extreme sense of spiritual desolation in the absence of those healing 'waters' that are supposed to renew and regenerate the 'Waste Land.' There is, as Perlman himself quotes from Eliot, only 'dry sterile thunder *without* rain.' The modern spiritual landscape is one of exhaustion and drought; there is a desperate 'thirst for the waters of faith and healing,' but there is also no indication of 'resurrection or renewal.'[85] The ancient fertility and vegetation rituals with their esoteric wisdom, embodying a 'harmony of human culture with the natural environment' have been sundered because all cultures and traditions have in the modern world merged and mingled, resulting in 'a breakdown of forms and the irrevocable loss of that sense of absoluteness which seems necessary to a robust culture.'[86] Ancient wisdom simply brings 'no quickening to the human spirit.'[87] The modern 'Waste Land' remains spiritually unregenerate, incapable of renewing and so recapturing that 'extreme sense of the unity of life' that could make of 'The Waste Land' a site of healing.

Even though Eliot will speak of an unregenerate 'Waste Land,' his poem is not unambiguously divided against this 'Waste' and this mood of desolation. Eliot will in his own life demonstrate an admiration for the posited cultural integrity of past cultural forms, and hold a conservative political outlook; however, this was not embodied in a conservative longing to restore those cultures and traditions that possessed this 'extreme sense of the unity of life.'[88] As he expounds in 'Little Gidding' from his *Four Quartets*:

> It is not to ring the bell backward
>
> Nor is it an incantation

[85] *Ibid*, p. 94.
[86] *Ibid*, p. 90.
[87] *Ibid*, p. 91.
[88] On Eliot's Christian perspective, see T.S. Eliot. *The Idea of a Christian Society*. London: Faber, 1939. On Eliot's politics, see Anthony Quinton. *The Politics of Imperfection: The religious and secular traditions of conservative thought in England from Hooker to Oakeshott*. London: Faber and Faber, 1978.

The Other Shore

On politics and 'spirit' in Fredy Perlman's *Against His-story, Against Leviathan*

Mark Huba

2015

ston's book on the grail legend: *From Ritual to Romance*.'[80] In this text, which Eliot considers so important to 'The Waste Land,' Weston explores the affinities between the medieval Christian grail legend and ancient fertility and vegetation rituals.[81] For Weston, 'The Waste Land' in the legends of the Grail Quest is a land of desolation, of an unregenerate nature that has fallen, in a mysterious fashion, to the very same sickness and infirmity of the land's ruler.[82] In its ancient form, 'The Waste Land' again refers to a frigid and unregenerate landscape; though, it is here also considered an inherent part of the alternating rhythmic movements of Nature: death, decay, and the desolate, wintry frigidity of the earth out of which is made possible rebirth, regeneration and a 'renewed life.'[83] 'The Waste Land' is not then a malevolent force to be banished and excised; it too is to be recognised and accepted as the other side of Life. Thus, in both instances, the quest for the Holy Grail and the spiritual journey of ancient ritualists to 'free the waters' ultimately entails human participation in the healing of the earth, and, in equal part, a spiritual healing of the self through personal initiation into these esoteric mysteries of death and decay—of an inner and outer 'Waste Land.'

For F.R. Leavis, Eliot's poem is a modern re-imagining of 'The Waste Land' that again marries this image of an inner, spiritual desolation with a worldly image of decay and ruination.[84] Perhaps the most prominent feature of this modern re-telling is an ever more

[80] T.S. Eliot. 'The Waste Land,' in Michael North (ed.). *The Waste Land: Authoritative text, contexts, criticism*. New York: W.W. Norton & Company, 2001, p. 21.

[81] Jessie L. Weston. *From Ritual to Romance*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1920. For a contemporary reassessment of Weston's thesis, see Peter Meister. *Arthurian Legend and Christianity: Notes from the Twentieth Century*. Hoboken: Taylor and Francis, 2013.

[82] Weston. *From Ritual to Romance*, pp. 16–18.

[83] *Ibid*, p. 33.

[84] F.R. Leavis. 'The Wasteland,' in Hugh Kenner (ed.). *T.S. Eliot: A collection of critical essays*. Englewood Cliffs: Prentice-Hall, 1962, p. 89.

> centre of a dying world.'[75] As Stephen Spender further details, this imagery of a wrecked and ravaged land of waste established Eliot's poem, amidst a wide number of critics and readers, as a profound indictment of Western civilisation in the aftermath of World War I.[76] While Eliot himself refuted this reading of his work, stating his poem was not 'social criticism' but 'a personal and wholly insignificant grouse against life,' he too never refuted these interpretations of a poem that gave apparent voice to 'the disillusionment of a generation'—and, in Perlman's case, generations to come as well.[77]

Still, 'The Waste Land' in Eliot's poem is possessed of an express spiritual symbolism. As Sheeba Azhar and Syed Abid Ali comment, this 'waste' in Eliot's title is not simply that of 'wars [,] devastation and bloodshed, but the emotional and spiritual sterility of western man.'[78] The physical waste of these devastated urban landscapes is inscribed into the bodies and selves of its inhabitants: 'the filth without insinuates defilement within.'[79] Even if Perlman adopts this 'Waste Land' in a predominantly literal fashion, his incorporation of this 'waste' into his own spiritual 'vision' opens his work to comparisons with such symbolism. As Eliot writes in the appended 'Notes' section for his work, 'the plan and a good deal of the incidental symbolism of the poem were suggested by Miss Jessie L. We-

[75] Maud Ellmann. 'A Sphinx Without a Secret,' in Michael North (ed.). *The Waste Land: Authoritative text, contexts, criticism.* New York: W.W. Norton & Company, 2001, p. 260.

[76] Stephen Spender. *T.S. Eliot.* New York: Penguin Books, 1976, p. 119.

[77] T.S. Eliot. 'Eliot on *The Waste* Land,' in Michael North (ed.). *The Waste Land: Authoritative text, contexts, criticism.* New York: W.W. Norton & Company, 2001, p. 112.

[78] Sheeba Azhar and Syed Abid Ali. 'Incorporation of Absurd and Symbolic Elements in Eliot's *The Waste Land.*' *Language in India.* Vol. 13 No. 3, 2013, p. 475.

[79] Ellmann. 'A Sphinx Without a Secret,' p. 260.

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any means the most popular, poem of the twentieth century.'[72] Attesting to its poetic import for *Against His-story, Against Leviathan*, Perlman borrows three lines from Eliot's 'The Waste Land' at the very inception of his essay:

> Here one can neither stand nor lie nor sit
>
> There is not even silence in the mountains But dry sterile thunder without rain…[73] Following the quotation, Perlman declares '*This is the waste land*: England, America, Russia, China, Israel, France…And we are here as victims, or as spectators, or as perpetrators of tortures, massacres, poisonings, manipulations, despoliations.'[74] As with his historical rendering of the 'Age of Gold,' Perlman again reads 'The Waste Land' in a quite literal fashion in association with his own time of environmental devastation and violent expropriations, even if there remains an evident interest in the affective resonances of Eliot's poetic symbolism: the distress of a fevered and frenzied restlessness; the sound of that dreadful thunder which brings no promise of rain, but only the threat of something far more menacing; and, of course, the associations of 'waste' with 'shit' and excrement. Certainly, as Maud Ellman notes, Eliot's poem is replete with images of an actual *land* of waste: of 'hooded hordes swarming over endless plains,' of 'bomb sites or vacant lots…where ancient women gather the wreckage of Europe,' of 'urban waste' and decaying cities that have become 'the ravaged

[72] Michael North. 'Preface,' in Michael North (ed.). *The Waste Land: Authoritative text, contexts, criticism*. New York: W.W. Norton & Company, 2001, p. ix.
[73] Perlman. *Against His-story, Against Leviathan*, p. 1.
[74] Emphasis added. *Ibid*, p. 1.

left but the dirty realities.'[70] As Perlman writes also of the 'Age of Gold' in the ancient Greek poetry of Hesiod, he 'remembered only that the past was golden compared to his own age.'[71] 'The strait' does not in this sense reference any 'narrow, difficult, and winding way' of rediscovering the 'kingdom of God' within or 'golden age' within for that matter. It suggests a very real historical barrier to any form of spiritual renewal in that modernity is estranged from the spiritual wholeness of a distant 'other shore.'

Here again, Perlman's extreme pessimism resurfaces, and this pessimism continues to be so extreme because his primitivism has literalised an esoteric, spiritual reality by conflating the 'golden age' with an actual historical reality existing 'before' and 'outside' Leviathan. Perlman's primitivism here serves to deprive the present of all spiritual meaning by purposefully confining all meaningfulness to a literal 'Age of Gold' so pure and radiant that these modern shores by comparison are little more than an abject mockery ruled over by the spiritual darkness of Ahriman and the 'synthetic' artifice of 'Leviathanic excrement.' Indeed, such incongruities extend beyond these problems with Perlman's 'vision' of the two shores and 'the strait.' These problems emerge also in another prominent spiritual symbol in Perlman's essay, one that accords more with these modern shores than the 'other shore:' 'The Waste Land.'

Section Two: The Waste Land

'The Waste Land' is a reference to the title of the 1922 poem by Anglo-American poet T.S. Eliot. In the words of Michael North, it is a work considered to be 'the most prominent, though not by

[70] *Ibid*, p. 253.
[71] *Ibid*, p. 77.

Abstract

This thesis is a critical textual analysis of the imbrication of politics and spirituality in Fredy Perlman's *Against His-story, Against Leviathan*, a foundational work of primitivism. This study is the first prolonged critical examination of Perlman's work and the ideas of a single primitivist thinker. In this thesis, I detail how Perlman reads his radical political concerns, his opposition to the State or Leviathan and 'Western civilisation,' through the esoteric framework of a spiritual 'vision' replete with references to the human 'spirit' and numerous spiritual luminaries.

As I maintain, because Perlman politicises spirituality, his work binds 'spirit' to the foundational dualistic antagonisms and binary oppositions of Western political thought, exemplified by his primitivist inversion of Thomas Hobbes' conflict between the 'state of nature' and Leviathan. His work similarly finds inspiration in the antagonistic spiritual symbolism of dualist religions within the Western Judaeo-Christian tradition. This, I argue, leads to numerous contradictions insofar as Perlman presents his work in radical opposition to 'Western civilisation,' whereas these dualistic antagonisms highlight Perlman's identity with certain maligned aspects of Western political and religious thought. As I further consider, this is doubly problematic because there are subtle intimations of another conception of 'spirit' in Perlman's work, taken from an alternative current of Western thought, emphasising reconciliation and relationship, dialectic and dialogue between opposites.

This problematic is explored across three parts. In Part One, I examine the lineaments of Perlman's spiritual 'vision' through ideas of spiritual renewal. Detailing the symbolic and temporal oppositions on which he bases renewal, I consider how Perlman exacerbates the spiritual malaise of what he terms the 'Western spirit,' and how he invokes a simulacrum of spiritual renewal through recourse to an apocalyptic catastrophism. In Part Two, I turn to Perlman's understanding of spiritual transformation. Attending to his

dualistic and politicised celebration of Life against Death, I note how Perlman defines spiritual transformation through the return to an immanent monistic unity, a position that elides the reconciliatory image of transformation as 'resurrection.' In Part Three, I turn to questions of 'spirit' and political resistance. I argue that Perlman's 'spirited' resistance reflects the warring politico-spiritual antagonisms he opposes, despite the appearance in his text of spiritual influences that communicate a gentler form of social change.

Declaration

This thesis contains no material which has been accepted for the award of any other degree or diploma at any university or equivalent institution and that, to the best of my knowledge and belief, this thesis contains no material previously published or written by another person, except where due reference is made in the text of the thesis.

Acknowledgements

I wish to express gratitude to my supervisor, Robert Sparrow, for his commitment to this project and his guidance throughout the composition of this thesis. Many thanks also to my associate supervisors, Michael Janover and Alison Ross, whose support has been instrumental in strengthening the critical direction of my work. Thanks also to my family, and particularly my mum, Michelle Huba, for her emotional support during the many ups and downs of this project. On a sombre note, I lost two very dear friends during the completion of my thesis: our family dog, Toby, and my sister's horse, Dynasty. These wise animals taught me so many important lessons, and their presence in my life will be remembered always. If I may, I would like to dedicate my thesis to both Toby and Dynasty.

been widening for 'three hundred generations' instead of three to six thousand years—which stands in accord with his aversion to chronology—and he may put a hyphen in the word 'His-story' for poetic effect, but the historical, temporal implications are the same. 'The strait' divides off 'our age' from the 'state of nature' because of the linear movements of historical time, or what Perlman also derogatively calls 'progress' and 'His-story.' The 'other shore,' 'state of nature,' 'golden age,' or 'Age of Gold' are not simply loosely conceived renderings of spiritual grace—the 'kingdom of God within'—much as 'our age' of Ahrimanic darkness is not simply a figurative byword for spiritual ignorance. The 'other shore' is in Perlman's primitivist conception an actual historical reality existing 'before' and 'outside' Western civilisation; and, 'our age' is literally *our age*, a modern world commensurate with Perlman's own time.

Perlman has more aptly collapsed into each other both these esoteric and historical renderings of the 'golden age,' 'state of nature,' and 'kingdom of God.' This confusion of the literal and the esoteric is, of course, the basis for his dismissal of Eliade's rediscovery of sacred 'vestiges' and 'analogies.' If it were simply a question of an inner 'golden age' or 'kingdom of God within,' then 'analogies' and 'vestiges' of this 'golden age' or 'kingdom' could indeed be rediscovered and renewed in any age or in any place—via 'the strait.' This would have proven the basis for a comparable 'openness to the flexibility of the sacred.' Perlman's primitivism does not however support this interpretation. His position is, in fact, far more inflexible and rigid than Eliade's position. He has, in contradistinction, claimed that there are no meaningful 'analogies' and 'vestiges' left in this world. Authentic, meaningful spirituality is located on the 'other shore' in those ancient communities that were capable of existing 'in a cosmic context;' and, this 'other shore' is cut off from modernity by the widening of 'the strait,' by historical, linear time, by 'progress.' As he writes, 'The idyl is gone now. Nothing is

into a symbol concerning inner spiritual renewal, if ultimately attesting to the sheer difficulty of following this 'hard road.'

Certainly, Perlman does refer to a 'kingdom of God within,' much as he speaks of numerous mystics, seers, prophets and visionaries within 'Western civilisation' who have, with evident difficulty, rediscovered their 'inner light,' their 'living spirit,' their 'golden age' within.[67] These are the mystical 'An-archists' who have torn away their Leviathanic 'armor,' a process of self-transformation that I will be discussing in greater depth in the second part of this thesis. These are spiritual luminaries who, in Perlman's symbolism, crossed over 'the strait' and restored the lost spiritual wholeness of the 'state of nature' within themselves and thus reattained an Edenic bliss. Indeed, despite his derogatory portrayal of and pessimistic conclusions about 'our age,' Perlman will at the very conclusion of his essay refer to 'An-archic and pantheistic dancers' who have ventured over 'the strait' to the 'other shore' because they 'no longer sense the artifice [of Leviathan] and its linear His-story as All.'[68] Perlman may therefore conclude that humanity's 'inner light' is 'eclipsed by something dark, but it continues to burn, and its flames shoot out where they are least expected.'[69]

While I can recognise these esoteric implications of 'the strait' in *Against His-story, Against Leviathan*, I too would maintain that there are limits to this interpretation. The major problem with Clark's reading concerns this reduction of 'the strait' to a largely esoteric, inner spiritual reality. As with Watson's 'golden age' within, this figurative reading fails to acknowledge that 'the strait' possesses quite blunt literal meanings as well, since it refers equally as much to a historical scission between the 'other shore' and these modern shores. Perlman may speak of a 'strait' that has

[67] See in this thesis, p. 118

[68] Perlman. *Against His-story, Against Leviathan*, p. 302.

[69] *Ibid*, p. 299.

Introduction

This thesis presents a critical textual engagement with Fredy Perlman's 1982 essay, *Against His-story, Against Leviathan.*[1] This textual critique is particularly concerned with the tensions and contradictions that arise from Perlman's attempts to translate 'spirit' and spirituality through his background in Left-wing radical politics and the political more generally.[2] Although Perlman's text is a relatively obscure work in the context of modern radical political thought, it has been described as 'one of the most significant and influential anarchic texts of the last few decades.'[3] Indeed, it is one of the founding texts of primitivism, anarcho-primitivism, or anti-civilisation theory. Emerging out of debates during the 1970s and 1980s within the Detroit-based antiauthoritarian journal, *The Fifth Estate*—where a truncated version of Perlman's text was first published—primitivism decries the environmental destruction and authoritarian consequences of the 'technological structure of civilisation' while promoting a sympathetic 'reappraisal of the indige-

[1] Fredy Perlman. *Against His-Story, Against Leviathan!* Detroit: Black & Red, 1983.

[2] I have adopted Philip Sheldrake's 'summary definition' of spirituality. For Sheldrake, ''spirituality' stands for lifestyles and practices that, explicitly or implicitly, portray a vision of human existence and of how our human spirits may achieve their fullest potential.' Spirituality is 'an aspirational approach to the meaning and conduct of human life whether this is seen in religious terms or in non-religious terms.' Philip Sheldrake. *Spirituality*. London: Bloomsbury Academic, 2014, p. 1.

[3] AK Press quoted in Aufheben. 'Civilisation and its Latest Discontents: A review of *Against His-story, Against Leviathan!*' *The Anarchist Library*, theanarchistlibrary.org/library/aufhebencivilization-and-its-latest-discontents-a-review-of-against-history-against-leviathan

nous world and the character of the primitive.'[4] Despite the protestations of 'reasoned' primitivist David Watson concerning 'simplistic legends of a coherent, primitivist Golden Age at FE [*The Fifth Estate*] overseen by Fredy Perlman,' these 'simplistic legends' are revealing in themselves, and attest to the marked identity that has been established between Perlman's work and the origins of primitivism.[5] Perlman's essay has furthermore proven a demonstrable influence amongst a number of major primitivist theorists; and, also remains a key reference point for numerous radical environmental, anarchist, and deep ecology groups throughout North America, Western Europe, and Australasia.[6]

This study is one of the first sustained textual analyses of Perlman's *Against His-story, Against Leviathan*, much as it is one of the first critical studies of an individual primitivist thinker. There

[4] Fredy Perlman. 'Against Leviathan: Community vs. The State.' *The Fifth Estate*. Vol. 17 No. 4, Winter 1982–1983, pp. 5–8.

John Moore. 'A Primitivist Primer.' www.primitivism.com

[5] David Watson. 'Swamp Fever, Primitivism & The "Ideological Vortex": Farewell to all that.' *The Anarchist Library*, www.theanarchistlibrary.org/HTML/David_Watson_Swamp_Fever_Primitivism_The_Ideological-Vortex_Farwell_To_All_That

[6] On Perlman's influence, see David Watson. 'Homage to Fredy Perlman,' in David Watson. *Against the Megamachine: Essays on empire & its enemies*. Brooklyn: Autonomedia, 1997, pp. 244–251; John Moore. 'Anarchy and Ecstasy: Visions of Halcyon Days.' *The Anarchist Library*, www.theanarchistlibrary.org/library/john-moore-anarchy-and-ecstasy-visions-of-halcyon-days; Arthur Versluis and Peter Lamborn Wilson. 'A Conversation with Peter Lamborn Wilson.' *Journal for the Study of Radicalism* Vol. 4 No. 2, 2010, pp. 144–145.

Perlman's influence is apparent throughout a number of radical periodicals and collectives, including *The Fifth Estate*, the now defunct British journal *Green Anarchist*, and the American journal *Green Anarchy*.

The *Dark Mountain Project*, an eco-literary journal, has also claimed inspiration in Perlman's work. dark-mountain.net

A number of anarcho-primitivist collectives also claim Perlman's work as a key inspirational text, such as the Australian based 'Fierce Dreams.' fierce-dreams.wordpress.com

the darkness of this cadaverous beast might not then be capable of reproducing a 'meaningful context,' but neither is Perlman's primitivism with its message of estrangement here capable of providing a basis for any new meaningful contexts. For Perlman, the only known communities capable of creating a 'meaningful context' exist on the 'other shore,' and such lost worlds of meaning are today either 'beyond memory's reach' or confined to the work of anthropologists and historians of religion.

There remains however another possible interpretation of 'the strait' that at least recognises some means of reconciliation between these two distant shores. John Clark, for instance, has drawn parallels between Perlman's spiritual symbolism of 'the strait' and the recurrence of this motif in the Western Judaeo-Christian tradition, specifically the 'strait gate' or 'narrow gate' referenced in the New Testament. Here, 'the strait' refers to the entrance to the 'kingdom of God' within.[63] However, this 'strait' is also a 'narrow gate' and, as such, entrance through this gate into the 'kingdom of God' is not as simple as taking the 'wide' road. 'The strait' suggests that entrance to the 'kingdom of God' 'is never the path of least resistance, but is a narrow, difficult, and winding way.'[64] As written in the New Testament:

> Enter by the narrow gate, since the road that leads to perdition is wide and spacious, and many take it; but it is a narrow gate and a hard road that leads to life, and only a few find it.[65]

Through this Judaeo-Christian symbolism, 'the strait' is not strictly a barrier, but a testament to the 'hard road that leads to life' and to spiritual transfiguration.[66] 'The strait' is here transformed

[63] Cafard. 'The Dragon of Brno.'

[64] John A. Sanford. *The Kingdom Within: The inner meaning of Jesus' sayings*. New York: Paulist Press, 1970, p. 65.

[65] *Ibid*, p. 65.

[66] *Ibid*, p. 65.

contamination. Perlman here establishes a moralistic standpoint that is even more extreme than Zoroaster's own spiritual vision. As Yuri Stoyanov details, Zoroastrianism could at least admit to an intermediate stage of history—a second age wherein Good and Evil intermix with each other—even if this age would eventually reach its final consummation in a third age wherein the darkness of Ahriman would be excised from the world.[60] Because Perlman so staunchly historicises and politicises the war between Ahura Mazda and Ahriman, he cannot admit this intermixture into his spiritual vision; there is only one or the other, inside or outside, good or evil.

What is more, Perlman reconfirms his unwillingness to discern any form of spiritual meaningfulness within the so-called 'shit' and excrement of 'our age,' trapped as it is 'inside' this Leviathanic and Ahrimanic darkness. Set apart even from the dualist religious traditions he aligns with, which could at least admit of a return to the world of Light through *gnosis*, Perlman's politico-spiritual vision only serves to exacerbate the widening of 'the strait' because he has now placed humanity's 'inner light' at such a historical remove from modernity.[61] Through the interposition of 'the strait,' Perlman's vision closes off the very possibility of spiritual renewal on these modern shores. The text's real message becomes one of estrangement from the spiritual integrity of the 'other shore' and alienation from its lost meaningful contexts. As Perlman himself notes, his politico-spiritual 'vision' is essentially a primitivist retelling of the Judaeo-Christian Fall from Paradise and the Garden of Eden.[62] Those *zeks* who have fallen from the 'state of nature' into

[60] Yuri Stoyanov. *The Other God: Dualist religions from antiquity to the Cathar Heresy*. New Haven and London: Yale University Press, 2000, p. 26.

[61] 'This saving knowledge [*gnosis*] cannot be discovered in the world, the realm of darkness. It must come from the realm of light, vouchsafed either by revelation (or illumination) or brought by a messenger.' Stuart Holroyd. *The Elements of Gnosticism*. Brisbane: Element Books, 1994, p. 5.

[62] Perlman. *Against His-story, Against Leviathan*, p. 47.

is assuredly an existing literature in these areas.[7] There too exists a literature on spirituality within anarcho-primitivism.[8] This extant literature however typically falls into three main categories. The first derives primarily from academic studies of primitivism, and incorporates Perlman's essay within a more general, overarching study of primitivist thought. The second reading is overtly antagonistic towards the claims of primitivism and its references to spirituality.[9] Spiritual concerns, in particular, are either ignored for their insignificance in relation to radical politics or condemned as a form of obscurantism and irrationalism. The third, and far more sympathetic reading, conflates Perlman himself with his writings, a position that makes recourse to the author's intended meaning for his text, and which more often amounts to a defensive memorialising of Perlman's life and work that verges at times upon hagiog-

[7] Mick Smith. 'The State of Nature: The political philosophy of primitivism and the culture of contamination.' *Environmental Values*, Volume 11, 2002, pp. 421–422; Mathieu O'Neil. 'Radical Tribes at Warre: Primitivism on the Net,' in T.L. Adams and S.A. Smith (eds.). *Electronic Tribes: The virtual worlds of geeks, gamers, shamans, and scammers*. Austin: University of Texas Press, 2008, pp. 251–268; Jacques Depelchin. 'For History, Against His-story.' *African Economic History*, Number 15, 1986, 173–182.

[8] John Clark. 'The Dragon of Brno.' *The Fifth Estate*. No. 31 Spring 1986, p. 17; John Clark. 'Anarchism,' in Bron Taylor (ed.). *Encyclopedia of Religion and Nature*. New York: Continuum, 2005, p. 51; Mick Smith. 'Wild-life: Anarchy, ecology and ethics.' *Environmental Politics*, Vol. 16 No. 3, 2007, pp. 470–487; Bron Taylor. *Dark Green Religion: Nature spirituality and the planetary future*. Berkeley: University of California Press, 2010; Sasha Lilley. 'Great Chaos Under Heaven: Catastrophism and the Left,' in Sasha Lilley, David McNally, Eddie Yuen and James Davis (eds.). *Catastrophism: The apocalyptic politics of collapse and rebirth*. Oakland: PM Press, 2012, pp. 44–76.

[9] For these critical accounts of the spiritual dimension in Perlman's work, see Murray Bookchin. *Social Anarchism or Lifestyle Anarchism: An unbridgeable chasm*. Edinburgh: AK Press, 1995; Murray Bookchin. *Re-enchanting Humanity: A defence of the human spirit against anti-humanism, misanthropy, mysticism and primitivism*. London: Cassell, 1995; Charles Bufe. 'Listen, Anarchist!' *The Anarchist Library* www.thenanarchistlibrary.org; Brian Oliver Sheppard. 'Anarchism vs Primitivism.' *libcom.org/library/anarchism-vs-primitivism*

raphy.[10] In this regard, I believe my concern with a close textual analysis of *Against His-story, Against Leviathan* will move beyond these existing critical frameworks while providing new and differing insights into this text and the origins of primitivism.

To begin, I would like to provide a brief introduction to this relatively obscure text and its author. As its radical influence might attest, *Against His-story, Against Leviathan* emerges out of—and is a response to—Perlman's background in Left-wing revolutionary politics. Committed throughout his life to the possibilities of radical social transformation, Perlman was a participant in the events of May 1968 in Paris, and a social activist across several universities in the United States with connections to the Students for a Democratic Society and the Industrial Workers of the World.[11]Mixing together ideas from Marxism and the anarchist tradition, Perlman developed his own critical insights into revolutionary practice and theory, and released these ideas through his publishing label *Black & Red*. Apart from these theoretical contributions, Perlman offered to an American readership some of the first English translations of major works in contemporary European radical thought, particularly Guy Debord's *The Society of the Spectacle*, and the writings of the ultra-left Marxist theorist Jacques Camatte.[12]

If a general mood could be ascribed to *Against His-story, Against Leviathan*, it would be that of Perlman's disillusion with some of

[10] A work that exemplifies this tendency towards hagiography—even while trying to deny such parallels—is Watson's 'An exemplary life: A memoir of Fredy Perlman' in Watson. 'Homage to Fredy Perlman,' pp. 250–251. See also Lorraine Perlman. *Having Little, Being Much: A chronicle of Fredy Perlman's Fifty Years*. Detroit: Black & Red, 1989.

[11] Perlman. *Having Little, Being Much*, p. 46–48. On Perlman's involvement in the events of May 1968, see Roger Gregoire and Fredy Perlman. *Worker-Student Action Committees: France May '68*. Detroit: Black & Red, 1969.

[12] Perlman's translations include Guy Debord. *Society of the Spectacle*. Detroit: Black & Red, 1983; Members of the Situationist International. *On the Poverty of Student Life*. Detroit: Black & Red, 2000; Jacques Camatte. *The Wandering of Humanity*. Detroit: Black & Red, 1975.

ing light of fire—one of the key symbolic elements in Zoroastrian religion—whereas for Ahriman 'light is anathema' because its 'element is the dark, the synthetic.'[55] Because they are as staunchly opposed as good is to evil—'Good means Ahura Mazda or Light; Evil means Ahriman or Darkness'—there can be no reconciliation between them.[56] Perlman can discern only an inverted 'war of extermination' between them, a 'war against Ahriman in the world and in the individual,' a war 'waged with fire, the great purifier,' a war by which 'the mask is burned off, the armor is burned out, [and] the Leviathan is burned down.'[57]

Perlman furthermore encodes this struggle of spiritual forces into a historicopolitical context—a literal 'state of nature' set against a literal Leviathan, much like the historical scission that separates the 'other shore' from these modern shores. This is again most pronounced in his reading of Zoroastrian eschatology. In Perlman's reading, Zoroaster divides history into only two periods: 'one is outside the Leviathan, the other is inside.'[58] History consists of a period 'outside' Leviathan where 'every living being and every member of the community has a special meaning,' and a second period—the age of 'progress'—which follows from Leviathan's disruption of this 'ancient community,' and the enclosure of this community within its monstrous body. The historical and spiritual confrontation between Ahura Mazda and Ahriman is thus all or nothing—Good or Evil, purity or impurity, Light or Dark, outside or inside; and, these divisions have as their dualistic foundation Perlman's interposition of 'the strait.'[59] 'The strait' that cuts through history as much as through Perlman's politico-spiritual 'vision' has annulled any possibility of spiritual

[55] *Ibid*, pp. 76–77, 300. On fire in Zoroastrianism, see Jenny Rose. *Zoroastrianism: An introduction*. London and New York: I.B. Tauris, 2010, p. 20.

[56] Perlman. *Against His-story, Against Leviathan*, p. 185.

[57] *Ibid*, p. 77.

[58] *Ibid*, p. 77.

[59] Grosso. *The Millennium Myth*, p. 23.

Perlman simply changes these connotations around. With Perlman, 'the state of nature' is now the sole repository of light—'the pure, the beautiful, the new'—and is home to intense visionary experience and meaningful mythological contexts whereas 'our age' belongs to the unhallowed domain of 'shit' and 'Leviathanic excrement, the substance of the universe'—a meaningless culture of commodities given over to a consumerist gaze that can do no more than cannibalise upon this lost wisdom of the 'other shore.[51]

This antagonistic dualism is further confirmed through Perlman's reactivation of a spiritual symbolism drawn from the ancient dualist religions of Zoroastrianism and Manichaeism, albeit in a very idiosyncratic and 'Nietzschean' style.[52]Throughout his text, Perlman reads this now inverted Hobbesian struggle of a pure 'state of nature' against an excremental Leviathan in terms of the Zoroastrian battle between the forces of Ahura Mazda and Ahriman, the respective spiritual representatives of Good and Evil, Light and Darkness, Truth and Untruth.[53] As Perlman writes in one of his extended commentaries on Zoroastrian dualism:

> The outsider is the Light, Ahura Mazda, associated with the spirits of fire, earth and water, with animals and plants, with Earth and Life. Ahura Mazda is the strength and freedom of the generation Hesiod considered the first, the golden. The insider is Darkness, Ahriman, also called The Lie. Ahriman is the Leviathan as well as the Leviathanic armor that disrupted the ancient community.[54]

As he writes at numerous other points throughout his essay, Ahura Mazda is always associable with the cleansing and purify-

[51] Perlman. *Against His-story, Against Leviathan*, pp. 252, 291.

[52] *Ibid*, p. 77; Friedrich Nietzsche. *Thus Spoke Zarathustra: A book for all and none*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2006.

[53] Perlman. *Against His-story, Against Leviathan*, p. 77.

[54] *Ibid*, p. 77.

the fundamental precepts of this Left-wing revolutionary tradition to which he had subscribed as well as disenchantment with the project of modernity he had implicitly supported through these radical commitments. While Perlman will continue to champion May 1968 long after its practical closure, his writings from the late 1970s up until his death in 1985 express marked critical reservations towards ideas and ideals he had earlier held: the concept of historical progress; notions of industrial and technological development; a theoretical framework that exalts work and the organisation of labour; and, the acceptance of the working class as agents of revolutionary social transformation.[13]

Furthermore, the word 'revolutionary' begins to fall from Perlman's vocabulary during this time and is replaced with such terms as 'insurgent' and 'insurrection'—an altered political vocabulary for the different social terrain of America in the 1980s.[14] While I cannot profess to detail the complex reasons for this shift, there are a few salient historical details that provide context for this new critical direction. One such detail is the 'implosion' of the 1960s counter-culture.[15] As evidenced in the pages of *The Fifth Estate*, radical militants of the 1960s voiced immense disappointment at 'the total collapse of the social infrastructure of rebellion which had been created during the sixties,' and were embittered towards the emergence of a new social conservatism with its attempts to organise people's lives 'around wage work and other activity ordained

[13] For these criticisms, see Perlman. *Having Little, Being Much*, p. 78; Fredy Perlman. 'Progress and Nuclear Power: The destruction of the continent and its peoples,' in Fredy Perlman. *Anything Can Happen*. London: Phoenix, 1999.

