates to mean "let me be a real questioner [laß mich ein wirklicher Fragender sein]" (GA 83, 54). The request as it actually comes to expression in chapter 22, however, which Heidegger's notes go on to point out, is phrased more explicitly in terms of love than of questioning: "*Amare*," Heidegger himself writes, and then, quoting Augustine from chapter 22, "*da quod amo: amo enim*" (GA 83, 55), "give what I love, for I do love": "'give me what I love,' give that to me to know—*as revealed* [*als Offenbares*] (not so that thereby I should no longer need to love, but exactly the *amandum*)" (GA 83, 55). "Let me question more fully" Heidegger takes to be a petition equivalent to that which says "Give me what I love"—and he glosses the "give me what I love" with the single word: "ex-tentio."[14]

The experience of oneself as questioning, wherein one is ex-tended in a movement beyond oneself, is here also the experience of a requesting that is a movement of love toward love. Such a questioning, in and through love, Heidegger goes on to suggest, belongs inherently to the time about which, and through which alone, we question. As a "way of existing," time and our seeking after time, inquiring into it, belong together (GA 83, 70). The reference to love here may help us see, about questioning, that which, without the reference, we might not see: just as love, in coming toward what it seeks—the one to be loved, the *amandum*—does not end but indeed finds its very life and growth, its endless opening to ever more life; so questioning, at heart, does not aim to end or come to a close through definitive answers, or solutions, but rather finds its very life in a recurrent renewal or rebirth. This belonging together of time and love in the ecstatic movement of questioning and requesting goes both ways: time is, Heidegger posits, "the possibility of

14. Then referencing *Confessions*, book 11, chaps. 29 and 30, where Augustine sketches out his distinction between temporal *distentio* as dissipating distraction by the multiple and fleeting pleasures of the world—the perverse temporality of sin—and temporal *distentio* as the *ex-tentio* and *intentio* of a gathering attraction to the one and eternal God, or the temporality of conversion: a difference in Augustine clearly influential for the much discussed distinction in *Being and Time* between inauthentic and authentic modes of existence.

the standing and holding, where what I love gives itself" (GA, 83, 73), and "my asking-after-time," as he continues to explain, is "the *possibility* of the *gathered stretching-out-from-oneself* [*des gesammelten Sichhinaustreckens*] toward the one and eternal that love itself is (amor amoris tui)" (GA 83, 78). Heidegger here goes on to cite the favored understanding of love that he attributes to Augustine—thus (for the record) addressing the question not only in a private love letter to one student but also in a public teaching addressed to a world of students: "*Amo . . . volo ut sis*," he writes in his notes, and then immediately glosses: "the letting-be of being gives me the being that is, that *authentically* is [*Volo ut sis*: Seinlassen des Seienden gibt mir *das* Seiende, das ist, das *eigentlich* ist]" (GA 83, 78).

Able to see in and through Augustine that a questioning about and through time amounts to a movement of love for love—"*amore amoris tui facio istuc*," as Augustine writes in *Confessions*, chapter 1 (cited in GA 83, 78), "I do (or make) this (confession) out of love for your love"—Heidegger takes the "authentic meaning" of such questioning, and its requesting, to be, as he puts it in his concluding notes for the seminar, that we miss the essential, and "we are mistaken about the essence of being" insofar as "in philosophizing we do not intend and let rule the fundamental mood" (GA 83, 80–81). And he goes on to sum up "this fundamental mood of philosophizing out of the essence of man: letting-be, *questioning releasement*, gathered restraint of the heart [Seinlassen, *fragende Gelassenheit*, gesammelte Verhaltenheit des Herzens], which does not roam about through meager questions and always available ready-made chatter" (GA 83, 81).

The restraint or reserve Heidegger speaks of here, the reticence of the heart—what we might even translate as its discretion—entails the heart's keeping quiet or holding back so as to give place and time for what, and who, are yet to come. While an Hegelian inheritance of Augustine's thinking about time may share with Augustine the conviction that human experience does, or even must, eventually catch up with itself in the fullness, and fulfillment, of time, and hence in a completion of the educational work we undergo through time, the Heideggerian inheritance of this thinking of time—which is also, he clearly holds, a thinking of the heart—would foreclose the possibility that human experience ever catch up fully with itself so as to complete or close down its learning. In and through such learning we never fully or finally catch up with ourselves: we ourselves, both individually and collectively, live creatively between the ever evolving and never fully consummated anticipation of who we (and those we love) will be and, then, the recurrently revised and never completed remembrance of who we (and those we love) have been. Individually, collectively, and also thus generationally, we never turn out to

be exactly or fully who we anticipated, or who we remembered, and thus we are likewise never done revisiting and revising what our having-been means and will have meant. The interplay of anticipation and remembrance, within the life of one individual, between the lives of many individuals, and across generations, is kept both alive and irreducibly open by the ex-tensions of love that give us to ourselves by giving us to others. In the openness of that interplay, our questioning, and its learning, can know no end; and in this sense, the heart of thinking, or a thinking of the heart, as *interior intimo meo et superior summo meo*, does follow an apophatic logic, according to which, if we believe our questioning and learning are done, then we have not learned or questioned. Whatever, and whomever, I manage to reach through my learning, there will remain something still yet more interior, and yet more distant; or, if I have definitively reached it, it is not the intimate. Jean-Luc Nancy suggests something close to this in *Adoration*: "All intimacy is 'interior intimo meo.' Being the most profound, it is also what, for its part, is bottomless. For Augustine and in the long tradition beginning with him, 'God' will have been the name of what is bottomless."[15]