[14] Perlman 'observed that to be "revolutionary" a project must culminate in revolution. He maintained that he had discovered no models which satisfied his requirements for "revolutionary."' Perlman. *Having Little, Being Much*, p. 139. On insurgency, see Fredy Perlman. *Letters of Insurgents*. Detroit: Black & Red, 1976.

[15] Todd Gitlin. *The Sixties: Years of hope, days of rage*. New York: Bantam Books, 1987, p. 403.

by official society.'[16] Another equally significant detail is Perlman's own growing awareness of the destructive impact of 'progress' and urban-industrial civilisation upon the earth's ecosystems, an ecological awareness concurrent with the rise of the modern environmental movement.[17]

This disillusion will also however become a catalyst for the re-examination of prior radical certitudes and the search for new directions.[18] If *Against His-story, Against Leviathan* therefore possesses a mood of disillusion with all that had gone unchallenged in Perlman's radical background, its theme is that of a search for origins—to discover the 'root' of modernity's problems and to discern a radical response to these problems within the realm of origins. As Perlman maintains, the major failing of the radical political traditions to which he had held the closest affinity—Marxism and anarchism—is their superficial critique of the existent order of things.[19] For Perlman, the Marxist critique of Capital and the anarchist critique of authority only capture fragmentary emanations of a deeper problem; and, their failure to grasp this problem only affirms their continued identity with the world they oppose.

These deeper problems derive from the origins of 'civilisation' or, more correctly, the origins of 'Western civilisation.' Perlman is, of course, hardly the first thinker to refract the problems of modernity through the broader scope of 'Western civilisation.'[20] Perlman even lauds one of the more prominent exponents of this critique: Jean-Jacques Rousseau.[21] This is not to say that Perlman's critique is absent of additional content. For one, Perlman gives his rendi-

[16] Peter Werbe. 'On Having Nothing to Say.' *The Fifth Estate*. Vol. 14 No. 2, April 1979, p. 5.

[17] Perlman. *Having Little, Being* Much, p. 78.

[18] Watson. 'Homage to Fredy Perlman,' pp. 250–251.

[19] Perlman. *Against His-story, Against Leviathan*, pp. 4–5.

[20] John Laffey. *Civilization and Its Discontented*. Montreal: Black Rose Books, 1993.

[21] Jean-Jacques Rousseau. *The Social Contract and The Discourses*. London: Everyman's Library, 1962.

modernity's explicitly temporal, historical estrangement from the 'state of nature,' the spiritual 'meanings' of these distant shores 'are beyond memory's reach.'[49]

However much Perlman might have spoken of a seer who 'slipped into our age from the other shore,' as if reaching beyond the irrevocable historical scission his primitivist stance has instituted, the symbolism of two shores separated by the strait suggests an ever widening demarcation between the shores of a pure, spiritually enlightened 'golden age' and that of an impure, dissolute, spiritually barren modernity torn apart from this archaic wisdom because of the historical, linear movement of 'progress.' Perlman's celebration of the seer's visionary world 'from the other shore' could in this sense be considered no more than a dirge for the dead, or soon to be deceased. This is because the seer's visionary experience has on these modern shores become an 'excretion' of its own—a commodity for the voyeuristic gaze of the modern tourist in what would appear to be a new, insidious form of spiritual colonialism: the consumption of the Other as site of authentic but exotic spiritual otherness.[50]

Through this historical scission or 'strait' that separates the 'other shore' from these modern shores, archaic 'vision' from tourist's gaze, the 'state of nature' from Leviathan, and past from present, Perlman's spiritual 'vision' instantiates a rather stark, antagonistic dualism. When compared and contrasted with Hobbes' own vision, Perlman's work could be said to do little more than invert Hobbes' worldview. Far from challenging Hobbes' antagonistic binary oppositions, Perlman only turns these oppositions upside down. Where, Hobbes, for instance, in his frontispiece for *De Cive* associates *civitas* with the pure light of Heaven and *libertas* or 'state of nature' with the darkness of a profane earth,

[49] *Ibid*, p. 178.

[50] On spiritual colonialism see David Brooks. *Bobos in Paradise: The new upper class and how they got there*. New York: Simon & Schuster, 2000.

analogies and vestiges in our world.'[45] Distinct from the voyeuristic tourist, Eliade looks over 'the strait' and glimpses the spiritual integrity of the 'other shore,' but he also 'fogs what he sees' by claiming to discern faint, evanescent traces in 'our age' of this lost, archaic spiritual wisdom. Failing to recognise the democratic ethos underlying Eliade's 'openness'—and its confrontation with a cultural conservatism that requires a return to the integrity of past religious forms—Perlman believes Eliade has falsely attributed spiritual meaningfulness to 'our age.'[46] There is for Perlman a sheer historical division—a widening 'strait'—cutting off the spiritual wisdom of the 'other shore' from these modern shores. Again, this scission is so pronounced because this 'other shore' is not only possessed of an esoteric meaningfulness but also an express historical significance in terms of its association with those archaic societies existing 'outside' civilization. Perlman's 'other shore' is a reference to those historically distant, archaic societies that lived these myths and immersed themselves in 'visions.' These are archaic societies that existed 'in a cosmic context where every living being and every member of the community has a special meaning.'[47] From this primitivist standpoint, there can clearly be no 'analogies' and 'vestiges' of the 'other shore' in 'our age' because modernity's *zeks* have, in Perlman's telling depiction, been 'despoiled of every last trace of community;' they possess no 'meaningful context' and, in turn, they are dispossessed of all 'meaning.'[48] As Perlman writes of

[45] Robert Ellwood. *The Politics of Myth: A study of C.G. Jung, Mircea Eliade, and Joseph Campbell*. Albany: State University of New York Press, 1999, pp. 103–104; Perlman. *Against His-story, Against Leviathan*, p. 10.

[46] Ellwood. *The Politics of Myth*, pp. 103–104. On Eliade's conservatism and fascist past, see Elaine Fisher. 'Fascist Scholars, Fascist Scholarship: The quest for Ur-fascism and the study of religion,' in Christian Wedemeyer and Wendy Doniger (eds.). *Hermeneutics, Politics, and the History of Religions: The contested legacies of Joachim Wach and Mircea Eliade*. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2010, pp. 261–284.

[47] Perlman. *Against His-story, Against Leviathan*, p. 178.

[48] *Ibid*, p. 178.

tion of 'civilisation' a name. He will 'name the monster.'[22] He calls it Leviathan, a title that derives from Thomas Hobbes' 1651 political treatise of the same name. Though, it is no longer simply reducible to Hobbes' commonwealth and the modern nation-state.[23] Leviathan is rather the fulfilment of an authoritarian and imperialistic impulsion that extends back to the origins of 'Western civilisation' in the ancient city-states of the 'Fertile Crescent.' As Perlman writes of the ancient Sumerian city-state of Ur, 'I've been using the present tense. Ur is now. It is not exotic at all. It is our world.'[24]

Perlman finds particular inspiration in Hobbes' famous frontispiece for *Leviathan* with its image of a monumental 'artificial man' whose body is not only a mechanical, 'armored' carapace but is also the 'body politic' itself, a conglomeration of faceless workers or serviceable 'springs and wheels.'[25] Of course, in being against Leviathan, Perlman goes on to disfigure this 'artificial man.' He twists its regal visage into that of a monstrous 'cadaverous beast,' and ridicules any notion of a 'social contract' binding together this artificial construct with this multitudinous 'body politic.' For Perlman, Leviathan is a totalising and all-encompassing technocracy.[26] Its 'artificial life' is a product of systematic dispossession—inward and outward colonisation—along with the expropriation of the creative labour of those nameless masses trapped inside it.[27] Leviathan similarly feeds on and despoils the natural world, and has done

[22] Perlman. *Against His-story, Against Leviathan*, p. 5.

[23] Thomas Hobbes. *Leviathan*. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1996.

[24] Perlman. *Against His-story, Against Leviathan*, p. 22.

[25] Hobbes. *Leviathan*, p. 84.

[26] On the counter-culture and technocracy, see, in particular, Theodore Roszak. *The Making of a Counter Culture: Reflections on the technocratic society & its youthful opposition*. London: Faber & Faber, 1969. For the influences on Perlman's vision of 'technocracy,' see Lewis Mumford. *The Myth of the Machine, Volume Two: The Pentagon of Power*. San Diego, New York and London: Harcourt Brace Jovanovich Publishers, 1964; Jacques Ellul. *The Technological Society*. London: Jonathan Cape, 1965.

[27] Perlman. *Against His-Story, Against Leviathan*, p. 5.

this to such an extent—under the auspices of 'globalisation'—that Perlman considers Leviathan to have 'become more powerful than the biosphere.'[28] The history of 'Western civilisation' is not then a story of 'progress;' it is rather—in Perlman's three hundred and two page retelling of this historical narrative—*His Story*, a story of humanity's prolonged descent into the excrescent body of this 'artificial man.' In these terms, Perlman can so chastise Marxism and anarchism because they still cleave to 'progress,' to *His Story*; and, as such, their response to Leviathan, even in a revolutionary guise, concludes only in the reorganisation of Leviathan's artificial organs, an internal modification to the functioning of its 'springs and wheels.'

Insofar as Perlman locates the root of modernity's problems in the origins of 'Western civilisation,' he too returns to the realm of origins to discern a 'way out' from Leviathan and as a means of interrupting its narrative of historical 'progress.' Perlman discovers this 'way out' in that time 'before' and 'outside' Leviathan in those original communities that have either yet to be enclosed within this 'cadaverous beast' or have successfully denied the emergence of this 'artificial man.' These are the original communities living in that original condition Rousseau honours in his *Discourse on the Origins of Inequality* and Hobbes condemns for creating lives that are 'nasty, brutish and short.'[29] This is the 'state of nature.' Indeed, Perlman believes the 'state of nature' is a term that 'should be brought back into common use.'[30] While Perlman here borrows from the largely hypothetical musings of Rousseau and Hobbes, this 'state of nature' in *Against His-story, Against Leviathan* is explicitly identified with archaic and indigenous societies. More specifically, Perlman's 'state of nature' emerges out of his reading of a range of anthropologists from the 1960s and 1970s—Stanley

[28] *Ibid*, p. 5.

[29] Rousseau. *The Social Contract and The Discourses*, p. 72; Hobbes. *Leviathan*, p. 84.

[30] Perlman. *Against His-story, Against Leviathan*, p. 7.

There is however a difference in emphasis with this reference to the 'other shore,' since there is here no indication of anyone slipping into 'our age.' This is due primarily to Perlman's interposition of 'the strait.' The descriptive term for a narrow passage of water, 'the strait' assumes in Perlman's essay a spiritually symbolic and affective resonance. It holds further meaning for Perlman because it also derives from an English rendering of a Native American word for Perlman's city of residence—Detroit—and served as the title for his last, uncompleted novel.[43] While 'the strait' suggests a narrow passage that connects two shores or two bodies of water, this 'strait' appears in Perlman's essay as an irrevocable boundary separating the 'other shore' from these modern shores. For Perlman, 'the strait' has, in fact, been '*widening* for three hundred generations,' an explicitly historical scission that accords with the image of temporal distance that opens Perlman's discussion of the tourist and the seer—'just how far progress has brought us.'

This widening 'strait' is, in turn, the basis for Perlman's contemptuous portrait of the spiritual efforts of modernity and the people on this side of 'progress.' Like his account of the voyeuristic tourist, modernity's *zeks* only appear capable of consuming, cannibalising, and commoditising the spiritual wisdom of the 'other shore.' Modernity's spiritual efforts are an excremental mockery. As Perlman brusquely proclaims, 'It's shit.' Perlman even goes on to criticise Eliade's studies in comparative mythology because Eliade is bold enough 'to find analogies and vestiges in our world' of this archaic 'other shore.'[44] Where Eliade expresses 'openness to the flexibility of the sacred' and believes the sacred can 'adapt to virtually any new worlds technology and social change may bring,' Perlman argues that 'Eliade fogs what he sees by claiming to find

[43] Fredy Perlman. *The Strait*. Detroit: Black & Red, 1988.

[44] Perlman. *Against His-story, Against Leviathan*, p. 10.

'Vision' thus becomes a key site for Perlman's confrontation of the 'state of nature' against Leviathan. This conflict is moreover understood both in an esoteric sense—the difference between a consumptive, meaningless gaze and a visionary, meaningful perception of 'spirits'—and also in this politico-historical sense—the distinction between a historical reality existing 'outside' or 'before' civilization and the age of progress 'inside' Leviathan. Each of these 'visions' share an alternate relationship to time or 'progress' which, in the context of Perlman's text, reflect either 'visions' borne of 'our age,' the age of Leviathanic 'progress,' or 'visions' that derive 'from the other shore,' from those distant shores Perlman associates with the 'golden age' and the 'state of nature.'

This contrast of 'visions' too gives rise to a spiritual symbolism unique to Perlman's essay. This is the imagery of the 'other shore,' an otherness that is possessed of such meaning only through reference to its excluded and estranged counterpart: *these modern shores*, 'our age,' the age of 'progress.' Indeed, this evocative image of two shores separated from each other is repeated in even bolder terms at another point in Perlman's essay; though, in this instance, Perlman turns from a discussion of 'vision' to that of the sacred mythologies of archaic cultures and societies, specifically in reference to Mircea Eliade's work in comparative religion. As Perlman writes in this context, 'the strait that separates us *from the other shore* has been widening for three hundred generations, and whatever was cannibalized from the other shore is no longer a vestige of their activity but an excretion of ours. It's shit.'[42] As with Perlman's reference to the meeting of tourist and seer, there is repeated again the exact same phrase 'from the other shore.' Similarly, this 'other shore' symbolises a historical and spiritual scission dividing off this 'other shore,' a historically distant 'state of nature' from these modern shores.

[42] Emphasis added. *Ibid*, p. 10.

Diamond, Pierre Clastres, Marshall Sahlins, and Richard Leakey—all of whom present a far more sympathetic portrait of life in so-called 'primitive' societies.[31] Through this positive reappraisal of the primitive, Perlman discovers a discordant interruption to historical progress and a means of escape from Leviathan. These original communities existing in the 'state of nature' provide evidence of cultures harmonised with their environmental surroundings; they indicate economic relations devoid of waged labour; and, perhaps most importantly, these are societies without Leviathan, societies without centralised authority, or, as Clastres maintains, societies *against* the State.[32]

Of course, as numerous commentators have remarked, this neo-Rousseauian primitivism may not be such a dramatic interruption to 'Western civilisation' and its narrative of 'progress.' This primitivism still participates in a long-standing history of the Western representation of the non-Western Other.[33] This primitivism shares intimacy with those Western scholars and artists who appropriated the 'primitive' for the discussion of decidedly modern issues and debates over the meaning of 'progress.'[34] As Frederick W. Turner

[31] Stanley Diamond. *In Search of the Primitive: A critique of civilization*. New Brunswick: Transaction Books, 1972; Pierre Clastres. *Society Against the State: Essays in political anthropology*. New York: Zone Books, 1987; Marshall Sahlins. *Stone Age Economics*. Chicago: Aldine-Atherton, 1972; Richard E. Leakey. *The Making of Mankind*. London: Michael Joseph Limited, 1981.

[32] Clastres. *Society Against the State*, pp. 189–218.

[33] See, for example, Edward W. Said. *Orientalism*. London: Routledge & Kegan Paul, 1978; Marianna Torgovnick. *Gone Primitive: Savage intellects, modern lives*. Chicago: University of Press, 1990; Marianna Torgovnick. *Primitive Passions: Men, women, and the quest for ecstasy*. New York: Alfred A. Knopf. 1997; Bron Taylor. 'Earthen Spirituality or Cultural Genocide?: Radical Environmentalism's appropriation of Native American spirituality.' *Religion*. Vol. 27 No. 2, 1997, pp. 183–215.

[34] Adam Kuper. *The Reinvention of Primitive Society*. New York: Routledge, 2005; Adam Kuper. *The Invention of Primitive Society: Transformations of an illusion*. New York: Routledge, 1988.

has remarked of the re-presentation of Native American Indians in the 1970s from savage Other to New Indian:

> We have made the Indian over into an image that represents all that we are not but wish we might have been. Ecology; communal living; nonaggressiveness; equal opportunity; natural, non-Western wisdom—these are the catchwords and phrases of *our time*, now brought together in the New Indian.[35]

From Turner's perspective, this positive vision of the 'New Indian' is not that far removed from the negative portrait of the savage Other; it is a variant upon this history of the Western appropriation and re-presentation of non-Western Others.

Peter Marshall has in turn directed such a criticism towards anarchoprimitivism. As he writes of the leading contemporary anarcho-primitivist John Zerzan in words that are just as applicable to Perlman and his essay:

> Zerzan's harmonious 'state of nature' pre-existing civilization might be different from Hobbes' war of all against all, Locke's free but uncertain condition or Rousseau's life of solitary individuals, but he makes a similar error in imagining a hypothetical state in order to justify the kind of society he would like to see. Indeed, his way of glorifying hunter-gatherers may not be very different from those colonialists who projected their desires and fears on to tribal societies in the Nineteenth and Twentieth centuries although they did it for different ends.[36]

[35] Frederick W. Turner. 'Introduction,' in Frederick W. Turner (ed.). *The Portable North American Reader*. New York: Penguin Books, 1977, p. 10.

[36] Peter Marshall. *Demanding the Impossible*. Oakland: PM Press, 2010, pp. 686–687. For John Zerzan's primitivism see John Zerzan. *Elements of Refusal*. Seat-

the tourist believes this purportedly superficial 'vision,' divested of 'qualities' and 'spirits' to be a truly enlightened form of perception. The tourist is, in this sense, kin to the *zek* because of this visual identity with 'progress,' with Leviathan's own 'His-story' of itself as forward progression and advancement. Indeed, Perlman's concerns with vision and compliance to the status quo are not isolated to *Against His-story, Against Leviathan*. While there is, for instance, Perlman's background in Situationist theory and its concerns with the consumptive gaze of the 'spectacular society,' he will also speak in a near contemporary article of the 'Voyeur,' a modern person so deprived of inner experience through consumption of the 'Told Vision' of mass media that 'he becomes one with the machine.'[39]

In contradistinction to the commodified gaze of the tourist, the seer who has seemingly 'slipped into our age' does not gaze at or consume images; rather; he experiences 'visions.' He sees beyond this proposed superficiality of the photograph to discern, in an animistic fashion, 'spirits' and 'qualities.' Although the tourist may, in Perlman's rendering, consider him to be both 'dupe' and 'moron,' the seer's vision takes flight; and, this esoteric 'flight' is the means by which the seer may slip into 'our age' 'from the other shore.' That Perlman would refer so explicitly to 'flight' is of further significance because this visionary journey is spoken of in a directly preceding discussion not in reference to 'our age'—the age of Leviathan—but rather to that time 'before' Leviathan—the 'Age of Gold,' the 'state of nature.'[40] As Perlman writes, those in the 'state of nature' 'strive for the sky. And on rare occasions the spirit of the sky possesses them. They fly. They become sky, feeling all its motions, sensing all its intentions. They become the sky who mated with the earth and gave birth to life.'[41]

[39] Perlman. *Anti-Semitism and the Beirut Pogrom*, pp. 20–22.

[40] Perlman. *Against His-story, Against Leviathan*, p. 12.

[41] *Ibid*, p. 12.

to Blake's engraving. These two frontispieces not only express a constitutive political conflict between different understandings of the State, *civitas*, and 'state of nature,' but there also recurs a conflict between differing, hostile 'visions.' Indeed, Perlman will invoke such a conflict of 'visions' within his text. Though, Hobbes and Blake are not here considered the foundation for this conflict. Rather, it emerges from Perlman's account of a hypothetical meeting between a tourist and a seer. As Perlman writes of this encounter:

> Just how far progress has brought us is revealed by the occasional tourist who happens on a seer. The tourist listens to the old man who somehow slipped into our age *from the other shore*. The tourist sits fidgeting through what he calls a "séance," snapping photographs. At the end of it all, the tourist produces a photograph which proves that the seer didn't fly, didn't even rise from his seat. And the tourist leaves, happily convinced that they, not he, are dupes and morons.
>
> Photographs show what we're most interested in: the surfaces of things. They don't show qualities, *spirits*.[38]

Through this encounter between tourist and seer, established in the very first chapter of his essay, Perlman invokes two quite distinctive and very much opposed conceptions of 'vision.'

The tourist's vision, for instance, is trapped within the confines of the camera's lens and the photograph—dependency from a primitivist standpoint upon the mediations of technology. The tourist discerns only the 'surfaces of things;' he relates to the world as a subject enframing a spiritless, depthless object. This tourist gazes at the world and consumes it. As Perlman continues,

[38] Emphasis added. *Ibid*, p. 12.

For all Perlman's posturing against Leviathan and His-story, his primitivism can actually demonstrate a degree of unawareness about its involvement in the history of 'Western civilisation.' His primitivism is assuredly an attempt to discover an interruption, an 'outside,' a 'beyond,' a 'before,' and a 'way out' of the totalising matrix of 'Western civilisation.' In his essay, Perlman would refer to this as drawing insights 'from the other shore' so as to step through Leviathan's 'iron curtain of inversion and falsification,' an 'iron curtain' that has ostensibly corrupted and despoiled every modern revolutionary project.[37] However, the problematic question that remains is whether Perlman's knowledge of this 'other shore' actually offers a way beyond this 'iron curtain,' or whether it is itself still implicated in the very structures and discourses it decries, a process of inversion that will serve as a guiding theme for this thesis.

In saying this, I am not particularly concerned with this problem of inversion in relation to Perlman's use—or misuse—of historical and anthropological evidence within *Against His-story, Against Leviathan*. Certainly, Perlman's reading of archaic and indigenous societies has proven conducive to the formation of a distinctive 'primitivist theoretical agenda.'[38] I would also take note of those figures within the disciplines of history and anthropology that have either criticised the many varieties of primitivism on the level of evidence or sought to confirm and defend it through the use of counter-evidence.[39] I do not emphasise these evidentiary-based de-

tle: Left Bank Books, 1988; John Zerzan. *Future Primitive and Other Essays*. Brooklyn: Autonomedia, 1994; John Zerzan. *Running on Emptiness: The pathology of civilization*. Los Angeles: Feral House, 2002.

[37] Perlman. *Against His-story, Against Leviathan*, p. 10.

[38] Moore. 'A Primitivist Primer.'

[39] For critiques of primitivism, see Iain Provan. *Convenient Myths: The axial age, dark green religion, and the world that never was*. Waco: Baylor University Press, 2013; Lawrence H. Keeley. *War Before Civilization: The myth of the peaceful savage*. New York and Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1996; Shepard Krech III. *The Ecological Indian: Myth and history*. New York: W.W. Norton & Company, 1999;

bates because of the existence in Perlman's text of other layers of meaning that are ultimately not dependent upon such evidence. Indeed, Perlman's essay is openly contemptuous of 'Positive Evidence,' much as it is averse to the utilisation of historical dates, despite its chronological and, at times, prosaic journey through 'His-story.'[40] Perlman may borrow from the academic disciplines of anthropology and history to help form his narrative and in presenting his vision of the 'state of nature,' but he is also markedly conflicted about the authority he is attempting to derive from academic knowledge.[41]

As Perlman states elsewhere, his text does not offer a 'historically solid interpretation' of the past.[42] His text is instead aligned with those capable, in Perlman's own words, of 'soaring out of the range of such academic crap.'[43] In place of historians and anthropologists, Perlman's text finds its identity and confirmation in the work of poets, such as T.S. Eliot, W.B. Yeats and William Blake, whose works are considered more as 'visions,' 'dreams,' 'myths,' and 'stories' than as historically accurate portraits of life either

Robert B. Edgerton. *Sick Societies: Challenging the myth of primitive harmony*. New York: The Free Press, 1992.

For more positive accounts, see Andrew Robinson and Simon Tormey. 'Beyond the State: Anthropology and 'actually-existing-anarchism.' *Critique of Anthropology*. Vol. 32 No. 2, 2012, pp. 143–157; James C. Scott. *The Art of Not Being Governed: An anarchist history of Upland Southeast Asia*. New Haven: Yale University Press, 2009; David Graeber. *Fragments of an Anarchist Anthropology*. Chicago: Prickly Paradigm Press, 2004.

[40] Perlman. *Against His-story, Against Leviathan*, p. 2. On Perlman's aversion to chronology, see Perlman. *Having Little, Being Much*, p. 129.

[41] On Perlman's conflict with academia see Fredy Perlman. *The Incoherence of the Intellectual: C. Wright Mills' struggle to unite knowledge and action*. Detroit: Black & Red. 1970; Fredy Perlman. 'Critical Education.' www.rohan.sdsu.edu/~rgibson/critical_education.pdf

[42] Fredy Perlman. 'Definitive Leviathan?' *The Fifth Estate*. Vol. 18 No. 1 1983, p. 2.

[43] *Ibid*, p. 2.

eye, but these eyes are only allowed to see what Leviathan prescribes; all other 'visions' enter into that troublesome and unruly realm of 'phantoms' and 'decaying sense' that, regardless of their purported unreality, are still 'justly punished.' What Hobbes establishes in his treatise—and his frontispiece—by way of the antagonistic confrontation between Leviathan and the 'state of nature' is a bifurcation of 'vision.' His work divides 'vision' into two separate realms: the disobedient, esoteric 'vision' of the 'enthusiast,' witch, and 'rude' commoner, and the obedient, mechanistic gaze of Leviathan.

To return at this point to Perlman, his *Against His-story, Against Leviathan* attempts to graphically undermine the 'awe' Hobbes would attribute to Leviathan. With his adoption of Blake's image of monstrous transmutation from Dante's *Inferno*, Perlman denies Leviathan any semblance of humanity or discernibly noble physiognomy. Leviathan becomes a creature of Hell, a demonic Beast, a 'monstrous cadaver' whose 'artificial life' consists of nothing more than 'the motions of the human beings trapped inside.'[37] Leviathan does not sustain and nurture the 'body politic;' it devours the living and transforms them into 'springs and wheels.' The world of Leviathan is reduced to that of a blasted, hellish wasteland far removed from the peaceful concord of Hobbes' frontispiece. For Perlman, this peaceful concord exists only in that 'state of nature' Hobbes has attempted to restrain and banish from his commonwealth.

There is however greater depth to this visual confrontation than simply the graphic inversion of Hobbes' politics from an anti-authoritarian, primitivist perspective. Like Hobbes' own bifurcation of 'vision,' Perlman's frontispiece also graphically establishes the difference between two opposed 'visions:' the mechanistic and ornamental 'fancy' embodied in Hobbes' engraving and the visionary, poetic 'Imagination' that is foundational

[37] Perlman. *Against His-story, Against Leviathan*, p. 27.

also banishes their visionary 'Imagination.'[32] By so arguing that witches are deceitful liars and that religious 'enthusiasts' are all charlatans, Hobbes refuses to consider that their 'visions' and 'Imagination' may not be mere 'phantoms of the brain;' that the witch and spiritual 'enthusiast' may actually be experiencing and expressing a truth that defies Hobbes' de-spiritualised gaze.[33]Of course, as a mechanistic materialist and a polemicist against the ensouled 'final cause' of Aristotelianism, Hobbes cannot accept this possibility, even while concluding that esoteric spirituality remains a threat to the corporatist faith of Leviathan.[34] Deprived of a soul, the world becomes for Hobbes as it will for his close friend Francis Bacon, a 'Great Machine' that can be set upon, controlled, manipulated, and, in the words of Bacon, 'penetrated in all her secrets.'[35] This is true also of the human body, reduced now to an automaton moved 'by strings and wheels as doth a watch.'[36] Without a soul, and governed by external causes, humans become the site for new forms of manipulation and social control so as to instil in them 'civil obedience,' a process evidenced in the supplemental authority of images, idols, 'fancy' and 'ornament' that aid in keeping Leviathan's 'body politic' always 'in awe.'

There, in turn, emerges another dimension to Hobbes' opposition to the 'state of nature.' Hobbes and Leviathan stand not only against the perceived disorder of individual passions and desires, but they also stand against the perceived disorder of the esoteric and imaginative world of personal 'vision' and visionary experience. Hobbes may champion the optical workings of the human

[32] *Ibid*, pp. 141–142; Merchant. *The Death of Nature*, pp. 208–209.

[33] For the shamanic dimensions of European witchcraft, see Emma Wilby. *Cunning Folk and Familiar Spirits: Shamanistic visionary traditions in early modern British witchcraft and magic*. Brighton: Sussex Academic, 2005; Carlo Ginzburg. *Ecstasies: Deciphering the Witches' Sabbath*. New York: Pantheon, 1991.

[34] Merchant. *The Death of Nature*, p. 208.

[35] Federici. *Caliban and the Witch*, p. 140; Merchant. *The Death of Nature*, pp. 168–172.

[36] Hobbes. *Leviathan*, p. 14.

within or outside 'Western civilisation.'[44] Indeed, Perlman incorporates over twenty of Blake's engravings, etchings, and paintings into his essay, including one for his front cover, taken from an illustration for Dante's *Inferno*.[45] That Perlman incorporates these 'visions' into his text is testament to his invocation of—and authorisation of his work through—these poetic and visionary qualities. The inclusion, for instance, of Blake's visionary 'Imagination' here attests to Perlman's attempts at circumventing the need for 'Positive Evidence' and offering—in place of the 'historically solid interpretation'—a text that aspires to be understood as 'vision,' 'dream,' and 'myth.' Perlman abandons 'overarching conceptual frameworks' for 'visions of a transfigured and glorified world.'[46] Distinct from his earlier radical criticism, he does not 'simply represent and consecrate the established economy and politics of a community.'[47] He presents a 'vision' of a disfigured world—of cadaverous beasts devouring the living amidst hellish wastelands drawn from the fires of *Inferno*—and a transfigured world—of lost Paradises and Edenic gardens. Perlman's primitivism is not alone in this regard. John Zerzan was also considered to enter onto 'the terrain of the visionary,' and was noted for his capacity 'to share a dream, a vision.'[48] Primitivism has in this regard an element of

[44] The two works of poetry Perlman most references include Yeats' 'The Second Coming' and Eliot's 'The Waste Land.' W.B. Yeats. *The Collected Poems of W.B. Yeats*. New York: Simon & Schuster, 1996, p. 187; T.S. Eliot. *The Waste Land: Authoritative text, contexts, criticism*. New York: W.W. Norton, 2000. For a general overview of Blake see William Vaughan. *William Blake*. Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1999.

[45] David Bindman (ed.). *The Complete Graphic Works of William Blake*. London: Thames & Hudson, 1978, p. 460.

[46] Alphonso Lingis. 'Fantasy Space, Private Myths, Visions.' *Journal of Phenomenological Psychology*. Vol. 30 No. 2 1999, pp. 102–103.

[47] *Ibid*, pp. 102–103.

[48] Quoted in Bob Brubaker. 'Visions and Criticisms.' *The Fifth Estate*. Vol. 19 No. 1 1984, p. 2; Alice Carnes. 'Visionary Works.' *The Fifth Estate*. Vol. 18 No. 4, Winter 1984, p. 2.

the mythopoetic—an attempt to create new visions and myths for the modern world.[49]

As other commentators have remarked, Perlman's vision of a 'state of nature' that lies 'outside' civilisation possesses important esoteric dimensions. Even when acknowledging that the 'state of nature' is more often explicitly bound to indigenous and archaic societies, Watson has noted, for instance, how aboriginal 'lifeways, [and] their histories' can be considered a reminder 'that *other modes of being are possible*.'[50] Mick Smith has further emphasised the utopian and mythological dimensions of the 'state of nature' within primitivism—the association of this 'state of nature' or 'other shore' with the spiritually meaningful reality of the 'Golden Age.'[51]Watson too has recognised in Perlman's 'state of nature' and 'golden age' concerns with inner, spiritual transfiguration and altered states of consciousness. As he writes, Perlman acknowledges that 'the Golden Age, as Rousseau once remarked lies neither behind us nor in the distant future but *within* us.'[52]

Perlman's text is, in fact, replete with references to an *inner* 'state of nature,' or Golden Age *within*. Perlman makes reference to the 'individual's living spirit,' to the 'kingdom of God within' from a Christian perspective, and to an 'inner light,' a term borrowed expressly from Quaker spirituality.[53] Furthermore, throughout Perlman's narrative account of 'His-story,' there are sustained references to spiritual traditions, figures, and personages who are all described as having rediscovered this inner 'state of nature' or 'golden age' within, even though they are—like those aforementioned—

[49] For the mythopoetic element within primitivism, see Peter Werbe. 'The First Primitivist Essay: "Gary Snyder Asks: Poetry or machines? Back to the Stone Age." *Radical Archives*, radicalarchives.org. See also Gary Snyder. *The Old Ways*. San Francisco: City Lights Books, 1977.

[50] David Watson. *Beyond Bookchin: Preface for a future social ecology*. Detroit: Black & Red, 1996, p. 240.

[51] Smith. 'The State of Nature,' p. 421.

[52] Watson. 'Homage to Fredy Perlman,' p. 251.

[53] Perlman. *Against His-story Against Leviathan*, p. 2.

'vision.'[27] Visions of an otherworld, of fairies, sprites, and spirits—these are for Hobbes nothing more than 'phantoms of the brain,' contorted traces of what he calls 'decayed' sense experience.[28]

Even though Hobbes will ridicule these visions—now conceived as little more than 'decaying sense'—he stills considers the threat these 'enthusiasts' and 'visionaries' pose to 'the leviathan elevated to a symbol of state.'[29] As in the specific case of witches, Hobbes can proclaim 'I think not that their witchcraft is any real power,' but still believes they 'are justly punished, for the false belief they have, that they can do such mischief, joined with their purpose to do it if they can: their trade being nearer to a new religion, than to a craft or science.'[30] Hobbes considers the practitioner of witchcraft to be no more than a deceitful and dishonest liar, since they have no 'real power,' and their magic is little more than the product of an addled and deranged mind. They are however still 'justly punished,' because they undermine 'civil obedience' and pose a threat to the authority of Leviathan, particularly seeing that their 'mischief' enters onto the terrain of heresy—'their trade being nearer to a *new religion*.' This just punishment is, of course, far from the realm of triviality with which Hobbes treats the 'rude' or common person's sympathies for 'fairies, ghosts, and goblins' since Hobbes writes these words at a time when those accused of witchcraft were being persecuted en masse across Europe.[31]

As both Silvia Federici and Carolyn Merchant argue, in so denigrating witchcraft and other forms of spiritual 'enthusiasm,' Hobbes condemns not only those accused of witchcraft, but

[27] Hobbes. *Leviathan*, p. 14.

[28] *Ibid*, p. 11.

[29] Schmitt. *The Leviathan in the State Theory of Thomas Hobbes*, p. 62.

[30] Hobbes. *Leviathan*, p. 14.

[31] For Hobbes in the context of the witch hunts, see chapter three, 'The Great Caliban: The struggle against the rebel body' in Silvia Federici. *Caliban and the Witch: Women, the body and primitive accumulation*. Brooklyn: Autonomedia, 2004, pp. 133–161.

or 'ornament,' a supplementary vision of itself as that 'Mortal God' so as to assure that pluralistic 'body politic' remains perpetually in fearful awe of Leviathan.[22]

Hobbes' frontispiece is thus no mere visual flourish. It is integral to *Leviathan*, and demonstrates the marked role of the image, and vision more generally, in Hobbes' work, if not providing evidence of Hobbes' 'vision' or envisioning of the world. Indeed, Hobbes declared that vision is 'the noblest of the senses,' an emphasis reflected in his scientific explorations of human optics.[23] As his personal involvement in the production of images further attests, Hobbes was not necessarily averse to the human 'Imagination,' and its works of 'fancy' and 'ornament.'[24] This sympathy however only extended so far. While Hobbes could champion those politically expedient forms of 'fancy' that inculcated 'civil obedience,' this attitude did not extend to those spiritual 'enthusiasts' so prevalent during the English Civil War. Their plurality of esoteric 'visions' coupled to their 'plurality of voices' defied and transcended Hobbes' ideal of an orthodox faith bound to the corporate unity of civil and ecclesiastical authority in the body of Leviathan.[25] As Schmitt remarks, Hobbes and his Leviathan are hostile to any expression of esoteric spirituality, those 'secret societies and secret orders, Rosicrucians, freemasons, illuminates, mystics and pietists, all kinds of sectarians, the many 'silent ones in the land."[26] Extending, in an ever more prominent fashion, to include witches and witchcraft and the beliefs 'rude [common] people have of fairies, ghosts, and goblins,' Hobbes condescendingly denigrates and dismisses their

[22] Tralau. 'Leviathan, the Beast of Myth, p. 76.

[23] Bredekamp. 'Thomas Hobbes's Visual Strategies,' p. 38.

[24] Tralau. 'Leviathan, the Beast of Myth,' p. 65. See also Antoni Malet. 'The Power of Images: Mathematics and metaphysics in Hobbes's Optics.' *Studies in the History and Philosophy of Science*, Volume 32, Number 2, 2001, pp. 323–324.

[25] Jules Steinberg. *The Obsession of Thomas Hobbes: The English Civil War in Hobbes' political philosophy*. New York: P. Lanf, 1988.

[26] Carl Schmitt. *The Leviathan in the State Theory of Thomas Hobbes*. Westport: Greenwood, 1996, p. 60.

tioned seers and visionaries—conspicuous for their emergence within 'Western civilisation.' Prominent examples include the dualist religious traditions of Zoroastrianism and Manichaeism; early Christianity; medieval Christian heresies such as the Brethren of the Free Spirit, the Cathars, and Waldensians; the Beguine mysticism of Marguerite Porete; the nature-oriented spirituality of Saint Francis of Assisi; the Hussites, Taborites, and Adamites of the Czech Reform period; and, spiritual fellowships that emerged during the time of the English Civil War, such as the Ranters and Quakers.

While Perlman may refer to those who have reclaimed their 'living spirit' and inner 'state of nature,' references to 'spirit' are not always so avowedly positive in his text. This 'living spirit,' for example, stands in rather stark contrast with the malevolence of the 'Western spirit.' Taken from Frederick W. Turner's *Beyond Geography: The western spirit against the wilderness*, this 'Western spirit,' synonymous with Judaeo-Christian monotheism, is for Perlman the esoteric face of Leviathan.[54] This malignant 'Western spirit' is the microcosmic reflection of a macrocosmic Leviathan, a 'spirit' of conquest and aggression, fear and ignorance directed towards the Other, and enacting 'a war of extermination by Spirit against Nature, Soul against Body, Technology against the Biosphere, Civilization against Mother Earth, God against all.'[55] The esoteric nature of Perlman's text has in this sense a double meaning. Much as his text includes the esoteric qualities of a 'vision,' a 'story,' a 'dream' and a 'myth,' so too can the text's apparently mundane definition of the 'state of nature' and Leviathan be said to encompass other esoteric resonances and meanings, in particular, these rather broad, if conflicted textual concerns with and understandings of the human 'spirit.'

[54] Frederick W. Turner. *Beyond Geography: The western spirit against the wilderness*. New York: Viking Press, 1980.

[55] Perlman. *Against His-story, Against Leviathan*, p. 4.

In the following thesis, I would like to critically engage with these esoteric and spiritual layers of meaning in Perlman's text. As I would maintain, such a major primitivist text as *Against History, Against Leviathan* cannot be properly understood through sole reliance upon what Perlman derogatively refers to as 'Positive Evidence.' Perlman's primitivism is not founded upon a rational analysis of historical and anthropological evidence. His work is founded upon a 'myth,' a 'dream,' a 'vision;' and, any evidentiary-based study, critical or otherwise, is ultimately limited and incomplete without taking greater acknowledgement of these esoteric, visionary, spiritual, mythological, and utopian origins of Perlman's primitivism.

Still, I would not suggest an exclusive focus upon such meaningful concerns. Perlman's text may better resemble a 'vision' with its infusion of fictive and mythopoetic elements, but I would not, in turn, propose that this work holds little to no import for a 'primitivist theoretical agenda.'[56] Perlman's text is rather ambiguous enough in its relationship to 'Positive Evidence' to have supported these theoretically mundane readings.[57] The promulgation of a 'primitivist theoretical agenda' on the basis of Perlman's essay is not the product of a gross misreading of a poetic 'vision,' but one possible—and quite understandable—interpretation of a text where Perlman calls upon 'scholarly evidence *to support his vision*' and in consequence 'transports it to a more mundane plane, inevitably calling forth responses and counter evidence.'[58]

Furthermore, this literary, fictive 'vision' remains still a 'vision' of something far more tangible.[59] While there remains always in

[56] For one attempt to deny the theoretical implications of Perlman's text, see Watson. 'Swamp Fever, Primitivism & The "Ideological Vortex."

[57] Indeed, Perlman did not 'shrink from the implications of his position' and his 'all-inclusive critique of machines and modern agriculture.' Perlman. *Having Little, Being Much*, p. 108.

[58] Brubaker. 'Visions and Criticisms,' p. 2.

[59] As Daniel Fuchs notes, 'The problem with the visionary defence—especially in fiction, which includes so much particularity—is that it seems to

the 'state of nature.' In this state, the individual as machine does not so much break down, as it reverts to its original condition before the imposition of Leviathanic authority: 'a state of chaos, anarchy, and fear brought about by the material appetites of each individual for competition, domination, and glory.'[19] A domain of war, violence, and human selfishness, the 'state of nature' finds confirmation for Hobbes in the lives of Native Americans of the New World, where Hobbes held a personal interest in the form of shares with two prominent colonial entities: the Virginia Company and the Somers Island Company.[20]

Despite its absence from the *Leviathan* frontispiece, this 'state of nature' in the Americas finds visual confirmation in the frontispiece for Hobbes' *De Cive*. The state of nature is here labelled *libertas* in dissociation from *Civitas*. Where *Civitas* stands for divine order and sovereign authority, represented by an angel whose sword points upward towards heaven, *libertas* encompasses anarchy and disorder, represented by a Native American Indian holding an arrow that points downward to a terrestrial, profane landscape of pillage, murder, and cannibalism. For Hobbes, of course, the brutality of the 'state of nature' has no strict geographical boundaries. It is not a 'State,' but a state of existence bound to those prideful and egotistical passions of the human mechanism. These are passions and appetites that remain always capable of return, re-emerging for Hobbes in the civil and religious disorder of the English Civil War, a state of anarchy to which Hobbes proposes a solution in the magisterial and sovereign body of Leviathan.[21] However, as the frontispiece also suggests, Leviathan's sovereignty is not enough to restrain these passions; Leviathan requires some form of 'fancy'

[19] Carolyn Merchant. *The Death of Nature: Women, ecology, and the scientific revolution*. San Francisco: Harper & Row, 1980, p. 209.

[20] N.R. Malcolm. 'Hobbes, Sandys, and the Virginia Company.' *The Historical Journal* Number 24 1981, pp. 297–321.

[21] J.P. Sommerville. *Thomas Hobbes: Politics ideas in historical context*. Basingstoke: Macmillan, 1992.

they shelter.[15] These similarities however are not without quite pronounced differences insofar as the organic and fructifying power of Rudolph's body is absent not only from Leviathan but also from the pastoral landscape he watches over. This sovereign is truly an 'artificial man,' a construct, a machine, and so is the natural world around him. Leviathan reflects Hobbes' mechanistic materialism and his conception of nature as automaton and his understanding of God as the 'great artificer' whereas Rudolph's portrait looks to the esoteric influences of astrology, alchemy, and magic.[16]

Much as Leviathan emerges as an independent sovereign authority from the greater sum of the political community's mechanised 'body politic' who have appointed 'one man, or assembly of men, *to bear their person*,' so too is Leviathan an independent and alien visual register of political authority, that is to say, a political Idol or 'Mortal God'—an object imbued with an awe-full potency that is not so much an object of worship as an object of fear.[17] Like the biblical Leviathan, from which Hobbes acquired the name for his artificial creation, this 'Mortal God' is to be held 'in awe' by those who created it, an aura best summarised in the quotation from the Book of Job that surmounts his head: '*Non est potestas Super Terram quae Comparetur*:' 'there is no power on earth to be compared to him.'[18]

The awed and idolatrous presence of Leviathan is necessary for Hobbes because of a discordant and entropic force conspicuously absent from the wellordered landscape of the frontispiece:

[15] Dario Gamboni. 'Composing the Body Politic: Composite images and political representation, 1651–2004,' in Bruno Latour and Peter Weibel (eds.). *Making Things Public: Atmospheres of democracy*. Cambridge: MIT Press, 2005, pp. 163–164.

[16] Peter Marshall. *The Theatre of the World: Alchemy, astrology, and magic in Renaissance Prague*. London: Harvill Secker, 2006.

[17] Hobbes. *Leviathan*, p. 114; Bredekamp. 'Thomas Hobbes's Visual Strategies,' p. 40.

[18] Hobbes. *Leviathan*, p. 114.

Perlman's work the reality of indigenous and archaic 'modes of being' along with the concrete reality of modern technocracies, this tangible kernel in Perlman's 'vision' is his radical political background. Perlman's 'vision' serves to imbue the radical implications of his text with a meaningful, transcendental significance, albeit in a nontheological form.[60] As I would argue, the meaningful 'vision' of *Against His-story, Against Leviathan* is inextricably bound to Perlman's mundane background in radical politics. Perlman may therefore express his 'vision' in a fictive form, but this is not to ignore how his work is still fundamentally 'fraught with political directives and implications.'[61] As in the visionary poet Perlman most admires—William Blake—his work is born of a visionary radicalism that is capable of combining together sacred and secular concerns, and enjoining symbolic imagery with a sustained indictment of the existent order of things.[62] Perlman even goes on to define so many of the spiritual luminaries within his text as those who have not only rediscovered their 'living spirit,' but also as forces of resistance, rebellion, and insurgency against Leviathan. Perlman thus speaks of '*spirited* revolutionaries,' 'daring radicals and visionaries,' and mystical 'Anarchists.'[63] Perlman's text is not in this sense simply a 'vision,' but what I would term a politico-spiritual 'vision' that

forget that the writer is giving us a vision of something.' Daniel Fuchs. *The Limits of Ferocity: Sexual aggression and modern literary rebellion*. Durham and London: Duke University Press, 2011, pp. 229–230.

[60] William A. Johnson. *The Search for Transcendence: A theological analysis of nontheological attempts to define transcendence*. New York: Harper & Row, 1974.

[61] Richard Wolin. *The Seduction of Unreason: The intellectual romance with fascism, from Nietzsche to postmodernism*. Princeton and Oxford: Princeton University Press, 2004, p. 53.

[62] The classic work on Blake's radicalism is David V. Erdman. *Blake: prophet against Empire, a poet's interpretation of the history of his own times*. Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1954. See also Peter Marshall. *William Blake: Visionary anarchist*. London: Freedom Press, 1988; and E.P. Thompson. *Witness Against the Beast: William Blake and the Moral Law*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1993.

[63] Perlman. *Against His-story, Against Leviathan*, pp. 101, 204, 221.

unites these visionary and spiritual elements with long-standing practico-theoretical commitments to radical social transformation.

Indeed, the major problematic for this thesis emerges precisely out of the tensions and contradictions that arise from this union in Perlman's essay of politics and 'spirit.' I consider this overt politicisation of 'spirit' so problematic—and the basis for that problem of inversion mentioned earlier—because Perlman also encloses his politico-spiritual 'vision' within existing structuring political antagonisms. This is no where more apparent than in Perlman's maintenance of Thomas Hobbes' political conflict between Leviathan and the 'state of nature.' Perlman, of course, alters the antagonistic relationship between the two by exalting the 'state of nature' and opposing Leviathan. However, this challenge does no more than invert this structuring political antagonism. Instead of questioning this conflict, Perlman reinscribes this division along reconstituted lines of hostility and defence. Perlman turns said political oppositions upside down, but fails to question the fundamental antagonistic dualism on which this division is predicated, a division closely bound to those other structuring political antagonisms of order and chaos, inside and outside, friend and enemy.[64]

As John Moore has remarked of the later primitivist writings of Perlman, his work forcibly confines division and difference 'within a Manichean framework of binary oppositions,' dualistic oppositions 'that characterise Western thought.'[65] Perlman has sought to discover 'intimations of an "outside" and a "beyond."'[66] Perlman has again sought to move beyond Leviathan's 'iron curtain of in-

[64] On these foundational dualities of the political, see Giorgio Agamben. *Homo Sacer: Sovereign power and bare life*. Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1998; and, Carl Schmitt. *The Concept of the Political*. Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2007.

[65] John Moore. 'Introduction,' in John Moore (ed.). *The Machine Against the Garden: Two essays on American literature and culture*. London: Aporia Press 1992, p. 4–5.

[66] *Ibid* p. 5.

like Hobbes himself—during the English Civil War.[10] He further participated in the design of the title-page for his earlier 1642 treatise *De Cive*, and had sketched a map of ancient Greece for his translation of Thucydides' 'Eight Books of the Peloponnesian Warre.'[11] Complementing this personal involvement in the production of images, Margery Corbett and Ronald Lightbown affirm the marked physiognomical resemblance between the sovereign figure who dominates the *Leviathan* frontispiece and Hobbes himself.[12] For Corbett and Lightbown, this affinity is 'a version of the traditional author-portrait in which the author and the concepts he expounds in his book are united into a single image.'[13] As a visual register of Hobbes' accord with the ideas set forth in *Leviathan*, the frontispiece becomes a personal statement, a declaration enjoining authorial creator with his creation: the 'artificial man' that is Leviathan.[14]

While Hobbes' image of the sovereign is so distinctive, his frontispiece does find comparison with another near contemporary portrait: Giuseppe Arcimboldo's painting of Rudolph II as Vertumnus, the Roman god of seasons. Though, in this image, the sovereign is here composed not of innumerable bodies but of fruits and vegetables. Even still, both images still graphically convey the generative power of the sovereign—both sustain the communities

[10] Malcolm Noel. 'The Titlepage of *Leviathan*, Seen in a Curious Perspective.' *Seventeenth Century* Volume 13 Number 2 1998, p. 124.

[11] Bredekamp. 'Thomas Hobbes's Visual Strategies,' pp. 44–46.

[12] Margery Corbett and Ronald Lightbown. *The Comely Frontispiece: The emblematic title-page in England, 1550–1660*. London: Routledge & Kegan Paul, 1979, pp. 228–229.

[13] *Ibid*, p. 229.

[14] Critics in Hobbes' own time referred to him as the 'Monster of Malmsbury.' Samuel I. Mintz. *The Hunting of Leviathan: Seventeenth-century reactions to the materialism and moral philosophy of Thomas Hobbes*. London: Cambridge University Press, 1964, p. vii.

famous frontispiece for *Leviathan*. Perlman is opposed not only to Hobbes' political vision but also Hobbes' envisioning of Leviathan as 'artificial man.' He establishes this visual opposition from the outset of his text through contrast with his own frontispiece image for *Against His-story, Against Leviathan*: an engraving by William Blake for the twenty-fifth canto of Dante's *Inferno*, wherein the character of Agnolo Brunelleschi is attacked by and transformed into a six-footed serpent.[7] As I would like to consider, this visual conflict is suggestive of an equally important conflict of 'vision' in Perlman's work, a conflict between differing conceptions of sight and perception that informs his politico-spiritual battle between the 'state of nature' and Leviathan, and the tensions between his message of spiritual renewal and spiritual estrangement. To consider these issues, I would initially like to explore, from a comparative standpoint, the role of 'vision' in the work of that thinker Perlman so opposes: Hobbes' *Leviathan*.

The frontispiece for Hobbes' 1651 treatise remains one of the most striking and enigmatic visual figurations of political theory. A 'political *arcanum*' in the words of Carl Schmitt, Hobbes' inscrutable image is still subject to considerable debate as to its meaning and significance.[8] Attributed to the French engraver Abraham Bosse, the design and composition of the *Leviathan* frontispiece was completed under Hobbes' supervision since he was personally familiar with the process of engraving.[9] Hobbes had even helped create an earlier version of the Leviathan title-page, canvassing a special edition for Charles II, who had been exiled in Paris—much

[7] Bindman. *The Complete Graphic Works of William Blake*, p. 460.

[8] Johan Tralau. 'Leviathan, the Beast of Myth: Medusa, Dionysus, and the riddle of Hobbes's sovereign monster.' in Patricia Springborg (ed.). *The Cambridge Companion to Hobbes's* Leviathan. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2007, p. 67.

[9] Horst Bredekamp. 'Thomas Hobbes's Visual Strategies,' in Patricia Springborg (ed.). *The Cambridge Companion to Hobbes's* Leviathan. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2007, p. 40.

version and falsification.' Perlman has not however moved beyond this 'iron curtain' because his 'outside' and his 'beyond' are still ensconced 'inside' the dualistic and binary antagonisms of the Western political tradition—much like his 'state of nature' is derived from a Western re-presentation of the non-Western Other. Perlman is emphatically against Leviathan, but this political opposition is only an inverted form of the political framework he so emphatically condemns.

This antagonistic political framework, in turn, serves to encumber Perlman's 'vision' and his conception of 'spirit.' Perlman's spiritual 'vision' itself devolves into an extremely rigid and dualistic worldview because opposites and oppositions are forcibly enclosed within this inverted, political 'war of extermination' between 'state of nature' and Leviathan. Where Perlman structures his work through a 'Manichean framework of binary oppositions,' he too resuscitates a dualistic spiritual symbolism drawn from the Western Judaeo-Christian tradition, as well as dualist religions, such as Zoroastrianism and Manichaeism.[67] Despite the fact that Perlman's 'vision' forcibly unites together the political with the spiritual, this union in a contradictory fashion serves in the promotion of an antagonistic worldview that continues to set good against evil, light against darkness, life against death, the pure against the impure, the meaningful against the meaningless.

Again, as with Perlman's inversion of Hobbes' political framework, this dualistic spiritual symbolism that pervades his text is not the basis for the discovery of a 'way out' of either 'Western civilisation' or this so-called 'Western spirit' with its attendant 'war of extermination.' These antagonisms do not provide evidence of an 'outside' and a 'beyond.' These structuring binary oppositions are instead located 'inside' the Western religious tradition Perlman opposes. This point, in turn, is one of the main reasons why I am far more concerned in this thesis with Perlman's conflicted relation-

[67] Perlman. *Against His-story, Against Leviathan*, p. 79.

ship to this Western Judaeo-Christian heritage in place of explicit concerns with his primitivist re-actualisation of the spiritual wisdom of non-Western cultures and societies. As I argue, the primitivist critique of 'Western civilisation' needs to be placed within the political and religious context from which it has attempted to extricate itself, rather than strictly adhering either to the primitivist's own belligerent disdain for this heritage or the primitivist's manifest identity with another tradition that exists 'outside' it.[68]

As I would further maintain, Perlman's text reinstates some of the more maligned facets of the Western Judaeo-Christian tradition, of which this antagonistic dualism is a central part. I refer here to what Michael Grosso has termed 'malignant transcendence,' particularly in the context of Western strivings for utopia and the 'Golden Age.'[69] I too borrow from Bron Taylor's work on the spiritual dimensions of 'radical environmentalism' and primitivism, or what Taylor has more broadly situated under the title of 'dark green religion.' As Taylor notes, these contemporary expressions of 'dark green religion' are not simply 'dark' in the sense of a 'deep shade of green' by way of a committed 'belief in the intrinsic value of nature;' they are 'dark' because they also posses a 'shadow side.'[70] 'Dark green religion' may defend the 'intrinsic value of nature,' but this defence can, as Taylor notes, devolve into a misanthropic contempt for human beings; make recourse to apocalyptic narratives that all too often sanctify violence; and, give way

[68] Cf. Ched Myers. 'Anarcho-primitivism and the Bible,' in Bron Taylor (ed.). *Encyclopedia of Religion and Nature*. New York: Continuum, 2005, pp. 56–60.

For this primitivist rejection of the Judaeo-Christian tradition, see David Watson. 'Nature, Flesh, Spirit: Against Christianity.' *Fifth Estate*. Volume 19 Number 2 1984, pp. 9–10.

On this relationship between primitivism and indigenous spirituality see David Watson. 'Anarchy and the Sacred', in David Watson. *Against the Megamachine: Essays on empire & its enemies*. Brooklyn: Autonomedia, 1997, pp. 159–174.

[69] Michael Grosso. *The Millennium Myth: Love and death at the end of time*. London: Quest Books, 1995, p. 11.

[70] Taylor. *Dark Green Religion*, p. 223.

problems with Perlman's estrangement from the modern world in terms of his allegiance to a Marxist conception of the 'totality,' and his representation of Leviathan as an 'artificial man' or 'Frankenstein's monster' that has loosed the bounds of its creators.

In lieu of these problems with the spiritual symbolism and politico-theoretical foundations of Perlman's text, I turn in section four to one of the major sources of the text's structuring antagonistic divisions: historical time. To explore these issues, I attend to Mick Smith's reading of the primitivist 'golden age' or 'state of nature:' that the 'golden age' belongs not to the mundaneness of historical time, but rather to the meaningfulness of cyclical, mythological time. Taking cognizance of Perlman's incorporation of both a historically 'mundane' and mythically 'meaningful' account of the 'state of nature,' I move in section five beyond Smith's problematic to a consideration of how these intersections give rise to a very different spiritual 'meaning' in Perlman's text: apocalyptic catastrophism. Through a comparative discussion of Frederick Turner's *Beyond Geography: The western spirit against the wilderness*, I consider how Perlman's problematic conflation of a historically mundane 'golden age' with a spiritually meaningful 'golden age' invokes the spiritual malaise of Turner's 'Western spirit,' reinstates its historical estrangement, and recaptures its message of spiritual renewal in terms of a violent and catastrophic apocalypticism. In lieu of these problems, I consider an alternative conception of spiritual renewal predicated upon the reconciliation of mundane, historical time with the 'meaningful' through questions of historical remembrance, and that of a processual understanding of change and transformation.

Section One: The Strait

As noted in the introduction to this thesis, Perlman's opposition to Hobbes' Leviathan is conveyed through reference to Hobbes' in-

sense, I will not be following Perlman into a consideration of the spiritual vacuity of the *zek*; I will rather attend to the bleakness of Perlman's 'vision' and its failure to provide hope for any meaningful forms of renewal.

I consider these problems across two interconnected points of discussion: Perlman's definition of 'vision' coupled with his spiritual symbolism, and Perlman's conflicted understanding of time and 'His-story.' To introduce the importance of 'vision' in Perlman's conception of 'spirit,' I begin in section one with a comparative discussion of the role of 'vision' in that text Perlman stands so emphatically against: Thomas Hobbes' *Leviathan*. Through an account of Hobbes' own divisive rendering of 'vision,' I consider how Perlman problematically maintains this visual antagonism, in an inverted form, by way of his distinction between the 'gaze'—associable with the modern tourist—and 'visionary' experience—identified with the seer. Here, in particular, I take note of the spiritual symbolism Perlman establishes on the basis of this antagonism: the image of two shores—these modern shores and the 'other shore' ascribed to a past 'state of nature'—both of which are separated from each other by 'the strait.' While acknowledging the esoteric implications of this 'strait' and this scission, I too recognise its overtly historical significance—that Perlman has by way of 'the strait' divided off a literal, historical 'state of nature' or 'golden age' of integral spiritual wholeness from a dissolute and spiritually barren modernity.

Following this point, I consider in section two Perlman's adoption of T.S. Eliot's poem 'The Waste Land' and its attendant symbolism. By way of comparison, I take particular note of Perlman's literal definition of this 'Waste' through his excremental portrait of modernity. Read alongside 'the strait' and the imagery of the two shores, I maintain that Perlman's spiritual 'vision,' instead of contributing to a message of spiritual renewal and reconciliation between these two shores, exacerbates a message of historical and spiritual estrangement. In section three, I further consider these

to a mood of 'selfrighteousness and a tendency to demonize adversaries.'[71] In relation to *Against His-story, Against Leviathan*, I would like to consider how such malign elements are a direct consequence of Perlman's primitivism and his politico-spiritual 'vision.' Though, more specifically, I would also suggest that Perlman's 'shadow' derives from his conflicted relationship with these antagonistic and dualistic facets of the Western political and religious traditions.

I find Perlman's repetition and re-inscription of this antagonistic politicospiritual framework all the more problematic because there are subtle indications throughout his text of another understanding of 'spirit' that does not conclude in an inverted 'war of extermination.' Rather, this conception of 'spirit' encompasses a message of reconciliation and relationship between opposites that overturns these dualistic antagonisms in some form of sympathetic polarity or dialectic. Opposites are here reconciled with each other: heaven with hell, light with dark, good with evil, life with death, the pure with the impure, and the meaningful discernible within the meaningless. Indeed, so many, but certainly not all, of those spiritual personages and influences Perlman refers to in his text are noteworthy because they overturn the 'war of extermination' Perlman attributes to Leviathan and the 'Western spirit.' These influences do not, as with Perlman, simply invert existing antagonisms; they reconcile these divisions and differences. Further distinct from Perlman's own attempts to withdraw to the 'outside,' they more appropriately suggest alternatives from within existing political and religious traditions, particularly from within the context of the Western Judaeo-Christian tradition. However, as I would also suggest, there is a concurrent tendency on Perlman's part to elide this reconciliatory alternative and instead to forcibly confine this message of reconciliation within Perlman's structuring politico-spiritual opposition of 'state of nature' against Leviathan.

[71] *Ibid*, p. 218.

While my thesis therefore offers a critical interpretation of Perlman's politicospiritual 'vision' and the tensions and contradictions that arise from his forced marriage of politics and 'spirit,' I would also like to draw out this still evident, if stifled message of spiritual reconciliation in Perlman's text. If this thesis is a critical interpretation of *Against His-story, Against Leviathan*, it too possesses an element of reinterpretation or reconstruction, particularly through comparison with some of the text's major spiritual influences and the reconciliatory message that guides them. There is here an attempt to work through the contradictions and tensions in Perlman's politico-spiritual 'vision' and thus to provide suggestions or intimations of an alternative reading of this text's apparent, but stifled message of reconciliation.

In terms of this reinterpretation and reconstruction, I have found particularly helpful a number of contemporary academic debates concerning the intersections between spirituality and radical social transformation, debates that have emerged primarily but not exclusively out of critical engagements with the anarchist tradition.[72]There are two contemporary thinkers, in particular, who have assisted in this search for an alternative reading of Perlman's text: Arthur Versluis and Simon Critchley. Although both thinkers hold different backgrounds and emphases, they together share in an attempt to think beyond the antagonistic dualisms of the political and do so by recognising that these foundational antagonisms—of friend against enemy, order against chaos—in critical allusion to the work of Carl Schmitt, consists of secularised theological concepts drawn from the Western Judaeo-Christian

[72] See, for instance, Alexandre J.M.E. Christoyannopoulos (ed.). *Religious Anarchism: New Perspectives*. Newcastle: Cambridge Scholars Publishing, 2009.

On anarchism and utopia, see, in particular, Lauren David and Ruth Kinna (eds.). *Anarchism and Utopianism*. Manchester: Manchester University Press, 2009; Ruth Kinna. 'Politics, Ideology and Utopia: A defence of eutopian worlds.' *Journal of Political Ideologies*. Volume 16 Number 3 2011, pp. 279–294.

cial body. It is moreover a term Perlman extends—with not a little insult to the actual victims of the Soviet Union's labour camps—to all modern workers in contemporary Western liberal democratic societies.[3] In regards to these labouring masses, Perlman writes that 'zeks do not reproduce a *meaningful* context.'[4] They cannot recreate cultural 'meaning' because they apparently have no 'spirit' left to renew. Perlman thus despairingly asks towards the conclusion of his essay whether modern *zeks* 'do indeed still have an "inner light," namely an ability to reconstitute lost rhythms, to recover music, to regenerate human cultures.'[5] While he elsewhere reservedly concedes that *zeks* 'however stunted they may be, still possess what Quakers call an "inner light,"' Perlman's message is hardly one of a spiritual renascence; it is a message of the evacuation and estrangement of 'spirit' from the modern world, a diminution of humanity's 'inner light' that would make renewal a rather difficult prospect.[6]

Instead of passing over this pessimism, I believe these statements are an indication of the tensions and contradictions in Perlman's primitivist rendering of the human 'spirit' and spiritual renewal. In the following discussion, I will maintain that this despondency is not an aberrant departure from a narrative otherwise notable for its life-affirming celebration of the human 'spirit.' I would rather suggest that Perlman's cynicism is inscribed into his spiritual 'vision' and its derisive portrait of the modern world. In this

[3] The *zek* is a recurring figure in Alexander Solzhenitsyn. *The Gulag Archipelago: 1918–1956*. Collins: Melbourne, 1973. As Perlman elsewhere writes of this identity between the gulags and life in a Western liberal democracy, 'I can't summarize Solzhenitsyn's findings; his books have to be read. In a brief space I can only say that the part of life spent in *Arbeit* [work], the triviality of existence in a commodity market as seller or customer, worker or client, leaves an individual without kinship or community or meaning.' Fredy Perlman. *Anti-Semitism and the Beirut Pogrom*. Detroit: Black & Red, 2002, p. 21.