While diverging from it in some regard, what I understand here by the intergenerational movement of anticipation and remembrance comes quite close to Robert Harrison's analysis of inheritance, especially in his recent turn to the role of love in world-formation. While Harrison's emphasis on continuity, preservation, perpetuation, and permanence within the logic of inheritance may lead him both to understate the excessive, unsettling, disruptive, and even violent dynamics that inheritance surely also entails, and while his aversion to the thoughtless chatter of the overly self-assured citizens of the "Borg collective" may, though understandable, involve a nostalgia that forecloses the more creative possibilities that could be opened by new media and other technology, I do find myself in deep agreement with Harrison's central contention that "it takes a great deal of love—what Hannah Arendt, borrowing a phrase from Saint Augustine, called *amor mundi*—to take the well-being of the world to heart and commit oneself to assuring its continuity through the generations. It is that love, and that love alone, that takes custody of the world's future."[16]

Today, the question of the world's future, and hence of a love that might

15. Jean-Luc Nancy, *Adoration: The Deconstruction of Christianity 2*, trans. John McKeane (New York: Fordham University Press, 2013), 75.

16. Robert Pogue Harrison, *Juvenescence: A Cultural History of Our Age* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2014), 117.

take the world's well-being to heart, is surely inseparable from those technoscientific forces whose radical and rapid development and spread rightly trouble Harrison, as they did the Heidegger on whom Harrison draws deeply. To answer the demands of the day today will surely mean reckoning not only with the ways that technology now shapes inescapably the time and the tempo of our everyday life, or the historical work of memory, but also the ways in which our technology, along with our growing numbers, now shapes even our geological age (which some would rename the anthropocene). As Harrison's close friend and colleague Michel Serres has richly shown, our technoscientific humanity today reshapes even such global realities as the weather (in French, *le temps*) in such a way that we reshape also, fundamentally, the time (*temps*) of our living—and dying. And while the technological and scientific aspects of such global human work might lead one to assumptions about its nonreligious character, I would contend that it involves rather a secularity—a bind both to the days in their passing and to the ages in their depth—that should be counted also fundamentally religious. For as Serres convincingly holds, the work of shaping and sustaining the time of our existence may be understood as a defining trait of religious life itself—exemplified for him in the ongoing work of the monks who do not simply follow or find themselves "within" the flow of some neutral, pregiven time, but who rather themselves open and weave, punctuate and sustain their shared life-time through the ordering, within a tradition, of their work and study, prayer and liturgy: their being together, across generations, in the world. Binding themselves faithfully to their life practices, the monks weave or tie together the time and tempo of their living within a practice of religion as the attentive gathering, a reading and rereading, whose opposite, Serres reminds us, is not atheism or unbelief, nor the rationality of technoscience, but negligence: a deficit of care or of love—of our diligence—not only for the social but also for the natural contracts that bind us to our worlds, and one another, by weaving their times and ages.[17]

If we come to see that the opposite of religion is not unbelief or atheism, nor the scientific reason and technological power with which these are often associated, but rather negligence, then perhaps we might begin to see a work of religion in those forms of diligence that, by countering our negligence, awaken recurrently to the demands of the day each day. These begin with the everyday demand of making a day, but they also ask our acknowledgment

17. Giorgio Agamben likewise finds religion's opposite in negligence within an analysis of profanation. See "In Praise of Profanation" in Agamben, *Profanations*, trans. Jeff Fort (New York: Zone Books, 2007).

that such a day, today, thanks to an intergenerational being-with now materially incarnate in our climate, is inseparable from days yet unknown, and from those still to be born—those, that is, to recall Rilke, there are to love. But just as the everyday demand of making a day often goes, in its very everydayness, unnoticed and untended, because too familiar, so too do we ignore our own neglect of a future whose automatic coming we too often too securely assume. As our preceding analyses have repeatedly suggested, if we grow attentive to the logic and life of negligence, we can see that a blindness to our negligence, a forgetting or neglect of it, is inherent to the negligence itself. Its logic follows that of the alienation from which we can, sometimes, awake through the pedagogy of estrangement: a reawakening or rebirth, to and by, the strangeness and fragility that are learned through a thinking of the heart.

If in Augustine the questioning movement of love for love transpires between the temporal soul and its eternal God, who promises the soul a today when time—and its losses—will in some deep sense cease, so to yield eternal life in its assured security, the temporality and thinking that we have explored in these pages not only with McCarthy and Heidegger but also with forebears like Nietzsche or his teacher Emerson, and heirs like Derrida and his students, suggest an intergenerational stretching-out of love toward love that is a stretching out of mortal fragility toward mortal fragility. It is also, in the generational play of love between the dead, the living, and those to come, a movement of time speaking to time: our time or age, our day, speaking to (and from) times and ages and days we cannot fully know or comprehend, even as we both inherit and bestow them. But if we cannot in that movement securely know or comprehend, we can, or we must, learn. And in that learning we can ask what it might mean, today, to answer negligence with diligence, or to convert our love, in all its unknowing, into love for another day, and for those, unknown, still to be born.

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