[4] Perlman. *Against His-story, Against Leviathan*, p. 178.

[5] *Ibid*, p. 301.

[6] *Ibid*, p. 300.

Part One: "This is the Wasteland:" Visions of the golden age, visions of apocalypse

A recurring theme in Perlman's *Against His-story, Against Leviathan* concerns the renewal and regeneration of the human 'spirit.' Whether conceived as the 'living spirit,' 'golden age' within, or, in allusion to the Quakers, an 'inner light,' this renewal of 'spirit' is so emphasised because it is entwined with the renewal of 'human cultures' in the face of a mechanistic 'civilisation,' a distinction between 'culture' and 'civilization' that encompasses Perlman's structuring demarcation between the 'state of nature' and Leviathan.[1] As a 'humanly meaningless web of unnatural constraints,' civilisation is not only considered to be diametrically opposed to the human 'spirit' but also incapable of creating a 'meaningful' culture.[2]

For all this emphasis upon the recreation of a 'meaningful' culture through the rediscovery of humanity's 'inner light,' Perlman displays marked pessimism about any such renewal, particularly in the modern world. This is most pronounced in his disparaging remarks towards the *zek*. A Sumerian word for 'slave' and Russian word for prisoners of the Soviet Union's gulags, the *zek* is one of the many faceless 'springs and wheels' that make up Leviathan's artifi-

[1] Perlman. *Against His-story, Against Leviathan*, p. 301.
[2] *Ibid*, p. 208.

tradition.[73] Critchley, for instance, speaks of the operative force of 'original sin' across the entire political spectrum—the positing of an inherent evil and iniquity in human beings that justifies Statist and authoritarian forms of government.[74] Versluis, in turn, has attended to Schmitt's founding political distinction between friend and enemy, and how this distinction is a secular rendering of the religious demarcation of orthodoxy from heresy, truth from falsity, and good from evil.[75]

Following from an understanding of these structuring political and theological distinctions, Versluis and Critchley have both considered alternatives to these dualistic antagonisms within the context of Western esoteric spirituality and mysticism. As Versluis maintains in his *The New Inquisitions*, Western esoteric spirituality and mysticism presents an alternative to these foundational politicoreligious antagonisms because it 'is based upon the mystic's transcendence of dualism.'[76] Western esoteric spirituality does not provide 'an outward path that requires the domination of others or of the natural world but an inward path that culminates in a joyous transcendence of self-and-other, that is to say, in an *overcoming* of dualism.'[77] In referring to a 'mystical anarchism,' Critchley too explores the 'overcoming' of 'original sin' and the dualism of good against evil, self against other on which it is predicated through reference to the Beguine mystic Marguerite Porete and her text *The Mirror of Simple Souls*.[78] In all, they acknowledge the significance

[73] Carl Schmitt. *Political Theology: Four chapters on the concept of sovereignty*. Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2006, p. 1.
[74] Simon Critchley. 'Mystical Anarchism.' *Critical Horizons: A journal of philosophy and social theory*. Volume 10 Number 2, 2009, p. 278. This article is collected in Simon Critchley. *The Faith of the Faithless: Experiments in political theology*. London and New York: Verso, 2014.
[75] Arthur Versluis. *The New Inquisitions: Heretic-Hunting and the intellectual origins of modern totalitarianism*. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2006, p. 91.
[76] *Ibid*, p. 156.
[77] *Ibid*, p. 156.
[78] Critchley. 'Mystical Anarchism,' pp. 292–294.

of Western esoteric spirituality in the rediscovery of alternate ways of being-in-common with others that transcends the antagonistic terrain of the political, but which also possesses practical and socially transformative possibilities of its own.

While Versluis and Critchley have greatly informed the search for an alternative to Perlman's own inverted politico-spiritual 'war of extermination,' I do not believe their conclusions ultimately support the discovery of a message of spiritual reconciliation in Perlman's work. This divergence emerges from their quite specific definition of mystical experience in terms of this '*overcoming* of duality.' Dualism, whether in politics or religion, is counter-posed with a spiritual experience of non-duality or non-dual unity. Herein, non-dual experience overcomes the difference between opposites through direct contemplative union or identity with that Ultimate Reality—the One or God—which transcends the multiplicity of differences, divisions and dualities that constitute mundane existence.[79]

I find this position particularly troubling in the context of Perlman's text because a major theme in this thesis is that of a certain critical reservation towards notions of 'overcoming,' or what has been referred to here as the search for an 'outside,' a 'beyond,' a 'way out.' The problem I have discerned here is the problem of inversion, and the ways in which this attempt to 'overcome,' to reach 'beyond,' and discover a 'way out' of a corrupt and illusory world of division, difference, and duality might ineluctably fold back in on itself, returning to and repeating—on an inverted level—the dualities of that divided world from which it has purportedly escaped and transcended.

Certainly, Versluis has in later works tempered his definition of mysticism by speaking in a more limited sense of an '*inclination* away from subject-object dualism and toward subject-object

[79] Arthur Versluis. *The Mystical State: Politics, gnosis, and emerging cultures.* Minneapolis: New Cultures Press, 2011, p. 123.

of friendship that broadens one's circle of concern. I draw, in particular, upon Perlman's conflicted relationship with the pacific and non-violent current within Christianity, including his own personal relationship to the Quakers, and a lingering debt to the anarcho-pacifism of the founders of New York's Living Theatre: Judith Malina and Julian Beck.

spiritual, emotional and affective dimension to questions of social change and transformation, inclusive of resistance and opposition. Toynbee speaks of an emotional 'stimulus' amidst those tasked with responding to the challenges of the 'disintegrating society.' For Toynbee, the 'problem of resistance' is the problem of resisters emotionally enslaving themselves to the object they oppose, a 'stimulus' of hatred, wrathfulness, and vengeance that provides little basis for an affirmative and positive act of creation. Resistance gives way instead to a 'sterile conventional militancy,' an uncreative sterility that simply inverts existing social antagonisms and turns the search for a social alternative into a war.

Through comparison with Toynbee, I consider how Perlman's own politicospiritual 'vision' and 'spirited' conception of opposition demonstrate a problematic relationship with exactly this form of 'sterile conventional militancy.' To explore these problems, I turn in section three to a comparative account of several major spiritual influences in Perlman's work: William Blake, Lao Tzu's *Tao Te Ching*, and the figure of the trickster in world mythology. I here consider how Perlman evades their dialectical and 'contrarian' figurations of resistance as well as their artful practice of transformation. Returning to Toynbee, I argue that Perlman's primitivism does not offer a successful 'response' to the 'challenge' of Leviathan because his position only reconstitutes its divisive antagonistic political terrain. I too suggest that Perlman's primitivism reinstates an inverted politics of the colonial 'frontier'—of the outside against the inside, the barbarian against the civilised—a position that attempts to forcibly deny the complexities of the modern world.

Finally, I consider those still extant references in Perlman's work to 'spirited' forms of resistance that do not cleave to this 'sterile conventional militancy,' but rather profess what Toynbee's calls a politics of 'gentleness.' This 'gentle way' is predicated not upon politico-spiritual warfare and hatred towards a demonised enemy, but rather a message of social reconciliation and a politics

unity.'[80] While this definition allows for greater interpretive freedom, it too introduces a pronounced confusion because 'inclination' and 'overcoming' are not coequal with each other. Versluis is speaking of two very different tiers of mystical experience. One is only inclined away from dualism, whereas the other is more emphatic because it purports to 'overcome' duality. What Versluis evades in these shifting definitions of mysticism is to acknowledge other 'typologies' of mysticism and spirituality that are neither inclined to move away from subject-object dualism nor overcome dualism *in toto*.[81] These are traditions that emphasise what might be better described as the transfiguration of the world's divisions, differences, and dualities.[82] They reconcile with duality instead of overcoming it.[83]

In contrast with mystical expressions of oneness and unity, these other traditions emphasise what Martin Buber refers to as a spirituality of the 'between.'[84] There is here a dialogical and

[80] *Ibid*, p. 116.

[81] Jonathan R. Herman. *I and Tao: Martin Buber's encounter with Chuang Tzu*. Albany: State University of New York Press, 1996, p. 177.

[82] For a general overview, see Shmuel Hugo Bergman. *Dialogical philosophy from Kierkegaard to Buber*. Albany: State University of New York Press, 1991.

For the classic exposition of a dialogical spirituality, see Martin Buber. *I and Thou*. New York: Touchstone, 1970; Maurice S. Friedman. *Martin Buber: The life of dialogue 4th Edition*. London and New York: Routledge, 2002.

For a philosophical account, see William James. *A Pluralistic Universe: Hibbert Lectures at Manchester College on the present situation in philosophy*. Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press, 1996.

On the psychoanalytic transfiguration of duality, see, David Bakan. *The Duality of Human Existence*. Chicago: Rand McNally & Company, 1966.

On the transfiguration of duality in Johann Wolfgang von Goethe, see Astrida Orle Tantillo. *The Will to Create: Goethe's philosophy of nature*. Pittsburgh: University of Pittsburgh Press, 2002.

[83] Andrew Metcalfe and Ann Game. ''In the Beginning is Relation': Martin Buber's alternative to binary oppositions.' *Sophia*. Vol. 51 No. 3, 2012, pp. 351–363.

[84] Maurice Freedman. 'Introductory Essay,' in Martin Buber. *The Knowledge of Man: A philosophy of the interhuman*. New York and Evanston: Harper & Row, 1965, p. 11.

relational conception of 'spirit' that is 'based not on absorption or immersion [in being] but ongoing response and connection,' a responsiveness or dialogue that requires duality or, to refer again to Buber's thought, the difference between a separate "I" and "Thou."[85] Such a dialogical conception of 'spirit' does not, in the words of pluralist philosopher William James, '"pass to the limit"' through a monistic identity with the 'all-inclusive soul of the world,' wherein 'everything is present to everything else in one vast instantaneous co-implicated completeness.'[86] It instead moves within and accepts a 'limit.' This limitation is not to be construed as a restriction, but as a respect for difference. It is an experience that accepts 'the primal contradictions of existence and human experience' through an understanding of difference and duality as a 'both/and relationship' as distinct from an adversarial relationship or in terms of non-dual transcendence.[87] In equal part, this spirituality of the 'between' holds possibilities of its own for radical social transformation, particularly so in relation to the life and work of Martin Buber.[88] Such transformations however derive from the acceptance of a 'limit' as opposed to what Albert Camus has referred to as an 'impatience with limits' embodied in the adversarial elimination of that which is Other and in the non-dualist attempt to encompass an Ultimate Reality.[89] This alternative politics of the 'limit' translates a dialogical and

[85] Buber quoted in Jonathan R. Herman. *I and Tao*, p. 161.

[86] William James. *The Varieties of Religious Experience*. Glasgow: Collins, 1960, p. 499.

[87] Marsha Aileen Hewitt. *Freud on Religion*. Durham: Acumen Publishing, 2014, p. 136.

[88] See, for instance, Martin Buber. *Paths in Utopia*. London: Routledge & Kegan Paul, 1949. For the political implications of Buber's spirituality, see James Horrox. *A Living Revolution: Anarchism in the kibbutz movement*. Edinburgh: AK Press, 2009.

[89] Albert Camus. *The Rebel*. London: Penguin Books, 1971, p. 269. On Camus' relationship to Christian faith and spirituality, see Elisabeth Bayley. 'To Accept in Order to Create: Albert Camus,' in Colby Dickinson (ed.). *The Postmodern Saints of*

soul' emerges through 'annihilation'—that there is here a process of self-transcendence requiring patient introspection and contemplation. As I consider, Porete's mysticism indicates that Perlman's joyous vision of 'self-abandon' in the 'state of nature' does not simply concern 'Life' and an erotic exuberance; it too entails a form of internal 'resurrection' or dying to self, a painful, difficult, and humbling transformative process. While drawing attention to Porete's message of self-transcendence, I too consider the problematic sacrificial dimensions of *The Mirror of Simple Souls*. In lieu of these concerns, I return to Freud and take consideration of an alternative psychoanalytic understanding of the 'resurrection:' acknowledgement of—and coming to terms with—an absence that haunts the self.

In Part Three of my thesis, entitled 'Encounters with Leviathan,' I return to one of the guiding themes of Perlman's essay: his incorporation of 'spirit' within an overarching narrative of resistance 'against' Leviathan. I look in more detail at the practical political implications of Perlman's 'visionary' and 'spirited' account of opposition and, in particular, his own question of inversion: the ways in which those who resist become what they oppose and stand against. Looking initially in section one at Perlman's indebtedness to the dialectical account of resistance in Guy Debord's *The Society of the Spectacle*, I recognise how Perlman abandons much of this earlier position for an increasingly undialectical account of resistance and its problems. Perlman here turns away from Debord's dialectic for a dualistic account of resistance that projects all the problems, failures and fatal inversions of opposition onto Leviathan.

In section two, I engage in a comparative study of one of the few extant references in Perlman's text to a dialectical understanding of resistance: Arnold J. Toynbee's *A Study of History*. With Toynbee, resistance and its problems conform to a dialectic of 'challenge-and-response,' a dialectic that places increased emphasis upon what Toynbee deigns the 'unknown quantity' or human 'spirit.' Toynbee's 'challenge-and-response' introduces a

associates with animals and the polymorphous perversity of infancy. Far from reconciling these oppositions, Brown's utopia of Fusion serves to reinstate the duality of Life against Death because it again depreciates independence and separateness in favour of interdependence or 'fusion,' and recreates an inverted dualism of body against mind. I demonstrate particular concern with the consequences of this 'fusion' for Brown's definition of self-liberation. As I note, Brown's exaltation of Life over Death culminates in a 'Dionysian,' ecstatic, and apocalyptic form of 'self-transformation' that occludes the patient, internal workings of Hegel's 'labor of the Negative,' and those introspective or 'Apollonian' forms of 'self-transformation.'

In section four, I draw comparisons between Brown's 'Dionysian' vision of 'self-transformation' and Perlman's own definition of self-liberation as ecstatic 'selfabandon' and 'possession.' Because Perlman also exclusively exalts Life against Death, body against mind, his definition of self-liberation is restricted to a 'Dionysian' ecstasy and a Reichian politics of sexual liberation: an ecstasy and excess that demolishes all internalised, 'armoured' separations, divisions and limitations through the return to a state of pantheistic oneness with nature. As I argue however, Perlman's pantheism and his politics of 'self-abandon' remain contradictorily dualistic because both these positions are predicated upon the exclusion of 'Death' and this internal 'labor of the Negative,' all of which again recreates an inverted dualism of body against mind with its depreciation of more introspective and patient forms of self-transformation. Perlman, like Brown, undermines the reconciliatory image of the 'resurrection.'

To explore these problems further, I turn to one of the most prominent Christian mystics in Perlman's essay: the Fourteenth century Beguine Marguerite Porete and her spiritual treatise, *The Mirror of Simple Souls*. I consider Perlman's attempts to read Porete through his own antagonistic framework of Life against Death. I too however detail his evasion of Porete's message that the 'simple

responsive form of spiritual experience into a practical respect for and confirmation of difference that entails patience, temperance, and moderation in relation to the Other.[90]

In these terms, I find this dialogical and relational conception of 'spirit' far more conducive to an alternative reading of Perlman's text because there is here emphasis not upon 'overcoming' or moving 'beyond' duality, but rather a transfigured understanding of duality emphasising important themes for this thesis of reconciliation and relationship. Emphasis upon dialogue and an acceptance of 'limits' is all the more significant because there are indications that Perlman's 'vision' and his primitivism instantiate a rather strident 'impatience with limits' by way of the idealisation of transgression, excess, exuberance, and ecstatic release from a 'mundane,' middling civility. Furthermore, Perlman's primitivist 'vision'—and primitivism more generally—demonstrate a marked degree of impatience with dialogue, if not with language itself.[91] With his general disdain for the mundane conventions of academic scholarship, Perlman embraces a visionary form unbound from such apparently meaningless concerns over fact and 'Positive Evidence.' The text's spiritually unassailable truths remain impermeable to 'reasoned' criticism. While this visionary quality grants the text a sense of certainty and conviction, it too imbues the text with a tone of self-righteous arrogance and elitism. The 'vision' devolves into a monologue.[92]

France: Refiguring the 'holy' in contemporary French philosophy. London: Bloomsbury, 2013, pp. 25–38.

[90] On this theme of moderation, see Camus' account of the goddess Nemesis in Camus. *The Rebel*, pp. 258–261.

[91] In his first major critique of language, Zerzan concludes with a 'feeling of wanting only to be done with all talk, knowing that being allowed to live coherently erases the need to formulate coherence.' Zerzan. *Elements of Refusal*, p. 43.

[92] I have drawn this idea of the visionary monologue from Buber's discussion of apocalyptic literature. For Buber, 'the apocalyptic writer has no audience turned toward him; he speaks into his notebook. He does not really speak, he

As Mathieu O'Neil has also explored in the broader context of primitivist literature—in online communities—the primitivist's unconditional rejection of everything 'that is not themselves,' namely 'civilisation,' constitutes an act of extreme 'boundary-building' that forcibly encloses primitivism within a delimited radical subcultural milieu shut off from 'outsiders.'[93] The 'vision' I would aver is an apt medium for the construction of such discursive boundaries, because the visionary does not welcome dialogue with those who do not share in this 'vision.' A spirituality of the 'between' thus provides suggestions for a path or middle way *between* some of these antagonistic extremes in Perlman's text, serving to further aid in the discovery of some of the text's buried themes of reconciliation while also questioning and problematising the visionary form of Perlman's text.

In all, this thesis considers the problems with Perlman's overt politicisation of 'spirit' in *Against His-story, Against Leviathan*, and how this enclosure of 'spirit' within a visionary narrative of radical political opposition not only reinvokes the antagonistic dualisms of the Western political and religious traditions but also stifles the possibility of a more reconciliatory spiritual message. The following thesis will explore these concerns across three major parts, each of which is subsequently divided into several smaller, interrelated sections. These parts essentially concentrate upon one major area of Perlman's 'vision' where these tensions in his politicised representation of 'spirit' are most pronounced. These will include the theme of spiritual renewal and regeneration, personal spiritual transformation, and questions of resistance and opposition. These major topics move from a more general account of the dualistic spiritual symbolism underlying Perlman's 'vision' to that of a critical ex-

only writes; he does not write down the speech, he just writes his thoughts—he writes a book.' Martin Buber. 'Prophecy, Apocalyptic, and the Historical Hour,' in Maurice Friedman (ed.). *Pointing the Way: Collected essays*. London: Routledge and Kegan Paul, 1957, p. 200.

[93] O'Neil. 'Radical Tribes at Warre,' p. 253.

a life he finds reflected in the Judaeo-Christian tradition with its reconciliatory symbolism of the 'resurrection.'

By way of comparison, I note how Perlman's text problematically maintains this duality of Life against Death. Through allegiance to Reich, Perlman binds 'death' to the repression of the individual whereas 'life' is associated with an essentialist 'original condition' in the 'state of nature.' As I suggest, Perlman moves into closer proximity with a noted critic of Brown: Herbert Marcuse in his seminal work, *Eros and Civilisation*. In Marcuse's own 'utopia of *Eros*,' death and human finitude are rejected in favour of a joyous celebration of being that has as its aspiration and goal an integral wholeness that privileges the timelessness of Being over the negativity of time and Becoming. In lieu of Marcuse, I consider how Perlman continues to set Life against Death because of this failure to accept and integrate into his conception of the self the finite limitations of the human condition.

Returning to Brown in section three, I further explore his relationship to the dialectical philosophy of Georg Wilhelm Hegel. As I note, Brown so emphasises the reconciliation of Life with Death because in the work of Hegel, death confers upon the living uniqueness and finite particularity. Where 'Life' embraces interdependence, 'Death' grants independence and separateness, and is thus considered integral to the processes of human individuation. Brown finds particular inspiration in Hegel's definition of a 'labour' or 'work' of the 'Negative' that introduces a psychical negativity, discontinuity or 'splitting' that serves as an indispensable condition for human autonomy. To develop this point, I draw upon the work of psychoanalyst Julia Kristeva and her re-envisioning of the Christian 'resurrection' through reference to Hegel and an internal 'work of the Negative.'

However, as I further discuss, Brown abandons much of his own dialectical thesis by simply replacing Marcuse's utopia of Eros with a utopia of 'fusion' through the restoration of the monistic unity of life and death before the advent of separation, a condition he

of the spiritual malaise of this 'Western spirit' rather than an alternative to it.

To conclude, I suggest that the major problem with Perlman's definition of renewal is his frustrated attempt to escape from history and the unbearable burden of the historical present. As an alternative, I consider the possibility of a transfigured understanding of human participation within historical time. Here, I reflect upon the act of remembrance and the importance of personal memory and everyday attachments in establishing a humanly meaningful 'love of the world.' I discern another possibility in an alternative definition of spiritual renewal. In allusion to Goethe's *Faust*, I define spiritual renewal neither as a definitive end-state of illumination nor as a moment of escape and transcendent release, but rather as the beginning of a process requiring 'Time and Effort.'

In Part Two of my thesis, entitled 'In the Old Adversary—a Friend,' I turn to Perlman's definition of a microcosmic 'state of nature' and a microcosmic Leviathan, a discussion that encompasses Perlman's conception of the self or the 'individual's living spirit,' and questions of self-liberation. Initially, I consider Perlman's indebtedness to the Marxist psychoanalyst Wilhelm Reich, whose theory of 'character armour' is integral to Perlman's understanding of a repressed as well as liberated self. While attending to this Reichian heritage, I focus particular attention upon another major influence in Perlman's work who attempts to enjoin Freudian psychoanalysis with Western esoteric spirituality. The thinker in question is the counter-cultural theorist Norman O. Brown and his seminal work *Life against Death*. Drawing attention to Brown's dualistic title, I attend to its key relationship with Freud's theory of the life and death instincts—*Eros* and *Thanatos*. For Brown, human alienation and self-repression is captured in what he calls humanity's 'flight from death' and mortality into the aggressive project of building immortal cultures, and so denying the finite nature of the human condition. Returning to Freud, Brown suggests the possibility of a life dialectically reconciled with death and mortality,

amination of the 'internal,' esoteric conflicts of an inner 'state of nature' versus an inner 'Western spirit,' and finally consideration of the practico-political implications of Perlman's spiritual 'vision' for resisting and opposing Leviathan. The sections in each of these parts subsequently repeat and move through some of the major critical discussion points for this thesis: the visionary dimensions of the text; Perlman's politicisation of 'spirit' and spirituality; his problematic maintenance of the antagonistic political and religious dualisms he decries; and, the suggestion of an alternative conception of 'spirit' through a comparative analysis of some of the spiritual influences in Perlman's work.

In Part One of this thesis, entitled 'This is the Wasteland,' I consider the prominent theme of spiritual renewal and regeneration in Perlman's essay. I consider the tensions in Perlman's essay between a positive, life-affirming celebration of the human 'spirit,' and a contemptuous portrait of modern individuals or *zeks* as 'domesticated cattle.' In section one, I initially locate these problems in relation to Perlman's conception of 'vision.' Drawing comparisons with the bifurcation of 'vision' in the work of Thomas Hobbes, I note how Perlman also divides 'vision' into two antagonistic spheres: the 'meaningful,' visionary realm of the seer and the 'meaningless' gaze of the modern tourist. I attend, in particular, to the dualistic symbolism that arises from this division: the image of two shores separated via 'the strait.' 'Vision,' I maintain gives way to a temporal disjunction between a historically distant 'other shore' and 'state of nature' consisting of seers and visionaries, and the spiritually dissolute shores of modernity with its tourists and voyeuristic consumers. Locating this bifurcation of 'vision' in the context of the dualist religious symbolism of Zoroastrianism, I argue that Perlman's position actively hinders the possibility of discerning any spiritual meaning or redemptive possibilities from within modernity. This is because his primitivist stance attributes all meaning to this historically distant 'golden age,' and then locks this meaningfulness away from these modern shores by means

of 'the strait' and the progressive movement of historical time, or 'progress.'

In section two, I extend this discussion of the pessimistic implications of Perlman's spiritual symbolism through comparisons with a major poetic influence: T.S. Eliot's 'The Waste Land.' As I discuss, 'The Waste Land' is in Perlman's work deprived of its symbolic significance as a site of spiritual regeneration and healing. In Perlman's highly politicised definition of this 'Waste Land' in relation to modernity, these lands of 'Waste' are again placed within a Zoroastrian struggle between the forces of Light and Darkness, purity and impurity. Renewal through healing is abandoned in favour of an understanding of regeneration as annihilation and extermination—the purgation of darkness and 'Waste' through the return to the light and purity of the 'golden age.'

In Section Three, I turn explicitly to the politico-theoretical basis for both this extreme dualism and its attendant cynicism. I firstly note here that *Against His-story, Against Leviathan* is a radical departure from Perlman's earlier radical theorisations because in his earlier work Perlman does not render Leviathan as an autonomous and artificial 'monstrous cadaver' but rather as a social relationship open to direct challenge and contestation. In defining modernity as an age ruled over by this monolithic and totalising Leviathan, Perlman actively precludes the discernment of any transformative possibilities on these modern shores. In these terms, I suggest that Perlman's 'vision' wallows in estrangement and alienation both 'from the other shore,' and also from these modern shores as well.

In section four, I attend to this overarching element of historical estrangement, and Perlman's alienation from historical time. I draw primary attention to the temporal disjunction in Perlman's primitivist stance between a historically distant but spiritually meaningful 'state of nature,' and the dissolute shores of modernity 'inside' Leviathan. As I consider, this structuring historical scission conforms to Perlman's distinction between two different conceptions of time: the spiritually 'meaningful' cyclical

time of mythology, associated exclusively with archaic societies, and the spiritual 'meaninglessness' of historical, linear time in the modern world. I take particular note of Perlman's interest in the work of Mircea Eliade, and his understanding of cyclical time as a basis for spiritual renewal through its capacity to escape from the 'terror' of historical, linear time into the sacred time of the '"beginnings"' or 'golden age.' Though, as I further maintain, Perlman's primitivism introduces a certain confusion into the definition of the 'golden age' because his understanding of it does not stand entirely 'outside' historical time, since it is also bound to a rather literal, historically concretised 'golden age' associated with those communities existing 'before' civilisation.

To develop this point, I turn to one of the major spiritual influences in Perlman's work: Frederick W. Turner's *Beyond Geography: The Western Spirit against the Wilderness*. As I note, these disjunctions between 'mundane,' historical time and 'meaningful' cyclical time are integral to Turner's story of the temporal estrangement of the 'Western spirit.' For Turner, this 'Western spirit' is estranged from meaningful, mythic forms of spiritual renewal, providing only a deceptive substitute for it in the form of a violent apocalyptic catastrophism that endeavours to bring about the end of time. In comparison with Turner, I argue that Perlman's attempted inversion of this 'Western spirit' actually serves to entrap Perlman's primitivism within this temporal estrangement.

Perlman, I argue, fails to recognise that while the Judaeo-Christian apocalypse entails the end of historical time, this yearning for the End Times, like Perlman's primitivist longing for the end of 'progress,' remains still concretised within history and does not therefore provide any substantive alternative to Turner's 'Western spirit.' Perlman's 'vision' serves to recreate an apocalyptic eschatology that holds eminently violent implications but which, in turn, abandons a symbolism of renewal in favour of this apocalyptic imagery of annihilation and destruction. I subsequently consider Perlman's primitivism more as a symptom

lished in 1975 Maurice Brinton's *The Irrational in Politics*, a work grounded in Reichian psychoanalysis from an anarchist perspective.[9] While Perlman will in the preface to Brinton's text express some reservations towards Reich's personality, he will find Reich's politicised psychoanalysis most sympathetic to his own revolutionary concerns with the imbrication of social and individual subjection along with the overturning of these bonds of repression.[10]

What Perlman borrows most from Reich is the concept of 'armor' or 'character armor.' It is a theoretical term Perlman will use frequently—if at times loosely and metaphorically—to refer to the 'armored' individual whose inner life has become as 'rigid' as those mechanised 'springs and wheels' Hobbes utilises to convey the inner workings of the State and the human body.[11] The 'armored' individual is, in Perlman's rendering, the microcosmic reflection of Leviathan. The 'armoured' person's inner life consists of a mechanised psychic carapace in affective disconnection from the world that finds correspondence with the divisions inscribed into the 'Western spirit'—'a war of extermination by Spirit against Nature, Soul against Body.' Perlman will even attribute this 'armoured' state to certain world historical figures, from Moses through to Lenin.[12] Indeed, Reich himself acknowledged in his own time the descriptive efficacy of the term, insofar as it conveyed a potent image of 'men and women sleepwalking through their lives, aided by thick, deadening psychic armor.'[13] Despite this evident descriptive force, 'character armor' has its foundation in psychoanalytic theory as well as in the convergence

[9] Maurice Brinton. *The Irrational in Politics*. Detroit: Black & Red, 1975.

[10] Perlman. *Having Little, Being Much*, p. 3.

[11] Perlman. *Against His-story, Against Leviathan*, pp. 56–57.

[12] *Ibid*, p. 56.

[13] George Makari. *Revolution in Mind: The creation of psychoanalysis*. Carlton: Melbourne University Press, 2008, p. 396.

To summon the spectre of a Rose

We cannot revive old factions

We cannot restore old policies

Or follow an antique drum.'[89]

As Leavis and other scholars have further remarked, the beauty of Eliot's 'The Wasteland' derives precisely from its 'rich disorganisation,' its 'seeming disjointedness,' and its 'wealth of borrowings and allusions.'[90] The poem is made possible on the basis of modernity's spiritual exhaustion, the dislocation and dismantling of absolute cultural forms, along with this mingling of spiritual traditions. The 'Waste Land' brings desolation and exhaustion, but the poem would here suggest that spiritual meaningfulness might even be discerned and recreated anew from amidst this desolation—to create meaning from waste. As D.E.S. Maxwell maintains, the poem may indeed establish a sense of 'almost overpowering spiritual disrepair in the world.'[91] However, if this work shares affinities with the journey of the Grail Quest, it too holds associations with a modern 'pilgrimage,' a journey through the desolation of this world and the soul that recaptures spiritual regeneration through 'the disorder, the meaninglessness, the mystery of life and suffering,' or what might elsewhere be referred to, in a more mystical frame, as 'the dark night of the soul,' and the 'agony of rebirth.'[92] If the 'absoluteness' of ancient cultural forms has in this modern 'Waste Land' lost all discernible meaning, new meanings might here be made possi-

[89] T.S. Eliot. *Four Quartets*. New York: Harcourt, Brace and Company, 1943, p. 56.

[90] Leavis. 'The Wasteland,' p. 90. See also Sabbar S. Sultan and Ibrahim Abu Shihab. 'Waiting in T.S. Eliot's 'The Waste Land." *Studies in Literature and Language*. Vol. 3 No. 2, 2011, p. 102.

[91] D.E.S. Maxwell. '*The Cultivation of Christmas Trees*,' in Neville Braybrooke (ed.). *T.S. Eliot: A symposium for his seventieth birthday*. London: Rupert Hart-Davis, 1958, p. 190.

[92] *Ibid*, p. 191.

ble by accepting the world for what it is—and working from amidst its dislocations—rather than adopting the conservative stance that spiritual renewal derives only from a forcible restoration of or submission to the spiritual integrity and robustness of past cultural forms.

From the standpoint of his politico-spiritual vision and his primitivism, Perlman cannot actually accept 'The Waste Land' for what it is, just as his vision cannot accept the possibility of working from amidst modernity's cultural and spiritual dislocations. Perlman has established that modern spiritual forms are 'shit' in comparison with a prior cultural and spiritual integrity in a historically past 'state of nature.' Perlman will even write expressly of this modern-day spiritual poverty in association with ancient fertility and vegetation rituals:

> We cannot know what it was to learn to hear the plants grow, and to feel the growth. We cannot know what it was to feel the seed in the womb and learn to feel the seed in earth's womb, to feel as Earth feels, and at last to abandon oneself and let Earth possess one, to become Earth, to become the first mother of all life. *We're truly poor.*'[93]

This spiritual poverty is again pronounced when Perlman refers to the anthropologist Leslie White and to his description of the 'richness of life' amongst those peoples deigned 'primitive.' As Perlman argues, 'I wouldn't use the word Primitive to refer to people with a richness of life. I would use the word Primitive to refer to myself and my contemporaries, with our progressive poverty of life.'[94] While interesting in itself for this double meaning of the word 'primitive' in an ostensibly primitivist text, these declarations

[93] Emphasis added. Perlman. *Against His-story, Against Leviathan*, pp. 10–11.
[94] *Ibid*, pp. 9–10.

While this critique is actually rather subdued when compared with other primitivist attacks on psychoanalysis—John Zerzan will associate Freud's thought with Nazism—this dismissal is problematic for two main reasons.[4] Firstly, Perlman is rebuking a particular aspect of psychoanalysis known as 'adjustment,' adaptational or ego-oriented therapy, a therapy that induces the individual to integrate themselves within the existent order of things.[5] It is a position that Freud himself criticised, maintaining instead that 'the psychoanalyst can neither bring the new personality into being nor determine what it ought to be, only the person who is analysing himself can make himself over.'[6] Secondly, Perlman may consider psychoanalysis to consist of 'miserable failures,' but it is also evident that his text's definition of psychic-spiritual 'discontent' cannot do without reference to the insights of psychoanalysis.

The most prominent of these influences in Perlman's essay is Wilhelm Reich, a figure who will prove such a defining voice of the politics of sexual liberation throughout the 1960s and after—and whose influence is also clearly apparent in the *Fifth Estate* where Perlman's primitivist works were first published.[7] Reich is himself a long-standing influence in Perlman's work, apparent in earlier and contemporary theoretical engagements.[8] Perlman too pub-

[4] See 'The Mass Psychology of Misery' in Zerzan. *Future Primitive and Other Essays*, p. 56.
[5] See, for instance, Anthony Molino and Christine Ware (eds.). *Where Id Was: Challenging normalization in psychoanalysis*. Middletown: Wesleyan University Press, 2001.
[6] Bruno Bettelheim. *Freud and Man's Soul*. New York: Vintage Books, 1982, p. 36.
[7] On Reich and the 1960s counter-culture, see Christopher Turner. *Adventure in the Orgasmatron: How the sexual revolution came to America*. New York: Farrar, Straus and Giroux, 2011. For Reich's influence in *The Fifth Estate*, see Fifth Estate Collective. 'Sex-Economy: Toward a self-governing character structure.' *The Fifth Estate*. Vol. 11 No. 7, April 1976, pp. 3–15; The Fifth Estate Collective. 'Wilhelm Reich on Sex & Politics: The family, sexual repression, and the irrational in politics.' *The Fifth Estate*. February-March 1975, pp. 7–10.
[8] Perlman. *Anti-Semitism and the Beirut Pogrom*, p. 22.

The Mirror of Simple Souls. For Perlman, Porete's work is a defence of Life and aligns with his message of pantheistic oneness with Nature; but, in lieu of the dualistic tensions in his essay between Life and Death, I discuss how Perlman also forcibly evades Porete's other message that the life of this 'simple soul' emerges through 'annihilation,' negation, and mystical self-transcendence—a dying to self. In conclusion, I return to the image of 'resurrection,' but do so from a Freudian perspective, and propose an alternative to Perlman's 'self-abandon,' the 'armored' self, and even the 'annihilated' self in the form of a self that has accepted or come to terms with a loss or absence that haunts being, and thus frustrates this primitivist ideal of completion and wholeness.

Section One: Armour

Despite these introductory references to a number of psychoanalytic influences in Perlman's definition of psychic-spiritual repression and liberation—Reich, Marcuse, and Brown—his essay actually expresses some rather unfavourable words towards psychoanalysis. Those who practice it are, for example, defined as 'psychemanipulators.'[2] Though, their manipulations would not appear very effective anyway. Alluding to Sigmund Freud's *Civilisation and Its Discontents*, Perlman remarks of those 'psyche-manipulators' who will attempt to 'induce' personal transformation in those who suffer from the psychic wounds and 'discontents' of civilisation. As Perlman concludes, 'their most vaunted successes will be miserable failures,' because one cannot from his perspective 'induce' such transformations while still ensnared within 'Leviathan's entrails;' such transformations are only possible 'outside' Leviathan, a path of personal liberation he discerns instead in the life of the 'Renegade' and other 'outside agitators.'[3]

[2] Perlman. *Against His-story, Against Leviathan*, p. 254.
[3] *Ibid*, p. 254.

of spiritual poverty ascribe all meaningfulness to an integral spiritual wholeness existing 'outside' and 'before' Western civilisation.

There is in this sense little indication here of a spiritual journey through Death to Life with an attendant 'agony of rebirth.' Certainly, Perlman concludes his essay with an image of release from darkest Night through the promise of a New Dawn, but there is also a repetition here of Perlman's interpretation of Zoroastrian dualism—of light against dark—with its inevitable and eschatological excision from modernity of that which is excremental, 'dark,' 'synthetic,' and 'artificial.'[95] The 'disorder, the meaninglessness, the mystery of life and suffering' along with modernity's dislocations and estrangements are not accepted as the other side of a 'renewed life;' this 'waste,' this 'shit' and excrement are spurned and cast out in favour of that integral spiritual and cultural wholeness Perlman has located in that time 'before' and 'outside' this 'Waste Land.'

Perlman's consistent depreciation of modernity in contrast with a historically prior cultural and spiritual integrity actually demonstrates an accord with a Romantic conservatism.[96] Romanticism is not, of course, a strictly conservative response to modernity.[97] Still, despite the anarchistic impetus behind his primitivism, Perlman's 'vision' will, at times, find concurrences with the reactionary politics of the Romantic 'Counter-Enlightenment.'[98] Perlman's work is, for example, not only critical of 'mass' society and 'mass' culture; it too expresses in numerous instances an antidemocratic impulse that finds its inspiration in the aristocratic elitism of Friedrich Nietzsche, whose work, as noted earlier, is also

[95] *Ibid*, p. 301.
[96] On the 'Romantic' critique of modernity, in its conservative and revolutionary forms, see Michael Löwy and Robert Sayre. *Romanticism against the Tide of Modernity*. Durham: Duke University Press, 2001.
[97] Michael Henry Scrivener. *Radical Shelley: The philosophical anarchism and utopian thought of Percy Bysshe Shelley*. Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1982.
[98] Wolin. *The Seduction of Unreason*, pp. 1–23.

central to Perlman's reading of Zoroaster or Zarathustra.[99] Where Nietzsche's Zarathustra 'called on human beings to rise in stature,' the adage followed by *zeks* is 'Dehumanize yourself in order to be exalted.'[100] Perlman may glorify the egalitarianism of the 'state of nature,' but modern democracies are little more than projects of mass conformity and crushing dehumanisation. Perlman too repeats the politically reactionary portrait of modernity as a period of historical degeneration. Perlman's primitivism accords with the 'Counter-Enlightenment' ideas of Oswald Spengler in his *The Decline of the West*, the critique of technology in the work of Ernst Jünger, and the 'Traditionalism' of Rene Guenon, all of whom 'viewed the entire expanse of human history from the standpoint of man's struggle with the forces of "mechanization."'[101] In all these images of historical decline into a mechanised present, modernity's spiritual and cultural depravity is contrasted with a prior wholeness that has been or is soon to be lost. Renewal would thus entail a 'return' to these 'robust' cultural forms so as to dispel modernity's 'disjointedness' and forestall this decline. Furthermore, the extreme and unprecedented nature of this degeneration calls for an equally extreme response, typically in a demand for 'extreme political measures.'[102]

[99] 'Europeans are great equalizers – Democrats they will call themselves – and they are determined to univerzalize their own condition.' Perlman. *Against His-story, Against Leviathan*, p. 267.

[100] *Ibid*, pp. 77, 230.

[101] Wolin. *The Seduction of Unreason*, p. 296. Oswald Spengler. *The Decline of the West*. New York: A.A. Knopf, 1928. On Jünger's conservatism, see Elliot Yale Neaman. *A Dubious Past: Ernst Jünger and the politics of literature after Nazism*. Berkeley: University of California Press, 1999. For the Traditionalist's critique of modernity, see Mark J. Sedgwick. *Against the Modern World: Traditionalism and the secret history of the twentieth century*. New York and Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2009. For a primitivist account of the parallels between primitivism and these conservative historical narratives of degeneration, see 'Lascaux' in Hakim Bey. *Immediatism*. Edinburgh and San Francisco: AK Press, 1994, pp. 37–39.

[102] Wolin. *The Seduction of Unreason*, p. 141.

and a morbid negativity that must be excised from the individual in order to restore an inner 'state of nature' or 'golden age' within. His position, I argue, moves closer to the utopianism of Herbert Marcuse's *Eros and Civilisation* with its 'Great Refusal' of death, a refusal that amounts to a denial of the finite limitations of the human condition; the privileging of Being over Becoming; and, the exalted image of a plenitude of being against the admission of a haunting absence or lack of being.

In section three, I discuss in more detail Brown's main reason for his essentially dialectical—and Hegelian—attempts to reconcile Life with Death: the admission that death confers uniqueness, separateness, and finite particularity to individuals. In further association with the work of Julia Kristeva, I discuss the associations between Hegel, death, 'resurrection,' and an internal 'labour of the Negative' that serves as a precondition for human autonomy. I also however critically engage with Brown's own failure to attend to his own dialectical thesis. Brown, I maintain, falls to the utopianism of Marcuse; though, his utopian stance is now one of 'fusion' where opposites and dualisms are forcibly abolished through a Dionysian vision of excess and erotic exuberance. This position, I argue, falls only to another dangerous extreme in emphasising Life's unity and interdependence against separation and independence; the exaltation of the body over the mind; and, the denial of more introspective forms of 'self-liberation.' In section four, I detail how Perlman's own denial of death and separation repeats these problems with Brown's vision of Dionysian excess and a utopia of 'fusion.' By means of his own exclusion of death, Perlman's 'self-liberation' problematically concludes in a politics of erotic 'self-abandon,' and a pantheistic conception of being—wholeness without division, unity without separation.

In the fifth section of this discussion, I will attempt to discern an alternative and reconciliatory understanding of 'self-liberation' through a comparative discussion of another of Perlman's major spiritual influences: the Beguine mystic Marguerite Porete and her

man's overt politicisation of 'spirit,' it too adumbrates concerns with the overturning of this subjection and a primitivist definition of the self and the human 'spirit' in association with the 'state of nature'—the 'golden age' within. In what follows, I would like to explore Perlman's politicised rendering of the human self and 'spirit' in terms of both this subjection and this message of personal release and politico-spiritual liberation. I too however would like to consider the problems that arise from Perlman's politicised conception of the 'individual's living spirit' in terms of this confrontation between the 'state of nature' and Leviathan, and the problems that emerge from what essentially amounts to an inner, psychic-spiritual 'war of extermination.'

To explore these issues, I turn in section one to the major influence supporting Perlman's representation of the 'armoured' individual and the self-liberation of the 'individual's living spirit:' the psychoanalyst Wilhelm Reich and, in particular, his concept of 'character armour.' As I will suggest, Perlman's politico-spiritual 'vision' of personal subjection and self-liberation is an orthodox re-telling of some of the earliest theoretical and practical formulations in Reichian psychoanalysis, while also being burdened with the problems of a Reichian concept of 'armor.' In section two, I turn from Reich to a comparative analysis of another major psychoanalytic influence in Perlman's definition of subjection and 'self-liberation:' the counter-cultural theorist Norman O. Brown and his seminal text *Life against Death*. Reflecting upon the work's explicit critique of the antagonistic assumptions of its own title, I attend to Brown's pivotal relationship with Freud's theory of the life and death instincts—*Eros* and *Thanatos*—and his efforts to dialectically reconcile this duality through the Judaeo-Christian religious symbolism of the 'resurrection.' However, by way of this comparative study, I note how Perlman's text problematically maintains this duality of Life against Death. By following Reich—in place of Freud's instinctual dualism—Perlman associates this Leviathanic 'armor' not only with internalised social constraints but also with death

Perlman will however annul such conservative associations when he repeats throughout his text that modernity is constitutively estranged from the 'state of nature.' Perlman wallows in estrangement, alienation, and spiritual poverty, but in the very same instance, refuses to accept or integrate this estrangement and this meaninglessness because there remains this concurrent longing for the 'Age of Gold;' and, this 'golden age' is truly understood and represented as the apotheosis of human spiritual realisation. While Perlman's interposition of 'the strait' might in this sense actually serve to evade the conservative implications of his 'vision,' it creates problems of its own because the modern 'Waste Land,' absorbed as it is into the politico-spiritual dualistic framework of his text, has been divested of its spiritual symbolism as part of a message of renewal and regeneration. 'The Waste Land' is now nothing more than a descriptor for the 'synthetic' world of Leviathan and the 'dark' world of Ahriman—a world of 'tortures, massacres, poisonings, manipulations, [and] despoliations.' As with his portrait of 'our age,' these modern shores, this side of progress, 'The Waste Land' is excised of all spiritual meaningfulness. 'The Waste Land' is no longer a space for healing, even if in a markedly altered form. In accord with the antagonistic Zoroastrian dualism in Perlman's essay, 'the Waste Land' becomes the site for a 'war of extermination' that would excise the modern world of all that is 'dark,' 'artificial' and 'synthetic.' The 'Waste Land' is not regenerated or healed; it is purged of its darkness by means of 'a cleansing fire'—the nihilistic and violent implications of which perpetually haunt Perlman's primitivist longing for the uncontaminated purity of a 'state of nature' that is all light without darkness, all purity without waste, all wholeness without estrangement, all robustness without disjointedness.[103] Even still, this longing for primal meaningfulness more often remains in Perlman's text just that—a frustrated yearning for completeness

[103] Perlman. *Against His-story, Against Leviathan*, p. 109.

made impossible by Perlman's own message of historical and spiritual estrangement from the 'state of nature.'

These problems with Perlman's 'vision' are not, of course, solely reducible to questions of Perlman's spiritual symbolism. If there is a dual esoteric and literal dimension to the 'state of nature' and 'The Waste Land' in *Against His-story, Against Leviathan*, there too is a more literal component to the aggressive cynicism of Perlman's spiritual 'vision.' This literal aspect derives from the politico-theoretical foundations of Perlman's text. While I have briefly considered this background in connection with Hobbes' *Leviathan*, the political and theoretical influences that inform Perlman's pessimism are themselves quite decidedly recent, emerging out of some of the more scathing Left-wing critiques of modernity.

Section Three: 'Frankenstein's Monster'

In a review article of *Against His-story, Against Leviathan*, entitled 'Prophet and Loss,' Paul Buhle considers Perlman's portrait of modernity in terms of the text's underlying politico-theoretical influences. As he maintains, Perlman's conception of modernity accords with two major political influences: the Situationists and the critical theory of the Frankfurt School; though, I would also affix to this list the Marxism of Jacques Camatte, a prominent 'light' in Perlman's essay.[104] In all, the problem derives from Perlman's lingering indebtedness to these Marxist responses to modernity. Buhle finds particularly problematic a Marxist 'Worse-the-better or big bang theory of revolution.'[105] This Marxist conception of revolution is for Buhle dependent upon the crushing reality of an immense, all-encompassing totality. This totality is the Situationist's

[104] Paul Buhle. 'Prophet and Loss.' *Voice Literary Supplement* February 1984, p. 6. On Camatte's influence, see Perlman. *Against His-story, Against Leviathan*, p. 5.

[105] Buhle. 'Prophet and Loss,' p. 6.

Part Two: "In the Old Adversary – a Friend:" On 'self-liberation'

Within the pages of *Against His-story, Against Leviathan*, Perlman attends to the malignant grandiosity of Leviathan—an 'artificial man' that has become 'more powerful than the Biosphere.' However, his essay's frontispiece actually invokes a decidedly more intimate and individualised portrait of Leviathan's dominion. Distinct from Hobbes' frontispiece, where the 'body politic' is unified within the larger body of the sovereign, Perlman's front cover consists of nothing more than a lone, naked individual being violently engulfed by a demonic dragon-beast. Indeed, this image—an engraving by William Blake for Dante's *Inferno*—is taken from a scene of transmogrification wherein the character of Agnolo Brunelleschi is deformed into the monster that consumes him.[1] Perlman may therefore refer to a Leviathanic macrocosm with its violent expropriation of 'Mother Earth,' but he also visually establishes a Leviathanic microcosm as well. Through this intimate portrait of subjection, Perlman considers in visual terms the expropriation of the individual, and the colonisation of their 'living spirit.'

Far from being a mere visual flourish, this image of subjection enunciates Perlman's textual concerns with the microcosmic repression of the 'individual's living spirit.' Though, in terms of Perl-

[1] Dante Alighieri. 'The Divine Comedy: Inferno,' in Mark Musa (ed.). *The Portable Dante*. Harmondsworth: Penguin Books, 1995, pp. 136–137.

within the act of human remembrance and in an alternative understanding of spiritual renewal understood as a process emphasising 'Time and Effort.'

spectacular society, the Frankfurt School's 'totally administered society,' and Camatte's 'despotism of Capital.'[106] It is a 'seamless web which grows tighter and tighter around us, promising more material abundance and delivering more spiritual death.'[107] As Camatte would concur, 'In the era of its real domination, capital has run away (as the cyberneticians put it), it has escaped. It is no longer controlled by human beings.'[108] Due to this perspective on the totality, revolutionary social transformation is severely restricted or in another sense redefined in terms of a more definitive cataclysmic end—a 'worse-the-better or big bang theory of revolution.' A time is expected or awaited with fervent anticipation when this totality's seamless 'web suddenly snaps.'[109] There is such emphasis upon a sudden, revolutionary interruption because without this definitive conclusion, there is no apparent end to the onslaught of a monolithic totality that is ever so resourceful in absorbing everything, including resistance, into its own orbit.

What Buhle most criticises in this theoretical stance is its closure of possibilities for social change and resistance in the modern world.[110] This theoretical position 'too easily dismisses the history of opposition and the possibility for revolt in the present.'[111] Its apocalyptic demand for a final, revolutionary consummation downplays the limited utopian possibility of a 'potential new society growing within the shell of the old.'[112] It denies this utopian impulse because all 'tiny measures of autonomy recaptured through

[106] Debord. *Society of the Spectacle*, p. 3; Max Horkheimer, & Theodor W. Adorno *Dialectic of Enlightenment: Philosophical fragments*. Stanford: Stanford University Press, 2002, p. 95; Camatte. *The Wandering of Humanity*, p. 12.

[107] Buhle. 'Prophet and Loss,' p. 6.

[108] Camatte. *The Wandering of Humanity*, p. 12.

[109] Buhle. 'Prophet and Loss,' p. 6.

[110] See also Richard L. Kaplan. 'Between mass society and revolutionary praxis: The contradictions of Guy Debord's *Society of the Spectacle*.' *European Journal of Cultural Studies*. Vol. 15 No. 4, 2012, pp. 457–478.

[111] Buhle. 'Prophet and Loss,' p. 6.

[112] *Ibid*, p. 6.

regional, ethnic, class, family, and personal struggle' are ultimately ineffectual and inadequate responses to the totality.[113] All these 'tiny measures' are but indications of the totality's capacity to absorb and co-opt that which resists it.[114] Social change and resistance are reduced to serviceable functions or appendages of the totality's 'seamless web.' Apparent gains and successes for social resistance—such as civil and equal rights—now indicate the totality's triumph. Following Camatte's cynical reasoning, for example, the totality no longer has any need for a standard value of normalcy; henceforth, all genders and sexualities become serviceable parts of the free circulation of Capital.[115] Those who struggle for gender equality and better representation of minorities are subsequently reduced to little more than the unwitting agents of Capital. Similarly, labour unions can be dismissed from this standpoint because organised labour subsumes human beings within the logic of the totality and civilisation's 'division of labour,' an extremely common perspective in primitivist literature.'[116]

The only real, definitive possibility for social transformation is therefore this interruptive 'big bang' that finally and definitively brings undone the entire matrix of oppressive capitalist social relations. Though, as Buhle duly notes, Perlman may certainly hold a background in revolutionary politics, but his own essay provides little indication of any revolutionary consummation. This is particularly evident in Perlman's depreciation—if not dehumanisation—of those potential instigators of mass revolution: the 'numberless *zeks*' who, in Perlman's account, appear 'more like domesticated cattle or sheep than like human beings in the state of nature.'[117]

[113] *Ibid*, p. 6.

[114] *Ibid*, p. 6.

[115] Camatte. *The Wandering of Humanity*, pp. 9–11.

[116] Buhle. 'Prophet and Loss,' p. 6; Perlman. *Against His-story, Against Leviathan*, pp. 4–5. On this primitivist critique of unions, see G. Munis and J. Zerzan. *Unions Against Revolution*. Detroit & Chicago: Black & Red, 1975.

[117] Perlman quoted in Buhle. 'Prophet and Loss,' p. 6.

While acknowledging the esoteric meanings of 'the strait,' I too recognised the overtly historical nature of this 'strait' in association with Perlman's primitivism and his critique of 'progress.' Coupled with the symbolism of the 'Waste Land' in Perlman's essay, the historical scission of the 'strait' was considered to exacerbate a message of historical and spiritual estrangement from the 'state of nature' or 'golden age.' With reference to the essay's politico-theoretical foundations, I further noted how Perlman's work serves to deprive 'our age' of transformative possibilities.

Turning from these visionary dimensions of Perlman's text, I attended in more specific detail to Perlman's estranged relationship to historical time. I did so through reference to Mick Smith's distinction between two different conceptions of time: the meaningfulness of cyclical, mythological time and 'mundane,' linear or historical time. Problematising Smith's distinction between a 'mundane' and 'meaningful' definition of the 'state of nature'—a mythic versus a historical 'golden age'—I attended to the tensions and contradictions in Perlman's work in lieu of his attempts to collapse myth and history into each other. A comparative analysis of Turner's *Beyond Geography* and his account of the spiritual malignancy of the 'Western spirit' aided in this task. Through Turner, I maintained that Perlman's primitivist efforts to collapse mythic time into a historically situated 'golden age' reinstates the estrangement of this 'Western spirit' and recaptures its malignant definition of spiritual renewal in the form of an apocalyptic catastrophism.

In light of these contradictions in Perlman's rendering of spiritual renewal, I questioned whether the reassertion of a mythic 'state of nature' actually serves to counter the historical and spiritual estrangement underlying Perlman's vision of the 'golden age' and the 'state of nature.' As an alternative, I considered the possibility of reconciling the 'mundane' with the 'meaningful' through the spiritual transfiguration of human involvement within history. As I maintained, this transfiguration of history can be discerned

is accepted as the only possible site for this creative process. Instead of a message of alienation from an originally pure 'golden age' to which all modern spiritual efforts are nothing more than excremental mockeries, spiritual renewal as creative process is capable of finding 'meaning' amidst modernity's 'waste.' This too would suggest that spiritual renewal within this modern 'Waste Land' may be subject to creative transformations that neither derive their 'meaning' from the reconstitution of a lost 'golden age' nor discount as irredeemably malignant the changes that have taken place in modernity. In more practical terms, the 'Time and Effort' involved in this creative process would entail the resumption of participation within history or, to follow Buhle's limited utopian promise, the allowance for a new world to be built within the shell of this world, an idea apparent in Perlman's earlier work, but which is largely quashed in the pages of *Against His-story, Against Leviathan*. This participation would not however have specific recourse to narratives of progressive development or narratives of 'return.' This processual understanding of change and transformation has rather sought to transfigure human involvement within historical time and thus find meaning in—and even create entirely new meanings from—the most meaningless of contexts.

Conclusion

This discussion has sought to explore the contradictions in Perlman's conception of spiritual renewal. Beginning with Hobbes' divisive rendering of 'vision' through reference to the distinction between Leviathan and the 'state of nature,' this discussion served to frame Perlman's maintenance of just such a divisive understanding of 'vision' in *Against His-story, Against Leviathan* in terms of the distinction between the tourist and the seer, but also, and most importantly, the spiritual symbolism that arises as a consequence of this antagonism: the image of two shores separated by 'the strait.'

For Perlman, these 'numberless *zeks*' have been so dehumanised by Capital and 'despoiled of every last trace of community' that *zeks* are capable of little more than reproducing themselves.[118] All they know is bare survival. Thus, in place of either 'a potential new society growing within the shell of the old' or mass social revolution, Perlman's own definitive conclusion to Leviathan is, in fact, provided by the Leviathanic totality itself. This ending is what so many primitivist thinkers refer to as the inevitable 'collapse' of civilisation.[119] In Perlman's own scenario of collapse, there is reference to a world-spanning Leviathan 'most likely to perish once and for all in a cataclysmic suicidal war, in which case Ahriman would permanently extinguish the light of Ahura Mazda.'[120] There is here certainly a 'big bang' but this conclusion is not a propitious outcome for anyone because this devastating end is performed by the very destructive logic of the 'totality' itself.

Buhle's criticisms are all the more remarkable because Perlman, in earlier of his theoretical writings, will also reject this totalising portrait of the modern world. This critique is, for example, most pronounced in his 1968 work, *The Reproduction of Daily Life*. Indebted to Marx's critique of Capital, Perlman here refutes this 'despotism of Capital'—an independent force tyrannising over humans and the natural world. As Perlman remarks, 'Even when it is admitted that the power of Capital is created by men, this admission may merely be the occasion for the invention of an even more imposing mask, the mask of a man-made force, a Frankenstein monster, whose power inspires more awe than

[118] 'Zeks do not reproduce a meaningful context. They simply reproduce.' Perlman. *Against His-story, Against Leviathan*, p. 178.

[119] On this theme of collapse in primitivism, see Lilley. 'Great Chaos Under Heaven,' pp. 44–76. See also Jared Diamond. *Collapse: How societies choose to fail or succeed, revised edition*. New York: Viking Penguin, 2011.

[120] Perlman. *Against His-story, Against Leviathan*, p. 301.

that of any natural force.'[121] The attribution of independence to Capital in the form of a 'Frankenstein monster' is problematic for two main reasons. Firstly, the conceptualisation of Capital as an independent force obfuscates Marx's observation—if only in his earliest writings—that Capital is primarily a social relationship.[122] 'Capital,' as Perlman remarks, 'is not a natural force; it is a set of activities performed by people every day; it is a form of daily life.'[123] Secondly, by invoking the autonomy of Capital, its critic only recreates another image of its all-pervasive power. However much it is decried as a 'man-made force'—a dead thing brought to life like Frankenstein's monster—this artificiality still re-establishes its determining, independent influence, which is not actually that far removed from the economic speculations of those who promote the image of Capital's purported autonomy.

This theoretical reification of Capital, in turn, influences how one understands resistance against this so-called 'Frankenstein monster.' Perlman considers, for example, two possible articulations of this reified perspective. The first establishes this 'Frankenstein monster' as '*an external force beyond their* [the resisters] *control.*'[124] Because its 'power inspires more awe than that of any natural force,' there is either the admission that no response is possible—a position of quietist 'resignation'—or there emerges a politics of retreat, escape, and withdrawal from this monolithic 'totality.'[125] A second approach would prove to be far more engaged, but now problematically turns its own conceptual and theoretical apparatus into equally abstract, ossified, and

[121] Fredy Perlman. *The Reproduction of Daily Life*. Detroit: Black & Red, 1968, p. 21.

[122] Karl Marx. 'Theses on Feuerbach,' in Eugene Kamenka (ed.). *The Portable Karl Marx*. New York: Penguin Books, 1983, pp. 155–158.

[123] Perlman. *The Reproduction of Daily Life*, p. 24.

[124] *Ibid*, p. 3.

[125] Theodor W. Adorno. 'Resignation,' in Theodor W. Adorno. *The Culture Industry: Selected essays on mass culture*. London and New York: Routledge, 1991, pp. 198–203.

of a process.'[263] I would here, for instance, turn to the processual understanding of spiritual renewal in the work of Johann Wolfgang von Goethe's *Faust*. While Goethe is not himself mentioned in Perlman's text, Faust is discussed; and, as Lorraine Perlman notes, Perlman had a long-standing fascination with the character of Faust.[264] Distinct both from Perlman's exclusive validation of spiritual renewal through cyclical time and also the interruption of time through allegiance to an apocalyptic catastrophism, this processual, 'Faustian' definition of spiritual regeneration is understood as the beginning of a transformative and creative process that requires 'Time and Effort.'[265] This is 'not the static perfection of completeness but the situation where human effort and striving *will ever be meaningful*.'[266] There is here neither any state of final completion to be attained nor any originary 'state of nature' to be restored.[267] All ends or endings are rather 'constantly changing, evolving, creating themselves anew…[because] at each "final" stage something new may be created.'[268] Spiritual regeneration is therefore a creative process balanced always between 'effort and consummation.'[269]

If spiritual renewal is thus re-conceived as a continual process that requires 'Time and Effort,' the present, 'our age,' might also no longer bear the mark of such unadulterated disdain. From this alternate conception of spiritual renewal, this present-day 'Waste Land'

[263] Arnold Toynbee. *A Study of History, Volume VI*. London: Oxford University Press, 1939, p. 174.

[264] Perlman. *Having Little, Being Much*, p. 17.

[265] Toynbee. *A Study of History*, p. 174.

[266] Edward Jamosky and James B. Robinson. 'The Reconciliation of Opposites in Goethe's *Faust* and in William Blake's *Marriage of Heaven and Hell*,' in Orrin Frank (ed.). *Occasional Papers in Language, Literature and Linguistics*. Northern Iowa: University of Northern Iowa, 1988, p. 9.

[267] Toynbee. *A Study of History*, p. 174.

[268] Tantillo. *The Will to Create*, p. 96.

[269] Jamosky and Robinson. 'The Reconciliation of Opposites in Goethe's *Faust* and in William Blake's *Marriage of Heaven and Hell*,' p. 9.

and continuity to our lives.'[261] Memory—and the personal associations we make with the durable 'things of the world'—is not about the glorification of the past, but rather the provision of a meaningful context, continuity, solidity, and 'durability' to our lives in the present.[262]This 'love of the world' through memory and everyday associations has, of course, little correspondence with Perlman's primitivism and his totalising disdain for all the 'human associations and human works' of civilisation, which he deigns a 'humanly meaningless web of unnatural constraints.' That is however precisely the point: this 'love of the world' provided by these 'personal memories' of everyday life provides a necessary counter to Perlman's nihilistic hatred of the world as well as his own message of historical estrangement from the present. 'Personal memories' grant meaningful continuity and context to human existence in the present, and thus serve to evade the nihilistic and apocalyptic discontinuities of Perlman's primitivism. Indeed, this 'love of the world' through the everyday associations of human memory may have not only granted a more human countenance to those 'numberless *zeks*' Perlman disparages, but also discovered greater meaning and spiritual resonance in that mundane 'vision' of the world Perlman so admonishes: the camera's lens and the photograph.

A second indication of this meaningful transfiguration of history resides in a differing, reconciliatory conception of spiritual renewal, a different understanding of this regeneration of the human 'spirit.' Thus, in place of spiritual renewal conceived as a definitive end-state of illumination that draws the individual 'outside' historical time into the cyclical renewal of 'dream time,' this alternative understands spiritual renewal as 'the beginning

[261] Arendt quoted in Christopher Lasch. *The Minimal Self: Psychic survival in troubles times*. London: Pan Books, p. 93. See also chapter twelve in Hannah Arendt. *The Human Condition*. Chicago: Chicago University Press, 1958.

[262] Lasch. *The Minimal Self*, p. 31.

independent forces with no relation to 'people's activities.' As Perlman comments, 'The terms used by Marx to describe people's activities have been raised [within Marxism] to the status of external and even "natural" forces which *determine* people's activity.'[126] The theoretical apparatus used to describe Capital becomes a determining force in itself. For Perlman, of course, Capital consists of 'people's activities.' As such, resistance to Capital in *The Reproduction of Daily Life* is not concerned with any 'Frankenstein monster' or 'despotism of Capital,' but in the forging of alternate social relationships within the context of 'daily life;' the amelioration of the worst excesses of Capitalist social relations; and, a fundamental recognition that no matter the all-pervasive realities of Capitalism, human beings are still possessed of meaning and thus capable of creating new meaningful contexts.

In Perlman's *Against His-story, Against Leviathan*, there is a quite pronounced theoretical as well as 'visionary' divergence from this earlier position towards this autonomous 'totality.' Perlman's Leviathanic monster—the concatenating 'totality' of State, Capital and Technology—has indeed achieved a spectral independence and autonomy. Perlman's Leviathan is an inverted reflection of the autonomy Hobbes attributes to his 'artificial man.' Leviathan is for Perlman an artificial excrescence upon the earth 'that has become more powerful than the Biosphere.' His Leviathanic totality or 'man-made force' is very much a 'power [that] inspires more awe than that of any natural force;' and, even though, this awe translates into disgust rather than obedience, there is a sense in which Hobbes's 'Mortal God' has succeeded in its other equally important task of instilling fear and terror.

Perlman will, of course, substantially qualify this representation of Leviathan because he refuses to give 'life' to this monster. Like the 'Frankenstein monster' of Capital, Leviathan

[126] Emphasis added. Perlman. *The Reproduction of Daily Life*, p. 3.

possesses only an 'artificial life.' Perlman's Leviathan is a 'monstrous cadaver,' a 'dead thing,' a machinic construct perpetually 'decomposing,' because it is a monster 'without any life of its own,' parasitizing as it does on the living beings that inhabit it, and feeding on their labour—much like Marx's representation of Capital.[127] Still, the admission that Leviathan is not really alive remains—from the perspective of *The Reproduction of Daily Life*—just as problematic as the definition of Capital as an impartial 'natural force' because this perspective gives way to the manufacture of 'an even more imposing mask, the mask of a man-made force' or Frankenstein's monster. In place of Perlman's earlier critical perspective that considered Capital as a 'form of daily life,' this Leviathanic Frankenstein's monster has now completely loosed the bounds of its creator or creators. As Camatte would concur, 'It is no longer controlled by human beings.' From Perlman's primitivist standpoint, this 'monstrous cadaver' is no longer a social relationship between human beings since the only authentic forms of community and sociality exist in that time 'before' Leviathan in the 'state of nature.' With Leviathan reduced to nothing more than a 'humanly meaningless web of unnatural constraints,' and with its 'numberless *zeks*' having been 'despoiled of every last trace of community,' this 'monstrous cadaver' is very much 'an external force' that cannot or, more aptly, should not be controlled.

Indeed, one major consequence of Perlman's totalising portrait of Leviathan—alongside Leviathan's parasitical corruption of those original communities in the 'state of nature'—is the delimitation of responses to the exigencies of modernity. In fact, Perlman has re-

[127] Perlman. *Against His-story, Against Leviathan*, p. 27. On the 1979 Three Mile Island Nuclear disaster, Perlman declares 'all this is no accident. It is the present stage of progress of Technology, alias Capital, called Frankenstein by Mary Wollstonecraft Shelley.' Fredy Perlman. 'Progress and Nuclear Power: The destruction of the continent and its peoples,' in Fredy Perlman. *Anything Can Happen*. London: Phoenix, 1992, p. 77.

happened.[257]Memory makes history meaningful insofar as the past interacts with the present, and gives creative form to one's life.[258] Of interest, Perlman will actually define his role in *Against His-story, Against Leviathan* as that of a 'rememberer.'[259] Though, Perlman's remembrance is really a memorialising of the historical record. Perlman scours the history of 'Western civilisation' for examples of 'spirited revolutionaries' who introduce a discordant element into the narrative of Leviathanic 'progress.' His memoriam, in turn, recuperates the problems with all triumphal historical narratives, including those of the State, because this memoriam serves only in deifying select moments in history while obfuscating those inconvenient 'dirty realities' that disturb such simplistic glorifications.[260] Also, if Perlman is serious in his celebration of mythic recurrence, he too is forced to concede that mythological time ultimately considers trivial and insignificant those 'facts which have merely happened' within 'mundane,' historical time. Cyclical time entails remembrance only in relation to those meaningful events 'we call mythical, which took place *ab origine*.'

What I am trying to emphasise is the meaningfulness of human memory in the limited context of people's own lives—of a living memory of one's past and place in the world. I am particularly interested in what Hannah Arendt has termed a human 'love of the world' through the embodied 'personal memories' of everyday life—'of human associations and human works, which give solidity

[257] Sigmund Freud. 'Screen Memories,' in Peter Gay (ed.). *The Freud Reader*. Vintage: London, 1995, pp. 117–126.

[258] Tara Forrest. 'Benjamin, Proust, and the Rejuvenating Powers of Memory.' *Literature and Aesthetics*. Vol. 12, 2002, pp. 47–62.

[259] Perlman. *Having Little, Being Much*, pp. 128–129.

[260] On the State's collective acts of remembering and forgetting, see, chapter three in Michael Billig. *Banal Nationalism*. London: SAGE Publications, 1995, pp. 37–59.

ladder-like theories of development; historical, linear time belongs to the meaningless domain of work-time, a domain where *zeks* struggle, labour, reproduce, and survive in a condition of 'domesticated' unfreedom; historical time is Eliade's 'terror of history' and, in Turner's *Beyond Geography*, 'the existential loneliness of the linear march of events towards annihilation;' and, of course, history is *His Story*, the story of a Leviathanic 'artificial man' that has no bearing upon Perlman's story of those who lie outside Leviathan in the non-linear rhythms of the 'state of nature.'

The problem here is that Perlman's primitivist stance does not escape from or disencumber itself of historical time. Historical time persistently haunts Perlman's primitivism and his spiritual attempts to flee from its purported malignancy. In this sense, I would maintain that Perlman's attempts to annul history and move 'outside' historical time are in themselves inherently problematic responses to historical time. Therefore, instead of simply reinforcing Perlman's antagonistic disdain for history by offering a more effective means of escaping from it—through the renewal of 'meaningful' cyclical time—I would instead like to propose, by way of conclusion, alternative intimations of a rapprochement with history—and this particular present moment. This is to offer a message of reconciliation between the meaningful and the mundane or, more exactly, to discern 'meaning' within the 'mundane,' but to do so without specific recourse to an apocalyptic catastrophism or concepts of progress. Through a message of reconciliation, emphasis would be placed not upon annihilating history because of its associations with 'progress,' but rather the transfiguration of human participation within historical, linear time.

A first example of this transfiguration of history through the meeting between the mundane and the meaningful emerges from the realm of human memory. Through remembrance, historical time loses its basis in concerns over strict chronology or the historian's concerns with past events as they really

cuperated one of the problems he earlier witnessed in those reified accounts of Capital: the representation of Capital as '*an external force beyond their* [the resisters] *control*.' Perlman even makes this point explicit in his essay when he writes that 'henceforth radicalism will be *external to the beast; radicals will all be outside agitators*.'[128] Perlman's emphasis upon an artificial Leviathanic 'totality' introduces a stark scission between Leviathan's 'insides'—'a humanly meaningless web of unnatural constraints'—and those 'outside' Leviathan in the 'state of nature' who still exist within or—in the case of 'outside agitators'—are capable of reestablishing meaningful social relationships. With Leviathan defined as an autonomous 'Frankenstein monster' and with the 'state of nature' as the sole repository of meaningful community and sociality, Perlman institutes an aversion, if not contempt, towards all attempts to 'control' or ameliorate the effects of this 'monstrous cadaver.' He refutes his earlier critical stance insofar as this Leviathanic 'totality' is no longer understood as a social relationship open to direct social contestation within the context of 'daily life.' For Perlman, any attempt to function within Leviathan's 'insides' serves only in perpetuating and giving 'artificial' life to this excrescent 'totality,' an artificial construct irrevocably shut off from the meaningful social contexts of the 'state of nature.' As Perlman succinctly writes, 'it goes on as long as the beast is animated by living beings.'[129] The only real alternative is therefore escape to the 'outside'—the path of 'outside agitators' and 'An-archic and pantheistic dancers'—since it is only once *zeks* have escaped the bonds of Leviathan's 'artificial' constraints, and rediscovered the 'state of nature' that true resistance—and true community or sociality—is made possible.

While Perlman's 'outside agitators' appear to participate in the decomposition of this 'monstrous cadaver' through their act of succession, this primitivist politics of the 'outside' is not commensu-

[128] Perlman. *Against His-story, Against Leviathan*, p. 291.
[129] *Ibid*, p. 266.

rate with a revolutionary 'big bang' and the mass social revolution of 'numberless *zeks*.' This is not a vision of direct human participation in the dismantling of a global Leviathan that has 'become more powerful than the Biosphere.' It rather indicates a politics of survivalism either within the interstices of modernity's urban-industrial wastelands or in the aftermath of a mass civilisational 'collapse,' a 'big bang' that occurs more in accordance with the rapacious logic of the 'totality' than by means of the direct intervention of 'outside agitators.' Where modernity's *zeks* merely survive as 'domesticated cattle,' Perlman's 'outside agitators' are rugged survivors who will outlive the 'domesticated' amidst Earth's post-apocalyptic waste lands because they have rediscovered the practices of the 'state of nature.'[130] In one of his final primitivist writings, Perlman will, in fact, unite this image of escape to the 'outside' with the collapse of civilisation in language redolent of *Against His-story, Against Leviathan.* As he writes, 'Even if we cannot see the breaches in the electrically charged barbed wire, we already know that inmates found their way out of the entrails of earlier mechanical monsters, camped outside the hulks that had seemed so real, and saw the abandoned artificial carcasses collapse and decompose.'[131] Despite Perlman's location of this withdrawal of 'inmates' in a historical context, I would maintain that this vision of artificial carcasses that seemingly collapse by themselves is a product of Perlman's far more contemporary account of Leviathan as an 'external force' or autonomous 'totality;' his complete disillusionment with the transformative abilities of modernity's 'numberless *zeks*;' and, his primitivist restriction of meaningful sociality to a historically distant 'state of nature.'

As with Perlman's 'Waste Land' and his portrait of 'our age,' this politicotheoretical definition of Leviathan works against

[130] On these primitivist ideas of 'rewilding,' see Smith. 'Wild-life,' pp. 470–487.

[131] Fredy Perlman. 'On the Machine in the Garden', in John Moore (ed.). *The Machine against the Garden.* London: Aporia Press, 1992, p. 28.

old.' Declaring that 'our age' is the end times does not portend 'spirited' participation—'to hasten that which is well-nigh upon us.' Its apocalyptic despair and 'paralyzed mourning' for lost meaningful contexts does not offer hope and is not even a goad to action, other than in the form of violent rage directed at a world that 'outside agitators' have placed beyond healing and beyond repair.

In lieu of this apocalyptic current in Perlman's essay and the spiritual desolation it engenders, I find Smith, Clark, and Watson's attempts to reclaim a spiritual meaningfulness from the 'state of nature' ultimately lacking in an acknowledgement of these contradictions in Perlman's conception of spiritual renewal. While the attempted reclamation of spiritual 'meaning' from Perlman's work is in its own way admirable, the reading of this text in terms of its esoteric meaningfulness fails to acknowledge how the meaningful and the historically mundane are inextricably, but problematically, bound together in *Against His-story, Against Leviathan.* To extricate one, meaningful facet of 'spirit' or the 'golden age' within and set this apart from another, historically mundane understanding fails to recognise how this 'meaning' is still enmeshed in 'mundane' historical time. It too fails to recognise the re-emergence in Perlman's work of a different, albeit malignant 'meaning:' apocalyptic catastrophism.

This recuperation of a 'meaningful' conception of the 'golden age' through reference to cyclical, mythological time is also problematic for another major reason: it leaves unquestioned Perlman's evidently estranged relationship not only from this particular present moment but also from historical, linear time. Perlman may try and mask this estrangement by referring to a hyphenated 'His-story' but, as I have noted throughout this discussion, Perlman is, in fact, burdening historical, linear time with starkly negative connotations. Historical time is forever being purged from the rhythmic cyclicity of Perlman's 'state of nature,' as if it were the malignant, evil twin of Leviathan and Ahriman. Thus, history is co-equal with concepts of 'progress' and

a nihilistic hatred of the world, and a frustrated longing for the 'collapse' of a Leviathanic 'totality' that obstructs the return of the 'lost belief or paradise' that is the 'state of nature.'

The 'self-fulfilling prophecy' of expectant hope for a new dawn is displaced by another message of apocalyptic despair and 'paralyzed mourning' for the 'Age of Gold.'[255] This primitivist eschatological narrative offers nothing more than 'radical alienation' and despair in the face of modernity's catastrophes. The imminence of the end times gives way to 'eschatological disappointment' and to the suspension of spiritual renewal and social transformation in the present. This deferral of change stands not in accord with a progressive teleology—as Perlman discerns in the Marxist Eschaton—but a deferral borne of a primitivist Eschaton of historical degeneration from a prior, idealised 'golden age,' a fall from Paradise reflected in a world of urban decay, anomie, political disintegration, and a litany 'of tortures, massacres, poisonings, manipulations, [and] despoliations.' All these varied signs of the 'end times' indicate the imminence of the collapse of civilisation. These signs all point to an intolerably bad situation, to a world that has been broken into pieces. As Taylor notes in the broader context of radical environmentalism, 'given mounting evidence of the precipitous decline in earth's life-support systems, the apocalyptic expectations that fuel environmental resistance are also understandable.'[256] However, within Perlman's primitivism, the consistent declaration of spiritual and historical estrangement from both this modern 'Waste Land' and this idealised 'golden age' actively preclude any positive and creative response to the crises of 'our age.' The Leviathanic dragon-beast may break the world into pieces, but this primitivist apocalypse is itself a broken ending bereft of any real possibilities for a different world or even that limited utopian promise of what Buhle describes as a 'potential new society growing within the shell of the

[255] Moyn. 'Of Savagery and Civil Society,' p. 78.
[256] Taylor. *Dark Green Religion*, p. 101.

the discernment of any transformative possibilities from within 'Leviathan's insides.' Just as there is in Perlman's conception of the 'Waste Land' no allowance for spiritual regeneration, so too is there no foundation for social transformation from the perspective of this autonomous 'totality' that has loosed the bounds of the social. There is either escape to the 'outside' or the far less promising outcome of a 'suicidal war' that brings an end to the Earth's Biosphere. There is either the Light of the 'outside' or the Darkness of the 'inside.' Contrasted with his message of spiritual and historical alienation from the 'state of nature,' there would appear, in lieu of these theoretical developments, an apparent estrangement from 'our age' as well. Perlman may refer to alienation from the 'state of nature,' but there is just as much an apparent unease with and revulsion towards the modern world as well. Perlman's primitivism is as much estranged from these modern shores as it is from the 'other shore.' In this sense, Perlman's politico-spiritual vision of the 'state of nature' and 'our age' institutes a temporal estrangement not just from the past and the present, but from historical time itself. In what follows, I would like to turn from these questions of symbolism and radical theory towards Perlman's troubled relationship with historical time and how this relates to these contradictions in Perlman's understanding of spiritual renewal and, more broadly, change and transformation of any kind.

Section Four: The Western Spirit

In his article, 'The State of Nature,' Mick Smith considers the spiritually 'meaningful' implications of primitivism in terms of its relationship to time—and varying conceptions thereof.[132] Drawing insights from the aforementioned Mircea Eliade, Smith recognises that the 'state of nature,' 'golden age' or 'Age of Gold' possesses

[132] Smith. 'The State of Nature,' p. 421.

spiritual meaningfulness by means of its location *outside* historical, linear time—or what Perlman derogatively calls 'His-story,' progress, or 'Leviathanic time.' The 'state of nature' inhabits that spiritually meaningful world of mythological time or what Eliade also refers to as *cyclical time*. As Eliade himself discusses, the ideal of a lost 'golden age' occurs only in 'mythic [cyclical] time, in primordial Time, that fabled time of the "beginnings."'[133] To 'return' to the 'golden age' is to suspend chronological time by re-enacting—through song, dance, and ritual—these myths of the "beginnings," the sacred Time before linear time, before humanity's fall to the 'terror of history.'[134] Hence, the essential non-linear, cyclical nature of mythology: the capacity to interrupt the flow of chronological time and restore the lost 'golden age,' if only in this spiritually 'meaningful' sense. As Eliade writes, 'by "living" the myths [of the 'golden age'] one emerges from profane, chronological time and enters a time that is of a different quality, a "sacred" Time at once primordial and indefinitely recoverable.'[135] The mythical time of the "beginnings" as it were dispenses with the apparently trivial 'facts which have merely happened' within historical time in favour of a remembrance—and re-enactment—of those meaningful events 'we call mythical, which took place *ab origine* and which constitute cosmogony, anthropogony, [and] the myths of inauguration.'[136]

On this basis, Smith considers the radical import of the primitivist's 'state of nature' in relation to the spiritual 'meaningfulness' of cyclical, mythological time. This is because cyclical time has as its basis a fundamental capacity to disturb historical time. What makes this potentially radical is its interruption of those nar-

[133] Mircea Eliade. *Myth and Reality*. London: George Allen & Unwin, 1963, p. 5.

[134] Mircea Eliade. *The Myth of the Eternal Return: Cosmos and History*. Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2005, pp. 49–92.

[135] Eliade. *Myth and Reality*, p. 18.

[136] Mircea Eliade. *Myths, Dreams and Mysteries*. New York: Harper & Row, 1967, p. 44.

Indeed, even though Perlman invokes the sheer, destructive proximity of the end times, I would ask the question of who is really ushering in this end of history in Perlman's primitivist apocalypse. As discussed in section three, Perlman's variant upon the spirited revolutionary, the 'outside agitator,' does not so evidently participate in Leviathan's destruction. Instead, these 'outside agitators' await with fervent anticipation the 'collapse' of urban-industrial civilisation. These 'outside agitators' do not hasten the end; they anticipate the consummation of Leviathan's own catastrophic historical trajectory: global ecological disaster, nuclear annihilation, and the eventual 'collapse' of civilisation. This primitivist apocalypse is certainly catastrophic, but there is also an implicit assumption that the 'last beast' has fallen to its own destructive logic. Leviathan, the 'artificial man,' commits suicide. The 'fourth beast' beheads itself. The end arrives—but not in accordance with the apocalyptic 'intentions' of 'spirited revolutionaries.'

Here again, that other interrelated impulsion of the Judaeo-Christian apocalyptic tradition resurfaces within Perlman's primitivist 'vision' of 'collapse:' a tragically resigned waiting for the end of history in the face of an unbearable present. As Forsyth notes, 'despite the powerful emotion of the [apocalyptic] visionary's voice, his obvious commitments to the glorious outcome, he does not present himself…as in any way part of the action he envisions. The events are all entirely beyond him; he is no more than a spectator of the grand drama.'[254] Instead of bringing about the end of history, Perlman's primitivist apocalypse reinstates the interminable restlessness and alienation of Turner's 'Western spirit.' Robbed 'of old comforts, and unable to feel reattached to the great events sealed off by subsequent history,' Perlman's 'vision' opens onto a 'spiritually barren world where the only outlet for the urge to life' is found in a restless discomfort with the present,

[254] Forsyth. *The Old Enemy*, p. 257.

the violent imagery of the apocalypse is certainly troubling, but it also indicates a very real closure of creative possibilities in the present. Recourse to apocalyptic violence may 'seem like a visionary and creative endeavour, [but] more often it is a refuge for those who feel powerless and lack vision and creativity. The image of society changing through the instrumentality of disasters is in a league with other personal and collective perspectives that see no alternative except violence as a way of resolving conflict or effecting change.'[251] Declarations of apocalyptic violence against the 'fourth beast' do not indicate a creative response to the present, but more aptly give expression to a message of powerlessness and impotent rage.

Perlman's apocalyptic 'vision' is not only in this sense 'a refuge for those who feel powerless and lack vision;' this primitivist apocalypse is also a refuge from the horrible burdens of the historical present or, in Eliade's terms, 'the terror of history.' The violent, destructive imagery of this primitivist apocalypse assuredly invokes a sense of necessary urgency and the need for extreme measures due to the apparent imminence of the end times in the modern world, but this destructive ending is not brought forth from a sense of 'responsibility to the present moment,' but rather the estranged 'feeling of not belonging to the world and its troubles.'[252] As Mendel writes of the violent imagery that permeates apocalyptic discourse, 'behind such rage against the world and the fervent desire to see it suffer and die lies radical alienation.'[253] Perlman's apocalyptic 'vision' is again built upon a fundamental contempt for and dislocation from this present-day 'wretched reality,' a modern world that is so discernibly 'wretched' because of its historical estrangement from the 'fulfilled image of wholeness' that is the 'state of nature.'

[251] David Spangler. 'When the Stars Rise From Earth,' in Stephen Koke. *Hidden Millennium: The doomsday fallacy*. West Chester: Chrysalis Books, 1998, p. 3.

[252] Susser. *Existence and Utopia*, p. 73.

[253] Mendel. *Vision and Violence*, p. 41.

ratives of linear, historical 'progress' that colonise the future in the name of an incessant growth and development—'progress' without due consideration for the ecological limits to growth. The 'state of nature' would therefore hold significance or 'meaningfulness' by proposing new mythologies unbound from these progressivist narratives.

Though, as Smith notes, primitivism more often locates its 'state of nature' and 'golden age' *within* linear time. The primitivist 'state of nature' is not situated within the spiritually 'meaningful' realm of cyclical, mythological time—the time of the '"beginnings."' It is quite specifically situated in the historical past; it is located in a time 'before' and 'outside' Western civilisation. Primitivism here deprives the 'state of nature' of its spiritual import because this 'golden age' is removed from the meaningfulness of cyclical, mythological time. As Smith maintains, primitivism offers only 'a straightforwardly *mundane* reality rather than a *meaningful* mythic account of the human predicament.'[137] Instead of escaping from the 'terror' of historical time, primitivists only entrap themselves ever more within it.

While Smith's account of the 'golden age' is significant for identifying these tensions within primitivism between 'mundane' historical time and 'meaningful' cyclical time, his position is not entirely applicable to *Against His-story, Against Leviathan* because this text does not solely reduce the 'state of nature' and 'golden age' to this literal, historical level of interpretation. This 'mundane,' historical element is still apparent in Perlman's work, but his text also contains this spiritually 'meaningful' conception of the 'state of nature.' His work consists of both a 'mundane' and 'meaningful' understanding of the term. Indeed, as already noted, Perlman's 'vision' of the 'golden age' is, like Smith's position, indebted to Mircea Eliade's studies in mythology.[138] Perlman even refers to him as one

[137] Smith. 'The State of Nature,' p. 421.

[138] Perlman. *Having Little, Being Much*, p. 118.

of the few scholars who has seen through Leviathan's 'iron curtain of inversion and falsification.'[139] Perlman too makes constant reference to the Eliadean distinction between historical time and cyclical, mythological time. When Perlman refers, for instance, to those medieval heretics who restored the 'golden age' within—through vision, dream, and revelation—he writes that 'such sudden disruptions of individual lives are also disruptions of Leviathanic existence. After such experiences, an individual abandons *the sequence of meaningless intervals of Leviathanic time*.'[140]This abandonment of 'Leviathanic time' is furthermore wedded to the recuperation of cyclical time—'the rhythms of the state of nature.'[141] As Perlman writes, to recuperate the 'state of nature' is 'to jump, to dance, and by dancing revive the rhythms, *recover cyclical time*.[142] Perlman's essay therefore not only contains reference to this distinction between 'mundane'—or 'meaningless'—historical time and spiritually 'meaningful' time, but he also considers the radical, interruptive implications of myth and this cyclical 'return' to the '"beginnings."'

Although Perlman invokes Eliade's conception of myth, he too, as noted, considers Eliade to have fogged what he sees 'from the other shore' because Eliade discerns 'analogies' and 'vestiges' of the sacred and the mythological in 'our age.' Perlman, of course, refuses to accept this position for two main reasons: modern spirituality is 'shit;' and, it remains so because 'our age' is cut off—via 'the strait'—from those historically distant 'communities in the state of nature' who *lived* these mythologies in a communally meaningful fashion. For Perlman, these archaic societies inhabited the meaningfulness of cyclical time. Unlike this modern age where *zeks* are enslaved to the incessant movements of historical 'progress,' these ancient communities divested themselves of the 'meaningless inter-

[139] Perlman. *Against His-story, Against Leviathan*, p. 10.
[140] Emphasis added. *Ibid*, p. 187.
[141] *Ibid*, p. 187.
[142] Emphasis added. *Ibid*, p. 299.

of 'repair,' an image of change that does not come to 'announce the end of the world, time, and history, but to promote *repair of the world* in time and history.'[249] Perlman's 'vision' favours instead a purificatory, apocalyptic violence—'a cleansing fire' that burns away all the impure filth of the old world.

Perlman's self-fulfilling prophecy is therefore markedly violent in its imagery and implications, consumed by fiery conflagrations, beheadings, and the extermination of all offending evils and impurities in order for 'alienated sojourners' to reclaim their 'lost belief or paradise' that is the 'state of nature.' Spiritual renewal is thus made possible through the commitment of 'spirited revolutionaries' to the imminent destruction of this 'artificial' and 'synthetic' world of Leviathan. There is here an inverted politico-spiritual 'war of extermination.' There is moreover, in relation to Turner, a sacrificial violence amidst this extermination. As Perlman frames colonial violence against the colonised, the task of resistance becomes that of '*sacrificing the sacrificers*,' that is to say, turning the sacrificial violence of the 'Western spirit'—with its *hecatombs*—against itself.[250] Certainly, primitivism has in general professed vocal support for violent insurrection; and, I will, in the final part of this thesis, return to the violent implications of Perlman's 'spirited' resistance to Leviathan.

Though, I would also note that the shrillness of Perlman's violent, apocalyptic pronouncements serves only to mask the fact that this primitivist apocalypse offers no substantive possibilities for either a spiritual or positive practical response to the exigencies of modernity. Perlman has, as noted in earlier sections, deprived modernity of all meaningfulness—it is an unregenerate 'Waste Land'—and also conceived this modern, Leviathanic 'totality' as an autonomous 'Frankenstein's monster' no longer open to challenge and social contestation. Perlman's dependence upon

[249] Emphasis added. Mendel. *Vision and Violence*, p. 21.
[250] Emphasis added. Perlman. *Against His-story, Against Leviathan*, p. 255.

apocalypse and to the emergence of a last Beast or 'rough beast' at the end of history, a Beast 'with lion body and the head of a man' that Perlman will equate with Leviathan and invokes constantly throughout *Against His-story, Against Leviathan*.[245]

This 'rough beast' also reveals another major problem with Clark's analysis: the pre-eminence of the dragon-beast—and Leviathan in particular—within apocalyptic narratives.[246] In the apocalyptic 'vision,' the dragon's end does not foreshadow this redemptive cyclical 'turning.' While the 'rough beast' in Yeats' 'The Second Coming' is certainly ambiguous enough to suggest a message of rebirth, there is no such ambiguity in Perlman's reading because this 'rough beast' is co-equal with Leviathan, and this dragon-beast—in its explicitly political form—is to be finally excised from the world.[247] In Perlman's apocalyptic 'vision,' the dragon is most emphatically not a symbol of renewal. The spiritual message of the apocalypse is that of the complete and utter annihilation of the dragon in the most dualistic and morally rigid of terms.[248] Insofar as Perlman's spiritual 'vision' institutes a 'war of extermination' between Light and Dark, his apocalyptic consummation of history knows only how to sacrifice and behead the dragon or 'fourth beast.' Like Perlman's portrait of an entirely unregenerate 'Waste Land' and his autonomisation of an artificial 'totality,' his apocalyptic vision of modernity discards with an imagery of healing and the symbolism of the 'healing waters.' Perlman's politico-spiritual 'vision' is removed from what Arthur P. Mendel has described as the merciful Judaeo-Christian message

[245] *Against His-story, Against Leviathan*, p. 2

[246] On the associations between apocalypse and the diabolic dragon, see Timothy K. Beal. *Religion and Its Monsters*. Hoboken: Taylor and Francis, 2014, pp. 71–87. On the association of Leviathan with evil, see Schmitt. *The Leviathan in the State Theory of Thomas Hobbes*, pp. 5–8.

[247] On the ambiguous meanings of the 'rough beast,' see John R. Harrison. 'What Rough Beast? Yeats, Nietzsche and historical rhetoric in "The Second Coming."' *Papers on Language and Literature*. Vol. 31 No. 4, 1995, pp. 362–389.

[248] Grosso. *The Millennium Myth*, pp. 318–320.

vals of Leviathanic time' for the cyclical recurrence of 'that fabled time of the "beginnings."'

To adapt Smith's observations to *Against His-story, Against Leviathan*, Perlman confuses the mythological 'golden age' with a historical 'golden age;' though, he has also, in a more distinctive formulation, collapsed the 'meaningful' cyclical time of the "beginnings" into an actual, historically constituted 'state of nature,' a literal, mundane 'Age of Gold' or 'dream time' he exclusively associates with indigenous and archaic societies.[143] Perlman has located mythical, cyclical time within historical time by associating the time of the "beginnings" with those societies existing 'before' Western civilisation's 'fall' into historical, linear time and the 'terror of history.' In contrast with Eliade's eventual recognition that archaic societies 'did not believe they lived in mythological time'—that they too understood the notion of a 'fall' from a timeless Paradise into linear, historical time—Perlman merges the worlds of myth and history, collapsing any distinction between a mythic 'golden age' and a historical 'golden age.'[144]

Far from reconciling the 'mundane' with the 'meaningful,' Perlman's 'state of nature' gives rise to contradictions and tensions, the most apparent being the creation of an ever more stark antagonistic dualism: the historical scission of 'our age'—trapped within the linearity of 'progress'—from the 'state of nature'—immersed within the cyclicity of 'dream time.' This scission, in turn, not only serves as a guiding impetus behind Perlman's disparagement of modernity and its *zeks*, but also exacerbates the spiritual—and temporal—estrangement he decries because the spiritually regenerative value of cyclical time has been so heavily circumscribed by association with a 'state of nature' locked away in the distant past.

[143] *Ibid*, p. 253.

[144] Ellwood. *The Politics of Myth*, p. 97. Eliade. *Myths, Dreams and Mysteries*, p. 43. See also Richard Heinberg. *Memories and Visions of Paradise: Exploring the universal myth of a lost golden age*. Wheaton: Quest Books, 1995, pp. 51–55.

Smith's 'meaningful' reading of the 'state of nature' fails in this regard to attend to such contradictions in this major primitivist text. As with Watson's inner 'golden age' and Clark's 'strait,' this largely esoteric reading only excuses and explains away such contradictions between the 'meaningful' and the 'mundane.' Perlman's relationship to these different conceptions of time is important for understanding the problems of spiritual renewal in his text; however, Smith's proposal that the meaningfulness of cyclical time would somehow resolve the problems with primitivism's mundane temporality is not critical enough. As I would like to consider, these problems with time require a closer examination of Perlman's own essay. Specifically, it requires a comparative account of one of the major spiritual influences in Perlman's work: Frederick W. Turner's *Beyond Geography: The Western spirit against the Wilderness*. As I would maintain, this work is pivotal to an understanding of the tensions in Perlman's relationship to time and spiritual renewal.

Turner's *Beyond Geography* is itself one of the guiding textual influences within *Against His-story, Against Leviathan*. It is also a formative influence in the development of Perlman's primitivism and the composition of his essay. As Lorraine Perlman writes, 'Fredy was startled by the similarity of Turner's conclusions to his own.'[145] This text has since become a key influence in its own right amongst other primitivists.[146] The text is of such specific import for this discussion because of its pre-eminent concerns with Western spirituality—the 'Western spirit'—in contrast with the 'living mythologies' of indigenous, and specifically Native American societies. As Turner himself notes in the introduction to his text, his work tells a 'spiritual story' about Western civilisation and colonialism.[147] As he maintains, 'the real story of the coming

[145] Perlman. *Having Little, Being Much*, p. 123.

[146] David Watson. 'Swamp Fever, Primitivism & The "Ideological Vortex."'

[147] Turner. *Beyond Geography*, p. xi.

transformation—with the imagery and symbolism of this Judaeo-Christian apocalyptic tradition, or what Cohn would define as a 'revolutionary eschatology.'

What however might this primitivist apocalyptic prophecy actually be said to fulfil, and particularly so in reference to these questions of spiritual renewal and regeneration? For Clark, Perlman's concluding image of a Leviathanic dragon-beast swallowing the whole world and ushering in the end of 'His-story' holds a specifically mythological significance. Clark discerns the mythic symbolism of the ouroboros—the dragon devouring its own tail—and its attendant spiritual message of cyclical regeneration.[241] Here is a cyclical, mythological 'turning' or return to the '"beginnings."' While an evocative interpretation of Perlman's envisioning of Leviathan, Clark elides the apocalyptic implications of Perlman's conclusion. In Perlman's work, the end of history is a dualistic choice between 'outside' or 'inside,' between an awakening 'to the cadences of a long-forgotten music or to the eternal silence of death without a morrow.'[242] Clark too ignores Perlman's repeated invocation of the apocalyptic imagery in W.B. Yeats' 'The Second Coming.'[243] A work of equal significance to T.S. Eliot's 'The Waste Land'—and with comparable themes of spiritual and worldly desolation—'The Second Coming' depicts a modern world spinning frantically out of control in the 'turning and turning' of the 'widening gyre' of a two thousand year historical cycle—'twenty centuries of stony sleep.'[244]While still professing a cyclical dimension to history—and a possible return to lost "origins"—Yeats' poem is still indebted to the Christian imagery of

[241] Clark. 'The Dragon of Brno.' On the positive symbolism of the dragon, see David Fontana. *The Secret Language of Symbols: A visual key to symbols and their meanings*. London: Pavilion Books, 1995, pp. 80–82.

[242] Perlman. *Against His-story, Against Leviathan*, p. 267.

[243] Yeats. *The Collected Poems of W.B. Yeats*, p. 187; *Against His-story, Against Leviathan*, p. 2.

[244] Yeats. *The Collected Poems of W.B. Yeats*, p. 187.

the Biosphere' is now One. It no longer has any frontiers and wildernesses to progress against; it has nothing left to conquer, no where left to play out its 'restless drive onward,' other than its potential to war against itself, which leads to this aforementioned danger: that 'the beast is most likely to perish once and for all in a cataclysmic suicidal war, in which case Ahriman would permanently extinguish the light of Ahura Mazda.' This is the 'first time' of Leviathan's decomposition because 'our age' is the site for its *final* decomposition. Leviathan is the 'last beast' and these are the last days of its progress. These are literally the 'end times,' because 'His-story'—the time of historical 'progress'—has reached its end in a globlalised world. As Perlman writes, history and Leviathan are 'almost at an end;' and, it has been Perlman's task, in the conclusion to his epic journey through 'His-story' to summarise 'ever so briefly, the moments leading to its end.'[240]

If the Book of Daniel's 'fourth beast' ushers in the *very* end of history, there is for Perlman no more perfect historical foundation for this imminent apocalypse than 'our age.' With a demonic Leviathan having, in an almost literal sense, devoured the whole earth—through globalisation—and having ushered in the end of history—'the end of its Progress'—these modern shores are the most fitting site for the expectation of an apocalyptic end to history. The modern world is the site for the final battle between the forces of Light and Dark, not only because of the dominion of this Ahrimanic darkness, but also due to one very real, pressing threat that could indeed bring an end to human history and planet earth: global nuclear annihilation. Perlman has reactivated the apocalyptic imagery of the Book of Daniel in a modern setting. Perlman has created in the pages of *Against His-story, Against Leviathan* a selffulfilling apocalyptic prophecy for modern 'spirited revolutionaries,' an apocalypse that enjoins a background in revolutionary politics—a 'worse-the-better' conception of radical

[240] *Ibid*, p. 266

of European civilization to the wildernesses of the world is a *spiritual story*.'[148] It is a story which 'enabled Europeans to explore the most remote places of the globe, to colonize them, and to impose their values on the native populations.'[149] Hence, Turner's title: the 'Western spirit' *against* the Wilderness, a malignant 'spirit' Perlman references throughout his essay.[150]

Perlman will so honour Turner that he even associates him with those 'seers of old' who 'returned to share their visions with their communities.'[151] Despite the fact that 'the seer of now pours his vision on sheets of paper,' Turner is still considered kin to that seer described earlier 'who slipped into our age from the other shore.'[152] That Perlman speaks of Turner as a seer possessed of a 'vision' is itself a somewhat pertinent appellation because, as Turner notes, his text's 'spiritual story' of the 'Western spirit' against the Wilderness has its basis in what the author could only describe as a 'vision.'[153] As Turner writes of this experience:

> The vision began, as the reader shall see, on a day I spent roaming the hot and windy hills of the Pine Ridge reservation in South Dakota. I saw myself there as both an inheritor of conquest and as an alien. I knew that both the Lakota and the Cheyenne had held sacred the Black Hills I could see in the westward distance, but I knew also that a belief in the sacredness of lands was not in my heritage. The distance I felt there was more than geographical. I could see the Black Hills. I was on a piece of aboriginal America. But I was estranged by history from them.[154]

[148] *Ibid*, p. xi.
[149] *Ibid*, p. xi.
[150] Perlman. *Against His-story, Against Leviathan*, p. 2.
[151] Turner. *Beyond Geography*, p. 2.
[152] *Ibid*, p. 2.
[153] *Ibid*, p. 6.
[154] *Ibid*, p. xi.

So important is Turner's 'vision' that despite his scholarly background in Native American history and 'close engagement with historical fact,' he will declare that any such use of historical evidence should not 'overshadow the vision of the whole' because he believes this visionary experience 'to be truer than anything I knew on the subject,' ultimately concluding that his role is 'closer to that of the literary artist than to that of the historian.'[155]

Certainly, Perlman lauds Turner for exactly this dissociation from scholarly 'historical fact,' celebrating instead Turner the seer who 'sings,' 'rants,' and 'almost dances.'[156] Still, Turner's 'vision' hardly approximates the spiritual ecstasy of Perlman's 'seers of old.' If there is a song-like quality to this 'vision,' it is more dirge than celebratory dance. What is, in fact, far more apparent in Turner's 'vision' of the Black Hills is his spiritual or 'more than geographical' distance from a perspective that honoured the 'sacredness of lands.' He demonstrates historical estrangement from the Black Hills' indigenous inhabitants 'whose relationships to their lands was dictated by an oblique but strong recognition of human biology, by the particularities of those lands, and by a living mythology that celebrated all this.'[157] Compared with Perlman's own duality of the tourist and the seer, Turner would appear to describe a moment of visionary insight that disturbs his role as tourist gazing out over a natural landscape; though, he sees neither 'spirits' nor 'qualities' in this 'vision.' Turner is rather haunted by the absence of spiritual illumination; he is granted a 'vision' of himself not as seer, but as 'an inheritor of conquest and as an alien.'

This 'vision' of spiritual and historical estrangement is, in turn, pivotal to Turner's own 'spiritual story' of Western civilisation and his account of the 'Western spirit.' The basic lineaments of this 'story' are largely confined within Part One of *Beyond Geography*

[155] *Ibid*, p. xii.
[156] *Ibid*, p. 2.
[157] *Ibid*, p. 7.

trophism into the creation of his own primitivist apocalypse, and does so in response to his own historical age. This catastrophism is firstly captured in Buhle's aforementioned criticism of Perlman's allegiance to a 'big bang' or 'worse-the-better' theory of revolutionary change. This revolutionary 'big bang' is so amenable to an apocalyptic catastrophism because it too is constructed around the dominion of a 'fourth beast'—the 'totality'—whose control 'grows tighter and tighter around us, promising more material abundance and delivering more spiritual death.'

Apart from these sympathies between a revolutionary and apocalyptic catastrophism, the lineaments of a distinctive primitivist apocalypse emerge at the conclusion of Perlman's essay. This primitivist apocalypse directly follows Perlman's pessimistic question of whether modernity's *zeks* still possess an 'inner light.' Refusing to answer his own question, Perlman proclaims with far greater assurance, 'What is known is that Leviathan, the great artifice, single and world-embracing *for the first time in His-story*, is decomposing.'[238] This 'first time' to which Perlman refers is, of course, somewhat strange and contradictory because he has already established throughout his essay that Leviathan is a 'dead thing' perpetually decomposing, in that it has only an 'artificial life' stolen from the human beings trapped inside it. As such, this is most certainly not the 'first time' Leviathan has decomposed. This contradiction is however revealing in itself, because it would suggest there is for Perlman something rather unique about this decomposition in 'our age' that makes it possible to speak of a 'first time.' As Perlman continues, Leviathan's decomposition is so unparalleled in a contemporary, modern context because 'it has reached *the end of its Progress*, for there is nothing left for it to progress against except itself.'[239] Modern, globalised Leviathan, 'single and world-embracing' and 'more powerful than

[238] Emphasis added. Perlman. *Against His-story, Against Leviathan*, p. 301.
[239] Emphasis added. *Ibid*, p. 301.

apocalyptic prophecy for the modern world. This is to remark of the 'revolutionary eschatology' that serves as the foundation for *Against His-story, Against Leviathan*. Already, I have considered Perlman's repetition of an apocalyptic catastrophism through comparison with Turner's *Beyond Geography*. I would also acknowledge how primitivist literature is far from diffident in taking cognisance of the apocalyptic current within its critique of civilisation.[236] However, I would here like to return to Cohn's *The Pursuit of the Millennium*, particularly his reading of the Book of Daniel, and to consider how Perlman's essay repeats one of the most defining features of the 'eschatological drama.' As Cohn notes, what defines the eschatology of the Book of Daniel—and makes it the foundational text for a 'militant, revolutionary chiliasm'—is its identification of the end times not only with a particular historical period—namely, the revolutionary's own age—but also, a historical period of intolerable suffering ruled over by a great power that is represented as a demonic, evil force—the 'fourth beast.' As Neil Forsyth concurs in a discussion of 'apocalyptic discourse,' 'by a curious but frequent twist of thought, the very "domination of Belial" [Satan] is the sign of how soon the end must come.'[237] A 'revolutionary eschatology' does not merely emerge in response to a terrible historical situation; it emerges in response to the worst of all possible situations—a world that has already been broken into pieces. The apocalypse comes, in the most emphatic of terms, at the *very* end of history.

Perlman, of course, embellishes this defining aspect of the Book of Daniel's apocalypse. He seizes upon this image of utter and complete catastrophe at the very end of history. There is however more than textual sympathy for this feature of the 'eschatological drama' in the Book of Daniel. Perlman too draws this apocalyptic catas-

[236] Zerzan. *Elements of Refusal*, p. 11.

[237] Neil Forsyth. *The Old Enemy: Satan and the combat myth*. Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1987, p. 208.

phy and, more specifically, chapters five and six, entitled 'A Crisis Cult' and 'Hecatombs.' While Turner will begin his 'spiritual story,' like Perlman himself, in ancient Mesopotamia with the rise of the first walled city-states, his story of the 'Western spirit' is primarily attributed to the history of Western Christendom. Despite his acknowledgement of the 'quarrelsome' nature of Western Christianity, Turner still considers it possible to speak of a 'recognizable unit,' an abstract 'Western spirit' that shares 'the same religious symbols,' owns 'the same holy writ,' and derives 'nominal spiritual identity from the same source.'[158]

Turner opens this Christian story of the 'Western spirit' during the decline of the Roman Empire with its innumerable social crises and political upheavals. He refers, in particular, to the emergence of 'crisis cults,' charismatic movements, and "revitalization movents"—cults and sects that offered release from this social, political, and spiritual turmoil through the promise of constructing 'a more satisfying life for themselves out of what they perceive as the ruins of the present.'[159] Amidst such cults, Turner situates a nascent Christianity devoid of the structural uniformity of a Church hierarchy or organisation. It is a 'cult' not yet marred by association with the malignancy of this 'Western spirit.' Instead, this Christian 'crisis cult' is, from Turner's perspective, considered to be a 'living mythology.' Its spiritual message is 'colored by the excitement of the revelation of a *new and living mythology* that seems to bring all

[158] *Ibid*, p. 7.

[159] *Ibid*, p. 56. Turner's reference to charismatic and "revitalization" cults derives from Weston La Barre. *The Ghost Dance: The origins of religion*. Garden City: Doubleday, 1970; Anthony F.C. Wallace. 'Revitalization Movements.' *American Anthropologist*. Vol. 58 No. 2, 1956, pp. 264–281; Max Weber. *The Theory of Social and Economic Organization*. New York: Free Press, 1947.

For recent studies in cultic revival and charisma, see Michael Eugene Harkin. *Reassessing Revitalization Movements: Perspectives from North America and the Pacific Islands*. Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press, 2004; Charles Lindholm. *The Anthropology of Religious Charisma: Ecstasies and institutions*. New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2013.

who are touched by it into an intimate relationship with the very springs of creation.'[160]

Turner here reads early Christianity through comparison with the living mythologies of indigenous, and specifically, Native American societies. There is one major, structuring reason for this comparison: spiritual revelation in both these traditions is considered to unfold through the recurrence of cyclical, mythological or sacred time. As with Smith and Perlman, Turner draws upon Eliade's conception of cyclical, mythological time. In living mythologies, spiritual revelation recurs and therefore escapes from 'the terror of history, the existential loneliness of the linear march of events towards annihilation.'[161] While Turner at least concedes that 'living mythologies' are not entirely successful in escaping from 'the passage of time' and life's sense of duration, he too believes that the cyclicity of myth achieves a 'dreamlike circumambience in which, though events occur, they are perceived as recurring in accordance with the changeless patterns announced in myth and confirmed in nature.'[162]

Understood in these cyclical terms, spiritual revelation is always 'unfolding,' 'recurrent,' and 'endlessly renewable.'[163] It is neither restricted to a particular historical moment in the past nor restricted to certain people; all may experience this revelation through intimacy with 'spirits' or the 'holy spirit' by way of dreams, visions, songs, dances, and prophecies.[164] As Turner writes of Jesus Christ within early Christianity, he is less historical personage, and more mythological figure, a dying-and-resurrecting god whose 'message seems to be of the divinity that dwells within and that is present in all creation, and of how to

[160] Emphasis added. Turner. *Beyond Geography*, p. 58.
[161] *Ibid*, p. 63.
[162] *Ibid*, p. 64.
[163] *Ibid*, p. 68.
[164] *Ibid*, p. 59.

direct people towards 'the *topos*, to this place,' to this particular present moment.[232] These apocalypses are rather formed from a fundamental estrangement and dislocation from the present order of things, 'a feeling of *not belonging to the world and its troubles*.'[233] Apocalyptic catastrophism and other millenarian movements attempt to consummate history by way of escape from an unbearable present, and do so by counter-posing 'the fulfilled image of wholeness' that is Paradise with the 'piecemeal, wretched reality' that is the present.[234] Perlman's 'spirited revolutionaries,' like Turner's 'alienated sojourners,' so urgently desire the end of the world and seek to usher in this final consummation of history because they find themselves in a world they 'no longer recognise or identify with.'[235] 'Spirited revolutionaries' act, but their actions are built upon this estranged project of escaping from the historical present, even if this escape is an illusory and fractured project because this apocalyptic vision of escape, as Turner recognises, only ensnares these 'spirited revolutionaries' ever more within historical time. In these terms, the apocalyptic vision remains a deceptive substitute for more authentic forms of spiritual renewal.

These problems together raise the further issue of the relationship between Perlman's own primitivist 'vision' and the Judaeo-Christian apocalyptic tradition. This is not simply a question of Perlman's support for this tradition, or even the question of its practical efficacy in a historical context, but rather to consider Perlman's spiritual 'vision' and his primitivism as a self-fulfilling

[232] Martin Buber. 'The Demand of the Spirit and Historical Reality,' in Maurice Friedman (ed.). *Pointing the Way: Collected essays*. London: Routledge and Kegan Paul, 1957, p. 190.
[233] Emphasis added. Stephen Koke. *Hidden Millennium: The doomsday fallacy*. West Chester: Chrysalis Books, 1998, p. 3.
[234] Gershom Scholem quoted in Matthew Sharpe. 'Only Agamben Can Save Us? Against the messianic turn recently adopted in critical theory.' *The Bible and Critical Theory*. Vol. 5 No. 2, 2009, p. 444.
[235] Gray. *Black Mass*, p. 12.

spiritual meaningfulness of mythological renewal, as if the two were synonymous or, at least, complementary because of their concurrent associations with the interruption or end of historical time. Turner's *Beyond Geography*, of course, does not consider these spiritual traditions synonymous because while mythological renewal may also interrupt historical time, this interruption derives precisely from its escape from history into the sacred, cyclical time of the '"beginnings,"' whereas a 'revolutionary eschatology' locates its interruption entirely within historical, linear time in the form of a terrestrial Salvationism and the reclamation of a worldly Paradise that has either existed in the past, or is to be reclaimed in a future reckoning.

Indeed, as already intimated, Turner—by way of Cohn—would introduce the question of whether Perlman's 'spirited revolutionaries' are a radical alternative to the spiritual malaise of the 'Western spirit' or might be better conceived as a symptom of it. Far from being divine harbingers of the 'golden age,' Perlman's 'spirited revolutionaries' more closely approximate the 'deep spiritual pathology' of those dispossessed 'alienated sojourners' whose only frenzied hope for renewal is the recovery of their 'lost belief or paradise' through an apocalyptic catastrophe which they themselves either violently usher into the world, or await with fervent, but ultimately frustrated expectation. Even if Perlman's 'beheaders' of the beast 'do not wait' for this 'apocalyptic future'—unlike the Marxist Eschaton with its progressive deferment of historical salvation—both positions, imminent or deferred, are but different articulations of the historical estrangement that underlies this apocalyptic vision of history.

Both these apocalyptic visions of terrestrial salvation are essentially estranged from the present historical moment. While Perlman suggests that the apocalyptic vision is a goad to action, this urgency is born of the attempt to escape from the burden of the historical present with its terrors, crises and catastrophes. In the words of Martin Buber, the apocalyptic visionary does not

live in accordance with this.'[165] Like other living mythologies, early Christianity offers a message of spiritual regeneration and renewal that provides for a meaningful interruption of and escape from the 'terror of history' with its looming social and spiritual crises; the possibility of beginning anew 'on the original model;' and, doing so in accord with the 'changeless patterns' of myth and nature.[166]

While early Christianity is defined as in some way comparable with the living mythologies of other indigenous spiritual traditions, this Christian 'crisis cult' does not in Turner's estimation remain a 'living mythology,' transmuting instead into that malignant harbinger of the 'Western spirit.' The dissociation of Christianity from myth and the rise of this malignant 'Western spirit' are placed in specific association with the transmutation of the Christian 'crisis cult' into the Christian 'Church.' Such a transmutation is in Turner's reading a complex and dialectical process inscribed into the very nature of spiritual revelation and the 'crisis cult.' As Turner writes, the crisis cult or charismatic movement 'grows out of the inspired meditations, the mantic transports and dreams, of a single individual,' a prophet and charismatic figure who 'holds the cult together' not by means of organised hierarchy, but rather what Max Weber has termed 'an "emotional form of communal relationship,"' a charismatic authority whereby these initial revelations, dreams, and meditations 'spread like an electric current from the figure of the leader.'[167] However, this charismatic bond 'cannot permanently exist' because of either the death of the charismatic leader who 'provides the minimal degree of coherence required by the cult' or the rediscovery of the pressing realities of mundane existence—'family, friends, home, occupation'—from which these cults tend to divorce their members.[168] To keep alive this 'spiri-

[165] *Ibid*, p. 63.
[166] *Ibid*, p. 59.
[167] *Ibid*, p. 58.
[168] *Ibid*, p. 60.

tual fervor,' the cult 'must in essence violate its own character' and submit itself to what Weber describes as 'the process of "routinization" or "traditionalization."'[169] The charisma that was previously invested in a single prophet-leader is institutionalised 'into offices and officials;' the division of the movement into clergy and laity; and, the "traditionalization" of the prophet-leader's original spiritual revelations.[170] The Christian 'crisis cult' survives and achieves 'the status of a church.'[171]

For Turner, there is one particularly troubling consequence of this newly reconfigured status: the Christian Church's increasing insistence upon its uniqueness and independence from all other mystery religions, mythologies and cults. Common or shared spiritual meaning is negated; and, for Turner, the mythological significance of Christianity is the first major casualty of this process of "routinization." As Turner maintains, the Christian Church not only distinguishes itself from other religious traditions, but also turns 'away from an implicit understanding of itself as a mythology.'[172] Where other mystery religions and spiritual traditions could acknowledge the shared heritage of myths of a dying and resurrecting god-man, the Church extricates Christianity from the world of myth—and these other spiritual traditions—by emphasising the sheer historicity of Jesus Christ. The Christian 'message' is considered entirely unique because 'Jesus and his ministry had been historical events,' whereas other spiritual traditions 'could not be true because their myths were only that, were not historically verifiable, and were thus only temporary, illusory reliefs.'[173]

Where early Christianity had accepted spiritual revelation as a 'continuous possibility…still tied in important ways to the natural world,' the Christian Church now 'sealed off revelation at the

[169] *Ibid*, p. 60.
[170] *Ibid*, p. 60.
[171] *Ibid*, p. 60.
[172] *Ibid*, p. 62.
[173] *Ibid*, p. 62.

the revolutionary implications of Marxism. The Marxist tradition also has its 'spirited revolutionaries' who do not simply 'wait for the stars to implement their wishes;' it too contains those who 'cast themselves in the role of the beast's beheaders' in far more immediate, interruptive, and violent terms. Perlman I would argue has unsuccessfully attempted to elide the identity between his own vision of the apocalypse and that of a Marxist 'revolutionary eschatology.'

He has moreover failed to account for the troubling identity between his 'spirited revolutionaries' and other crusading zealots within Western Christianity who have committed atrocities in the fervent belief that they too are cleansing the world of 'evil' and that 'the gods are fighting alongside them.' All that would appear to separate Perlman's 'spirited revolutionaries' from these other crusaders is their firm conviction that they have located the true source of 'evil'—in Leviathan—whereas these other positions deflect their apocalyptic convictions onto a demonised and sacrificial scapegoat. Though, here again, this sense of conviction and divine licence to punish 'evil' only serves to reaffirm the continuity between all these variant apocalypses.

Most significantly, Perlman's literal, historical and politicised reading of the apocalypse has lost its unique relationship not only with an understanding of the apocalypse as inner revelation—'a *metaphor* for a spiritual change'—but also, and most problematically, the 'meaningful' recovery of mythological or cyclical time that Perlman elsewhere considers pivotal to, and the penultimate expression of the renewal of the human 'spirit.' As Turner duly notes in *Beyond Geography*, Judaeo-Christian apocalyptic catastrophism, with its more often terrestrial and violent attempt at restoring a 'lost belief or paradise' through the sacrificial purgation of 'evil' from the world is a project concretised *within* historical time, even if its ultimate but frustrated aim is the 'end of history.' In a confused manner, Perlman has tried to conflate the spiritual meaningfulness of apocalyptic transformation with the

Apocalyptic catastrophism is explicitly politicised and equated with the practical 'commitments' and 'intentions' of modern-day revolutionaries. The idea of an imminent apocalyptic consummation is moreover considered an important spur or goad to action. The 'apocalyptic proclamation is not mere future telling; it calls upon each person to realize the dawn of a new day, to hasten that which is well-nigh upon us.'[230] There is seemingly no basis for passivity in this apocalyptic vision because action, commitment, and forceful participation are no where more pronouncedly evident than in the firm belief that 'the end is assured,' and that this ending to history corresponds with the catastrophes of one's own time and place.[231]

Perlman's essay therefore proclaims support for a Judaeo-Christian apocalypticism that is eminently more immediate, imminent, and interruptive of historical time. Perlman finds express sympathy with 'revolutionary eschatology' so long as those 'spirited revolutionaries' who adopt its imagery and rhetoric do not wait for the coming of the 'end times,' and who subsequently reconfigure the apocalyptic 'vision' to encompass practical but still 'spirited' participation in the destruction of the 'fourth beast.' There are however very significant problems with this reading of the apocalypse. Firstly, the idea that the apocalyptic 'vision' promotes action—in fervent anticipation of the end—and therefore hastens the end of history and the subsequent return of an ideal, Edenic condition is not as distinct from a Marxist eschatology as Perlman would like to suggest. Perlman may criticise the passive, quantitative, incremental developmental model of Marxist conceptions of historical 'progress,' and the authoritarian implications of the revolutionary vanguard Party that guides the proletariat towards this terrestrial, future Paradise, but that is not to ignore

[230] Bernard Susser. *Existence and Utopia: The social and political thought of Martin Buber*. London and Toronto: Associated University Presses, 1981, p. 101.
[231] *Ibid*, p. 101.

end of the Apostolic era as if the stone had been rolled back into the entrance of the Messiah's tomb.'[174] Revelation had come *once* in historical time—and no more. By situating Jesus, his ministry, and his revelations exclusively within historical time and in the confines of the historical past, the Church had denied spiritual regeneration through the 'recurrence' of a 'living mythology.' The Christian Church abandoned the spiritual meaningfulness of cyclical, mythological time, and 'with increasing consciousness and intensity, delivered itself to history.'[175] The Christian Church abandoned itself to historical, linear time and the 'terror of history,' the terror of 'existential loneliness' in the face of the 'linear march of events towards annihilation.'

This historical rendering of the Christian 'message' is subsequently a catalyst for a 'slow starvation of the soul,' and the emergence of a distinctively 'Western spirit.'[176] Christian myth became 'a dead letter,' much as the natural world also became a 'dead letter' devoid of any mythical significance, introducing that split between 'nature' and 'spirit,' 'body' and 'soul' that so defines Perlman's understanding of the 'Western spirit.' Christianity instead finds expression through the profession of faith, allegiance to the 'paraphernalia of the Church,' and the substitution of 'dogma and ecclesiastical hierarchy for true belief.'[177] Even where the 'holy spirit' continued to give rise to new spiritual revelations, as in Christian mysticism, this tradition remained heavily circumscribed, and a constant target of censure and persecution through accusations of heretical deviation from the teachings of the Church.[178]

By closing off the spiritual meaningfulness of this mythic 'recurrence,' Christianity becomes in Turner's—and Eliade's—definition the first truly *historical* religion. The Church delivers

[174] *Ibid*, p. 66.
[175] *Ibid*, p. 66.
[176] *Ibid*, p. 66.
[177] *Ibid*, pp. 61, 67.
[178] *Ibid*, pp. 68–71.

Christians over to the 'terror of history,' to the long march of a linear, historical temporality.[179] With revelation sealed off 'at the end of the Apostolic era,' Christian spirituality, interchangeable now with the 'Western spirit,' finds the 'urge to life' only within the forward movements of historical time in a state of perpetual, restless, and frenzied 'becoming.' Christianity renders its 'people alienated sojourners in a spiritually barren world where the only outlet for the urge to life was the *restless drive onward*.'[180] As Turner continues, 'robbed in this way of old comforts, and unable to feel reattached to the great events sealed off by subsequent history, the Christian West had to live onward, set its face resolutely forward.'[181]Indeed, Christianity's estrangement from the 'changeless patterns announced in myth and confirmed in nature' here becomes 'the very engine of history.'[182] This 'Western spirit' is for Turner the precondition for all later notions of historical 'progress,' just as its 'restless drive onward,' devoid of the 'old comforts' of myth and nature, is considered to have 'enabled Europeans to explore the most remote places of the globe, to colonize them, and to impose their values on the native populations.'

There remains however from Turner's perspective one lingering spiritually regenerative possibility amidst this historical 'restless drive onward.' It is a 'vain, tragic [and] pathetically maintained hope,' symptomatic 'of a deep spiritual pathology…that has prevented us from experiencing more authentic forms of renewal,' but it is nonetheless the only form of spiritual renewal offered by this 'Western spirit.'[183] This form of malignant renewal and redemption is apocalypticism: 'the hope of recovering in an apocalyptic future what it [Christianity] had once had in the past.'[184] If the promise

[179] *Ibid*, p. 63. Eliade. *The Myth of the Eternal Return*, p. 162.
[180] Turner. *Beyond Geography*, p. 82.
[181] *Ibid*, p. 82.
[182] *Ibid*, p. 65.
[183] *Ibid*, p. 72–73.
[184] Emphasis added. *Ibid*, p. 65.

divine sphere,' as if they too were 'angels' of heaven, knowing directly and intuitively the righteous will of God.[227]

The apocalypse may therefore prove to be a spiritual 'vision,' or 'dream' as Perlman writes in this context, but 'dreams are the stuff the world is made of, and such dreams are *self-fulfilling prophecies*.'[228] A literalised and historicised apocalypse transforms the 'dreams,' 'visions,' and 'self-fulfilling prophecies' of 'spirited revolutionaries' into statements of radical, practical conviction. These prophecies and dreams are declarations of practical, human participation in the expurgation from the world of this 'fourth beast,' which Perlman and the Book of Daniel identify with that thoroughly more terrestrial, 'evil,' 'dark,' 'synthetic,' and 'artificial' Leviathan. Perlman even returns to these very same issues in the context of the millenarian movements of the late Middle Ages and their resuscitation of a Judaeo-Christian apocalypticism; though, of course, Cohn's critical account of these movements has been abandoned for a more sympathetic treatment. As Perlman writes specifically of the Adamites, a radical antinomian sect during the Czech Reform period, their

> expectation of the imminent collapse of the *last beast* is not mere wishful thinking. In our day such expectations, couched in the language of our time, will be called revolutionary theories…the expectations are not wishful thinking because *the revolutionaries do not wait for the stars to implement their wishes*. On the contrary, the revolutionaries cast themselves in the role of the beast's beheaders. Their prognostications are commitments, statements of the revolutionaries' intentions.[229]

[227] Martha Himmelfarb. *Apocalypse: A brief history*. Chichester: Wiley-Blackwell, 2010, pp. 159–160.
[228] Emphasis added. Perlman. *Against His-story, Against Leviathan*, p. 102.
[229] Emphasis added. *Ibid*, p. 218.

the 'fourth age' is also the end of Leviathan. The end of history emerges out of this breaking of the world. As Perlman rewrites the Book of Daniel through his Zoroastrian dualism 'after the fourth there are no more. The sequence ends. The fourth breaks the world into pieces and is itself broken. After the fourth beast there is Light, the light of Ahura Mazda.'[225]

While Perlman evidently sympathises with the Book of Daniel's apocalypse because of its repetition of—or forced convergence with—his own dualistic account of history, there is another pivotal reason why Perlman so appreciates this founding text in the Judaeo-Christian apocalyptic tradition: its blunt political literalism and the subsequent location of its spiritual 'vision' in response to the problems of a specific historical period. By associating the fourth beast with the 'shadowy' author's own present-day political, social and economic reality; and, by situating the end times in the annihilation of this 'fourth beast,' the Book of Daniel's apocalypse has the potential to become eminently practical, if not revolutionary in its implications—what Cohn would define as a 'revolutionary eschatology.' As Perlman himself writes, even though the transformative 'agency that overturns the fourth beast is supernatural' in the Book of Daniel, he still adamantly maintains that the apocalypse 'does not exclude human participation. On the contrary, it invites human participation. The most spirited revolutionaries are those who think the gods are fighting alongside them.'[226]Perlman here invokes what Martha Himmelfarb has described as one of the more disconcerting, but recurrent, facets of the Judaeo-Christian apocalyptic tradition: the tendency for 'visionaries' of the end times to announce and act upon their apocalyptic vision through strict identity with 'the

[225] *Ibid*, p. 101.

[226] *Ibid*, pp. 101–102.

of spiritual redemption and revelation is thus closed off from the present and locked away in a distant historical past, spiritual renewal is only made possible in a future, millenarian reckoning and hopeful, fervent belief in the restoration of this 'lost belief or paradise.'[185]

As Turner duly notes, the Judaeo-Christian apocalyptic tradition, particularly in the Book of Daniel and the Book of Revelation, describes this apocalyptic regeneration and final consummation always in the most destructive, violent, and sacrificial of terms, typically involving the expurgation from the world of all evil and sin. Hence, Turner's interest in one of the classic historical works in Judaeo-Christian apocalypticism: Norman Cohn's *The Pursuit of the Millennium*.[186] In this work, Cohn details numerous Christian Crusades, millenarian movements, and apocalyptic cults with their messianic *prophetae* that did not simply await with quietist meekness the coming of this apocalyptic denouement, but actually sought to usher in the end times within historical time through the violent excision of evil in the form of an everchanging, multivalent demonised enemy: Jewish communities, Muslims, lepers, heretics, and even the Christian Church, which would assume for some the status of Antichrist itself.[187] 'The decay of Christian mythology' and spiritual renewal gives way to the 'hecatomb:' a large-scale sacrifice or sacrificial offering as a malignant, ghastly effort in restoring this 'lost belief or paradise.'[188] Though, of course, in Turner's rendering, this sacrifice and this apocalypse are borne from the spiritual malaise and historical estrangement of the 'Western spirit,' and thus promise no means of escape from this 'restless drive onward.'

[185] *Ibid*, p. 73.

[186] Norman Cohn. *The Pursuit of the Millennium: Revolutionary millenarians and mystical anarchists of the middle ages*. London: Mercury Books, 1962.

[187] Turner. *Beyond Geography*, p. 81.

[188] *Ibid*, p. 72.

In summarising Turner's 'vision' of the 'Western spirit,' I have sought to demonstrate that its conception of this 'spirit' and differing forms of spiritual renewal hinges precisely upon different conceptions of time. Turner's 'Western spirit' is born of a conflict between the meaningfulness of cyclical, mythological time—identifiable with early Christianity and indigenous societies—and the mundaneness of historical, chronological time—the temporality of Western Christendom and modern progress. From a comparative standpoint, I find Turner's spiritual reading of time provides a better understanding of the tensions and problems with Perlman's own relationship to time than does Smith's distinction between the 'mundane' and the 'meaningful.'

This is not, of course, a question of whether Turner's work is accurate or not in accounting for this 'Western spirit' or in its sweeping critique of Western Christianity. Apart from the question of Turner's evident aversion to the economic and political realities of Western colonialism, I would note, at the very least, that Turner's work repeats and heightens Eliade's own express 'alienation from the spirit of historical Christianity,' and reaffirms Eliade's normative claim that 'it is more authentically human to live one's life in terms of transcendent exemplary models, nontemporal and nonhistorical structures, than to identify oneself fully with the temporal and historical dimension of existence.'[189] I would further note that while Eliade 'speaks of the incarnation of Christ' as occurring 'in historical time,' he too recognised in a more nuanced manner that it 'cannot be reduced to its mere historical dimension, because this incarnation, followed by resurrection and ascension, has a mythical character.'[190] Salvation may then occur 'in a historical context,' but 'to attain it, human beings must live out the drama of Christ in a ritual or liturgical form which is 'the periodical repetition of

[189] Douglas Allen. 'Eliade and History.' *The Journal of Religion*. Vol. 68 No 4, 1988, pp. 555–556.

[190] Roberto Cipriani. 'The Many Faces of Social Time: A sociological approach.' *Time & Society*. Vol. 22 No. 1, 2013, p. 20.

apocalypticism.[221] With the world divided between the Light and the Dark, the Good and the Evil, history too is divided and partitioned along these very same antagonistic lines of demarcation. As noted earlier, in Perlman's reading, Zoroaster's eschatology consists of only two periods: 'one is outside the Leviathan, the other is inside.' On a historical terrain, the Book of Daniel repeats Perlman's Zoroastrian envisioning of history as a war between the 'outside' and the 'inside,' the 'state of nature' against Leviathan.

As much as Perlman identifies with this dualistic historical scission in the Book of Daniel, he too remarks of the text's further division of history—the time 'inside' Leviathan—into a 'Zarathustrian sequence of ages.'[222] Four ages in total are admitted into this historical sequence, and each age is represented by one of 'four great beasts,' each of which corresponds with four historical empires, or what Perlman summarily refers to as four beastly Leviathans. These empires are the Chaldean, Persian, Hellenistic Greek, and Roman or Parthian empires.[223] While all four ages lie within 'Leviathan's insides,' Perlman is primarily interested in the representation of this 'fourth beast,' because its fourth age is also the *final age*. Daniel's time is the age of apocalypse, the 'end times,' the final battle of Good against Evil, Light against Dark, Ahura Mazda against Ahriman, 'state of nature' against Leviathan. Where earlier ages also caused terrible suffering, the fourth age belongs, like Perlman's 'Waste Land,' entirely to the darkness of Ahriman. It is an age of utter catastrophe. The 'fourth beast' has claimed the world for its own and, as Perlman quotes from the Book of Daniel, it 'shall devour the whole earth, and shall tread it down, and break it in pieces.'[224] Because this is the end times,

[221] Norman Cohn. *Cosmos, Chaos and the World to Come*. New Haven and London: Yale Nota Bene, 2001. pp. 220–231.

[222] Perlman. *Against His-story, Against Leviathan*, p. 101.

[223] *Ibid*, p. 101; Cohn also speaks of four ages. Cohn. *The Pursuit of the Millennium*, p. 21.

[224] Perlman. *Against His-story, Against Leviathan*, pp. 101–102.

Against Leviathan is actually sympathetic to this form of imminent and immediate apocalypticism. Perlman approves of those revolutionary eschatologies that do not wait for the 'end times' with patient, if long-suffering optimism, but instead seek to forcibly usher in the 'end times.' Where Turner, for example, problematises apocalypticism in all its many forms through reference to the historical estrangement of the 'Western spirit' and its sacrificial *hecatombs*, Perlman's position finds nothing problematic about those other apocalypses that sought to defy the quantitative, progressive movements of 'Leviathanic time' by means of the immediate, and more often violent, restoration of a terrestrial 'golden age.'

Perlman's identification with this more immediate, imminent and interruptive apocalypse is no where more apparent than in his positive reading of that Biblical text Cohn believes is the paradigmatic expression of 'revolutionary eschatology:' the Book of Daniel. Perlman is particularly concerned with the apocryphal Daniel, and the fact that this foundational text in the Judaeo-Christian apocalyptic tradition would appear to contain two authors or two Daniels.[218] The first and earliest Daniel aligns with the Jewish religious tradition, whereas the second is a 'shadowy character,' a visionary author 'who lives much later, probably in the days of Rome and Parthia, who speaks the language not of Moses, but of Zarathustra, and who looks for the coming, not of Yahweh, but of Ahura Mazda.'[219] Perlman, of course, sympathises with the apocalyptic vision of this second 'shadowy character,' because his text is also indebted to a Zoroastrian dualism.[220]

What Perlman finds most agreeable in the Book of Daniel with his own spiritual 'vision' is its concretisation of this antagonistic Zoroastrian dualism within history—and, as Cohn, argues, Zoroastrianism serves as the central inspiration for Judaeo-Christian

[218] Perlman. *Against His-story, Against Leviathan*, p. 101.
[219] *Ibid*, p. 101.
[220] *Ibid*, pp. 55–56.

the *illud tempus*, of the "beginnings."[191] There may in this sense be only one incarnation, but there too is the suggestion that historical renewal and regeneration within Christianity is markedly individualised: 'history can be regenerated, by and through each individual believer.'[192]

Despite these reservations, Turner's work is useful for the purposes of this thesis because it is such an important component of Perlman's spiritual 'vision,' and his reading of and relationship to the Judaeo-Christian tradition. Before discussing the implications of Turner's 'vision' of time for Perlman's own 'vision,' I would firstly note that *Against His-story, Against Leviathan* continues to replicate the antagonistic terrain of this 'Western spirit.' This is not in any way to ignore Perlman's overt hostility towards this malignant definition of 'spirit.' He evidently decries 'progress' and 'Leviathanic time,' and he abhors this 'Western spirit' with its 'war of extermination by Spirit against Nature, Soul against Body, Technology against the Biosphere, Civilization against Mother Earth, God against all.' However, as with his reading of Hobbes' *Leviathan*, Perlman also consistently re-encodes these dualistic antagonisms; he more simply turns said dualities upside down; and, this process of inversion is just as apparent in his reading of Turner's work and its subtitle in particular: *The Western spirit against the Wilderness*. When Perlman therefore defends in his introduction the concept of 'Wilderness'—'all of nature and all the human communities beyond Civilization's ken'—he writes how 'Turner defines the Wilderness the same way the Western spirit defines it, except that the term is positive for Turner, negative for the Western spirit.'[193] Perlman has again only inverted the antagonism in Turner's title by setting the 'Wilderness' against the 'Western spirit,' much like his inversion of the Hobbesian war between the 'state of nature' and

[191] *Ibid*, p. 20.
[192] Eliade. *The Myth of the Eternal Return*, p. 130.
[193] Perlman. *Against His-story, Against Leviathan*, p. 3.

Leviathan. He has moreover misinterpreted Turner whose work suggests that the 'Wilderness' is more a projection of the 'Western spirit,' and is still implicated within Western representations of the natural world and indigenous peoples. Perlman appears to understand this in its 'negative' sense—the 'Wilderness' as a howling, desolate and nightmarish realm of savagery and heathenism—but he fails to recognise that even his own 'positive' re-imagining of the 'Wilderness'—a pristine 'state of nature'—still derives from a Western imagining of Nature and the Other. The 'Wilderness,' whether 'positive' or 'negative,' belongs to a representation of naturalness ensconced very much 'inside' Western civilisation.

Perlman's 'vision' is itself still trapped within the antagonistic terrain of the 'Western spirit.' His essay, in turn, only serves to reconstitute the problems with this 'Western spirit'—in an inverted guise. This is no where better evidenced than in this conflicted relationship between cyclical time and historical time. As noted, Perlman's primitivism situates the meaningfulness of cyclical time within linear, historical time by conflating the sacred time of the "beginnings" with the historical reality of archaic and indigenous societies—those ancient communities 'where every living being and every member of the community has a special meaning.' By contrast, these modern shores are historically estranged from these lost meaningful contexts due to the widening of 'the strait' and the 'restless drive onward' of historical, linear time. While Perlman speaks at times of the possibility of recovering 'cyclical time' through vision, song, dance and revelation, this recovery of lost cyclical rhythms actually stands in stark contrast with his politico-spiritual 'vision.' Perlman rather consistently emphasises that there is no spiritual 'meaning' on these modern shores left to renew, much as there is no one with an 'inner light' left to renew it. He even refuses to concede that there are mythological 'vestiges' and 'analogies' of the 'golden age' in 'our age' that would make possible such a renewal. Instead, Perlman can refer only to the immense spiritual vacuity of modern *zeks* and to a present-day spiritual and

or frustrating realization that the end cannot arrive because of the intrusive, sober realities of historical, linear time.[214]

There are, of course, a number of significant reasons why Perlman elides Cohn's thesis concerning revolutionary eschatology. While Perlman will actually refer to Cohn's text, he also derogatively considers Cohn a 'His-storian,' a scholar who maligns 'a millennium of resistance' in Western Europe and who identifies with the biased documents of legal, political, and religious authorities.[215] Perlman therefore opposes Cohn's thesis because he considers it conservative. Indeed, Cohn is very critical of Judaeo-Christian apocalypticism and Marxism's relationship to this tradition—but, then again, so is Perlman. Cohn is further critical of the historical enactment of a terrestrial Salvationism and its fervent belief in the physical punishment of 'evil,' particularly when this iniquity is attributed to social minorities. Such criticisms do not however make Cohn an arch-conservative. He may prove critical of the endowment of social change with 'all the mystery and majesty of the final, eschatological drama,' but he also displays sympathy for the 'tough, shrewd rebelliousness of the common people,' a rebelliousness that does not rely upon a sense of divine mission but is still capable of bringing about 'solid gains in prosperity and privilege.'[216] Cohn too hardly sympathises with those in positions of authority. For instance, in *Europe's Inner Demons*, Cohn in no way defends the written words—and official histories—of those in authority, since this text is devoted to a systematic dismantling of the ways in which legal and religious authorities constructed the image of a social enemy that could be demonised and persecuted.[217]

Apart from this general disdain for Cohn, there is one major reason for Perlman's elision of Cohn's thesis: *Against His-story,*

[214] Gray. *Black Mass*, p. 7.
[215] Perlman. *Against His-story, Against Leviathan*, p. 183.
[216] Cohn. *The Pursuit of the Millennium*, p. 308.
[217] Norman Cohn. *Europe's Inner Demons*. St Albans: Paladin, 1976.

> who hitherto have groaned under the oppressor's heel, shall in their turn inherit dominion over the whole earth. This will be the culmination of history; the Kingdom of the Saints will not only surpass in glory all previous kingdoms, it will have no successors.[212]

In Cohn's understanding, Marxism reinstates this 'eschatological drama' in a secular form and in a modern historical context; the 'demonic' power becomes Capital and the bourgeoisie; 'The Saints of God' and 'chosen, holy people' are transposed into the proletariat and revolutionary Party; the 'Kingdom of the Saints' acts as the final 'consummation of history' or Fully Achieved Socialism; and, the apocalyptic war against evil is infused into the revolutionary struggle itself with its violent expropriation of the expropriators. Thus, Marxism 'with boundless, prophet-like conviction' offers 'to a number of rootless and desperate men' the 'boundless, millennial promise' of 'carrying out a divinely ordained mission of stupendous, unique importance.'[213]

In Cohn's terms, the Marxist Eschaton is far from passive; it too militantly presses for the 'end times' and plays out the eschatological dramas of history in far more immediate and imminent terms. Marxism may postpone the return of this 'golden age' through the mediating authority of a Revolutionary Party and its 'scientific' prescription for the future development of socialism, but this does not mean it can be simply equated with the endlessly deferred dissatisfactions of the 'Western spirit.' More correctly, it would require an admission that Judaeo-Christian apocalypticism possesses two conflicting impulsions that are inextricably bound together: a message of historical imminence—that the end is upon us or has already arrived—coupled with passive deferment and postponement of the final consummation of history—an 'eschatological disappointment'

[212] *Ibid*, p. 21.
[213] *Ibid*, pp. 309–310.

historical estrangement from a 'golden age' that exists 'outside' Western civilisation. Through comparison with Turner, Perlman's primitivism is so overtly pessimistic concerning the possibility of spiritual renewal on these modern shores because his primitivism here re-enacts in a different guise the estrangement of the 'Western spirit.' Perlman has not 'sealed off revelation at the end of the Apostolic era;' his primitivism has, in an ever more extreme fashion, 'sealed off revelation' to a time 'before' Western civilisation, a time of meaningful contexts that communally celebrated those 'changeless patterns announced in myth and confirmed in nature.'

Instead of responding to the spiritual malaise of this 'Western spirit,' and providing indications of 'more authentic forms of renewal,' Perlman's primitivist 'vision' only reaffirms a message of alienation from yet another 'lost belief or paradise.' Perlman's primitivism does not provide a radical alternative for 'alienated sojourners in a spiritually barren world;' his primitivist 'vision' is merely a different spiritual route for the articulation of this alienation, particularly for those 'alienated sojourners' estranged from organised religion and the Christian Church. Indeed, if Perlman's historical localisation of the 'state of nature' replicates the spiritual malaise of the 'Western spirit,' it too introduces the question of Perlman's relationship with what Turner would describe as that most inauthentic and malignant form of spiritual renewal: apocalyptic catastrophism. In the exclusive attribution of spiritual 'meaning' to a historical 'golden age,' the 'urge to life' within primitivism might also be said to find no other outlet than in that 'vain, tragic [and] pathetically maintained hope' of violently ushering in the End Times so as to recapture the 'lost belief or paradise' that is the 'state of nature.' Whether this 'apocalyptic future' is awaited with fervent expectation—as in the primitivist 'collapse' of civilization—or serves as justification for human efforts to violently usher in the end of days, such a primitivist apocalypse would not appear as an alternative to the 'Western spirit,' but an inverted reflection of the

estranged and perpetually thwarted urges of 'alienated sojourners' to reclaim a lost spiritual wholeness closed off by 'progress.'

The repetition in Perlman's essay of these conflicted intersections between mundane and meaningful time here contributes to the discovery of another kind of spiritual meaningfulness—apocalypticism—that possesses quite malign implications from the perspective of Turner's *Beyond Geography* and from the perspective of Cohn's *The Pursuit of the Millennium*. In the following and final section, I would like to explore the recurrence of exactly this 'meaningful,' if malignant, apocalypticism in Perlman's *Against His-story, Against Leviathan*. As I will consider, Perlman too often confuses a Judaeo-Christian apocalyptic catastrophism—the forceful interruption of the meaninglessness of 'Leviathanic time'—with a 'meaningful' message of spiritual renewal and radical social change, a position that brings into question Perlman's reading of Turner's 'Western spirit' and exacerbates the contradictions in his conception of 'spirit.'

Section Five: A broken ending

While I would like to consider Perlman's relationship to the Judaeo-Christian apocalyptic tradition, I would firstly acknowledge his own critique of apocalypticism. This is most pronounced in Perlman's critical response to the Marxist materialist conception of history, particularly in the work of Friedrich Engels. Befitting his hostility to the meaninglessness of 'Leviathanic time,' Perlman maintains that a Marxist materialist understanding of history is but an excrescent outgrowth of capitalist notions of 'progress.' Perlman here emphasises the determining influence in Friedrich Engels' *The Origin of the Family, Private Property and the State* of Lewis Henry Morgan's 'ladder' model of history and the development of civilisation. Perlman draws particular attention to Engels' replacement of Morgan's topmost 'rung'

work of that scholar Turner relies upon in *Beyond Geography* for his account of an apocalyptic catastrophism: Norman Cohn's *The Pursuit of the Millennium*. For Cohn, modern revolutionary political ideologies, particularly Marxism, are considered to be 'heavily endebted to that very ancient body of beliefs which constituted the popular apocalyptic lore of Europe.'[209] As part of Cohn's thesis, Marxism is a revolutionary militant chiliasm that has not only secularised the Christian Eschaton in accordance with the '"purposes of history,"' but has also endowed actually existing 'social conflicts and aspirations with a transcendental significance—in fact with all the mystery and majesty of the final, eschatological drama.'[210] This 'drama' is itself best summarised in Cohn's reading of the Book of Daniel, a Biblical text he considers 'the paradigm of what was to become and to remain the central phantasy of revolutionary eschatology.'[211] As he writes of this apocalyptic 'phantasy:'

> The world is dominated by an evil, tyrannous power of boundless destructiveness – a power moreover which is imagined not as simply human but as demonic. The tyranny of that power will become more and more outrageous, the sufferings of its victims more and more intolerable – until suddenly the hour will strike when the Saints of God are able to rise up and overthrow it. Then the Saints themselves, the chosen, holy people

[209] Cohn. *The Pursuit of the Millennium*, p. 309.

[210] *Ibid*, p. 308. For recent explorations of these intersections between modern radical movements and Judaeo-Christian apocalyptic traditions, see Gray. *Black Mass*; Arthur P. Mendel. *Vision and Violence*. Ann Arbor: The University of Michigan Press, 1999; Richard Allen Landes. *Heaven on Earth: The varieties of the millennial experience*. New York and Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2011; Stephen D. O'Leary and Glen S McGhee. *War in Heaven/Heaven on Earth: Theories of the apocalyptic*. London: Equinox Publishing, 2005; Teofilo F. Ruiz. *The Terror of History: On the uncertainties of life in Western Civilization*. Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2014.

[211] Cohn. *The Pursuit of the Millennium*, p. 21.

of progress—'American civilization'—with Communism.[194] For Perlman, Engels confines radical social transformation within the continuum of historical linear progress, 'Leviathanic time,' or 'His-story.' Socialism is reduced to a progressive outgrowth of capitalism.[195] The highest 'rung' of Communism does not provide a substantive or qualitative alternative to capitalism; rather, communism is predicated upon the quantitative, linear development of capitalist processes of industrialisation. Communism is merely the progressive socialisation of existing capitalist economic processes.

Where Perlman finds parallels between the Marxist conception of 'progress' and the apocalyptic 'restless drive onward' of the 'Western spirit' is in Engels' identification of a prior historical age of 'Primitive Communism'—a 'state of nature' or 'Age of Gold' in Perlman's rendering—that precedes the rise of civilisation. For Perlman, here is an age 'before' and 'outside' civilisation lodged within the very historical developmental edifice of Marxist theories of 'progress' that has the potential to disturb said progressivism; and, certainly, Engels holds a restrained admiration for this age of 'Primitive Communism.'[196] However, because of Engels' linear model of historical development and his location of this prior age in the historical past, 'Primitive Communism' is also irretrievably and irrevocably lost to the present. This 'golden age' can only be restored or re-encountered by 'laboring humanity' through means of the 'upward march of Humanity's Productive Forces' and in accordance with the quantitative, incremental developments of historical progress.[197] As in Eliade's response to Marxism, 'at the end of the Marxist philosophy of history, lies the age of gold of archaic eschatologies.'[198] However, this 'age of gold'

[194] Perlman. *Against His-story, Against Leviathan*, p. 14.

[195] *Ibid*, p. 4.

[196] Friedrich Engels. *The Origin of the Family, Private Property and the State*. Moscow: Progress Publishers, 1948, p. 175.

[197] Perlman. *Against His-story, Against Leviathan*, p. 300.

[198] Eliade. *The Myth of the Eternal Return*, p. 149.

the progressive deferment and postponement of the 'golden age' is very selective in its reading of the relationship between Marxism and the Judaeo-Christian apocalyptic tradition. Certainly, there exist Marxist thinkers, such as Ernst Bloch and Walter Benjamin, who have sought to rehabilitate and recuperate for Marxism a 'millenarian, apocalyptic inheritance on the fringes of orthodox Christianity;' but, they did so in the belief that the apocalyptic utopia 'is not something far off into the future, but is at the heart of human experience; it is already at hand in an anticipatory and fragmentary way.'[205] The apocalypse is not here a deferral of historical possibilities, but a principle of hope upholding 'the indispensable value of the human imagination' in defiance of 'the boundaries of what is believed to be practicable.'[206] This version of the apocalypse 'opens up vistas that would otherwise remain closed, expanding the range of human possibility.'[207] It recuperates the etymological meaning of apocalypse as inner revelation—the 'End-Time' as a 'metaphor for a spiritual change.'[208] Indeed, there are possible correspondences here between Perlman's own vision of spiritual revelation as historical interruption and this vision of the 'End-Time' as principle of hope and interior spiritual change; though, Perlman fails to make these connections insofar as he devotes himself to the task of denouncing Engels' antiquated theory of historical development.

Perlman's reading of Marxism as the progressive deferment of the 'golden age' is further problematic for its dissociation from the

[205] Christopher Rowland. ''Upon Whom the Ends of the Ages have Come': Apocalyptic and the interpretation of the New Testament,' in Malcolm Bull (ed.). *Apocalypse Theory and the Ends of the World*. Oxford: Blackwell Publishers, 1995, p. 53. See also Michael Löwy. *Fire Alarm: Reading Walter Benjamin's 'On the Concept of History.'* London and New York: Verso, 2005; and, Ernst Bloch. *The Principle of Hope*. Cambridge: MIT Press, 1986.

[206] John Gray. *Black Mass: Apocalyptic religion and the death of utopia*. New York: Farrar, Straus and Giroux, 2007, p. 18.

[207] *Ibid*, p. 18.

[208] *Ibid*, p. 1.

is qualitatively distinct from these 'archaic eschatologies' because this 'golden age' is no longer re-encountered through a 'return' to the sacred time of the '"beginnings;"' it is rather ensconced within historical time and, specifically, at some point in the distant future.[199]

By locating 'Primitive Communism' in the distant past and placing the 'age of gold' in a future reckoning at the end of history, Marxism reveals its intimacy with Turner's 'Western spirit.' Indeed, Perlman defines Marxism as but a 'farcical replay of the Roman Church's expropriation and inversion of the anti-Roman crisis cult.'[200]This is because Marxism, like the Christian Church in Turner's work, has historically estranged itself from this lost 'golden age,' providing readmittance to this age of integral wholeness only within the linear, progressive movements of historical time. It reclaims the frustrated longing of the 'Western spirit:' the 'hope of recovering in an apocalyptic future what it had once had in the past.' Marxism has simply secularised the Christian Eschaton through the concept of 'progress.' It provides a surrogate form of 'salvation' from the 'terror of history' insofar as the terrors and injustices of historical development are but a prelude, a 'necessary evil' or 'premonitory symptom of the approaching victory that will put an end forever to all historical "evil."'[201] As Perlman writes, the 'Eschaton of this [Marxist] Apocalypse' endeavours 'to send all humanity scurrying up the escalator [of progress], past His-story's concentration camps, toward the highest stage of moronization, the topmost camp, the one ruled by the General Secretary of the Paradisial Party, a ruler who calls himself The Proletariat.'[202] Perlman thus renders the Marxist materialist conception of history in terms of the alienation of the 'Western spirit,' because of its historical estrangement from 'Primitive Communism;' its reactivation of an apocalyptic Salvationism within the confines of historical time; and, its belief in a worldly, terrestrial 'lost belief or paradise' that can only be reclaimed in the future.

[199] *Ibid*, p. 149.
[200] Perlman. *Against His-story, Against Leviathan*, p. 300.
[201] Eliade. *The Myth of the Eternal Return*, p. 149.
[202] Perlman. *Against His-story, Against Leviathan*, p. 300.

Perlman does therefore recognise problems with the temporal and spiritual estrangement of the 'apocalyptic future' in lieu of Turner's *Beyond Geography*. There are however significant limitations to Perlman's critique of apocalypticism. For one, as previously noted, Perlman could be said to ambiguously—and hypocritically—reinstate this apocalyptic estrangement because he too conflates the spiritual meaningfulness of the 'golden age' with the mundane historically distant reality of 'human communities beyond Civilization's ken.' Despite those other esoteric resonances of the 'state of nature' and the 'golden age' in his work, Perlman more often locks away the 'golden age' in a distant past by way of the 'widening' of the 'strait' and the temporal dislocations of historical progress. Where the Marxist apocalypse and its version of a lost paradise are 'excessively continuous with the present statist order' and its inexorable development, Perlman substitutes this developmental, quantitative and future-oriented perspective with 'primitivist nostalgia or exoticist longing' for 'other places and other times.'[203] With Perlman's primitivism, 'the past and the other [have] replaced the future.'[204] Thus, the only substantive difference between a Marxist and primitivist apocalypticism is that Perlman's 'exoticist longing' stands against progress—even if this longing is still located within historical time—whereas Engels' recovery of 'Primitive Communism' is strongly identified with the linear, progressive developments of 'Leviathanic time.' This last point, in particular, raises a second major problem: Perlman's account of a Marxian eschatology as

[203] Samuel Moyn. 'Of Savagery and Civil Society: Pierre Clastres and the transformation of French political thought.' *Modern Intellectual History*. Vol. 1 No. 1, 2004, p. 78.
[204] *Ibid*, p. 78.

crescence, a 'congealed social process.' While Porete's spirituality suggests that human sinfulness can be challenged, and can be done so without need for the Church, Porete still recognises that there is a very real disturbance and discord in the life of the 'simple soul,' and this discord is not imposed from without. Porete still calls for an 'appropriate response to original sin,' a response that now encompasses a 'preparative process that will lead to divine life.'[314] 'The priest and their doctrine [of Original Sin]' might no longer have any intermediary role in the life of the 'simple soul,' but only because the 'simple soul' attends to this internal discord through such a 'preparative process.'

This emphasis upon internal discord is further reflected in the inwardness and contemplativeness of Porete's spirituality. As Porete writes, her work was composed for 'the desirous contemplative that be and dwell ever in desire of love.'[315]Contemplatives are those who are 'summoned by their own inwardness.'[316] They do or say nothing that stands 'against the peace of their inward being.'[317] This inward contemplation is in equal part a turning away from the world. As much as Porete speaks fervently of love and that 'Love is God and God is Love,' there too is detachment, separation, and division from the world.[318] As Porete writes of the 'simple soul,' 'she hath no comfort nor affection, nor hope in [any] creature that is made.'[319]

The centrality of introspection to spiritual development as contrasted with 'external' transformations further corresponds in Porete's work with the distinction between 'faith' and 'works.'

[314] Danielle C. Dubois. 'From Contemplative Penitent to Annihilated Soul: The recasting of Mary Magdalene in Marguerite Porete's *Mirror of Simple Souls*.' *Journal of Medieval Religious Cultures*. Vol. 39 No. 2, 2013, p. 162.

[315] Porete. *The Mirror of Simple Souls*, p. 18.

[316] *Ibid*, p. 111.

[317] *Ibid*, p. 45.

[318] *Ibid*, p. 41.

[319] *Ibid*, p. 41.

of psychoanalysis with revolutionary politics.[14] I therefore believe it necessary to provide a brief excursus into Reich's concept of 'armor' because as much as Perlman emphasises the potent symbolism of 'armor,' his reading incorporates some very basic assumptions of Reich's understanding of the term.

'Armor' emerges from Reich's early criticisms of those analysts who focused exclusive attention upon 'swift interpretation of the deepest layers of the unconscious.'[15] Reich maintained in contrast that initial focus should be directed towards the analysand's resistance to the analysis—negative transference—through observation of the individual's 'character,' which encompassed 'a person's way of talking, walking, their affectations, their giggles, smiles, sneers, their politesse and their rude guffaws.'[16] 'Deep interpretations of unconscious contents' could only begin once the analyst had exposed to the analysand their 'character armor,' attending to their 'artificial mask of self-control, of compulsive, insincere politeness and of artificial sociality.'[17]

This method of exposing to the analysand their 'character armor' assumed two differing forms. First, Reich exploited the transference of the analytic setting by provoking the analysand and forcibly exposing their 'artificial sociality.' In the words of Daniel Fuchs, Reich's therapeutic treatment was founded upon controlled aggression: 'therapy by confrontation, involving provocation, loud repetition, poking, a sort of benign, necessary sadism.'[18] A second, later method abandoned all together personal introspection and analysis of the 'deepest layers of the unconscious.' Reich instead adopted what he termed 'vegetotherapy,' a form of massage ther-

[14] Wilhelm Reich. *Character-Analysis*. New York: Farrar, Straus and Giroux, 1972.

[15] Makari. *Revolution in Mind*, p. 394.

[16] *Ibid*, p. 395.

[17] Paul A. Robinson. *The Freudian Left: Wilhelm Reich, Geza Roheim, Herbert Marcuse*. New York: Harper & Row, 1969, pp. 24–25.

[18] Fuchs. *The Limits of Ferocity*, p. 43.

apy that 'did away with the psychoanalytic taboo of never touching a patient.'[19] Because he would no longer locate the analysand's 'character armor' in the repressions of the unconscious, but rather in the 'armored' knots of repression marked onto the contours of the body, he now believed repression could be undone through a special massage technique, a form of physical healing that adumbrates his final technical effort: the 'orgone accumulator.'[20]

Although 'character armor' was not, in its earliest form, an entirely morbid condition—it can 'limit one's ability to experience life,' but it also protects one 'from the hard knocks of reality'—it will assume, in association with Reich's Marxist sympathies, political and purely life-negating connotations, as it will in Perlman's own conception of 'armor.'[21] As George Makari notes, 'Reich's theory of character always had within it implicit political resonances.'[22] With Reich's wedding of psychoanalysis and Marxism, this political dimension became explicit. For Reich, 'character armor' now embodied a 'congealed social process.'[23] As Janine Chasseguet-Smirgel remarks of Reich's innovation—and his increasing divergence from Freud—'the character and muscular armour [now] represent the bodily inscription of external prohibitions which are of social origin.'[24] Through the authoritarian structure of the patriarchal family, in particular, the individual became 'armored;' and, this armouring of the self through the family subsequently aided in 'the formation of a character structure adapted to the authoritarian social system.'[25] In Brinton's summary, personal repression anchored 'submission to authority

[19] Janine Chasseguet-Smirgel and Béla Grunberger. *Freud or Reich? Psychoanalysis and illusion*. New Haven and London: Yale University Press, 1986, p. 112.

[20] Robinson. *The Freudian Left*, p. 73.

[21] *Ibid*, p. 23.

[22] Makari. *Revolution in Mind*, p. 398.

[23] Robert S. Corrington. *Wilhelm Reich*. New York: Farrar, Straus, and Giroux, 2003, p. 130.

[24] Chasseguet-Smirgel and Grunberger. *Freud or Reich*, p. 184.

[25] Corrington. *Wilhelm Reich*, p. 130.

life away from systematic discipline based on the institutional church as mediator of all knowledge of, and access to, God.'[308] The 'simple soul' is spiritually removed from 'Holy-Church-the-little-with-all-his-rude-scripture' because she 'seeketh no more God by penances, nor by no sacraments of Holy Church.'[309] However, as Michael Lerner maintains on the basis of a close textual reading of *The Mirror of Simple Souls*, Porete's spirituality does not work towards or encompass the overthrow of the 'Holy Church.'[310] Indeed, Porete did not reject theology for purely 'visionary or somatic experiences.'[311] Unlike many other medieval female mystics, Porete 'unapologetically claimed the male prerogative to think in matters theological.'[312]

This question of Porete's relationship to Christianity extends into her definition of 'original sin' or human sinfulness and its equivalence with Perlman's rendition of the concept: a lie fostered by 'armored' priests. Certainly, one of the heretical claims attributed to Porete's text was that the 'simple soul,' united with God, cannot sin and do evil; as such, the 'simple soul' could be said to rise beyond 'the worldly dialectic of conventional morality and the teachings and control of the earthly church.'[313] Again, there is the implication that Porete's spirituality ultimately moves beyond the control of the Church; but, it would be erroneous to claim on this basis that Porete, in turn, considers 'sin' and human evil as non-existent, or, in Perlman's Reichian terms, an 'armoured' ex-

[308] Joanne Maguire Robinson. *Nobility and Annihilation in Marguerite Porete's* Mirror of Simple Souls. Albany: State University of New York Press, 2001, p. xi.

[309] Porete. *The Mirror of Simple Souls*, p. 75.

[310] Michael Lerner. *The Heresy of the Free Spirit*. Berkeley: University of California Press, 1972, p. 76.

[311] David Kangas. 'Dangerous Joy: Marguerite Porete's good-bye to virtues.' *The Journal of Religion*. Vol. 91 No. 3, 2011, p. 300.

[312] *Ibid*, p. 300. See also Amy M. Hollywood. *The Soul as Virgin Wife: Mechtild of Magdeburg, Marguerite Porete, and Meister Eckhart*. Notre Dame: University of Notre Dame Press, 1995, pp. 181–182.

[313] Porete. *The Mirror of Simple Souls*, p. i.

away the obstacles: the sacraments and preachers and their salvation machinery.'[305] Quoting from *The Mirror of Simple Souls*, Perlman concludes with an image of 'free human beings' who are now given to 'reappropriate the powers usurped by Leviathans with no more qualms, "with such peace of mind, as they use the earth they walk on."'[306]

The Mirror of Simple Souls essentially reflects back Perlman's own politicospiritual 'war of extermination' between the 'state of nature' and Leviathan, just as it conforms, on the level of 'self-liberation,' with his struggle of Life against Death, light against dark, 'outside' against 'inside.' 'Self-liberation' again serves to banish the darkness and 'armor' of Leviathan by returning to the purity of a 'Zarathustrian light.' Instead of simply entering into a critique of this reading, I would rather like to explore by way of comparison those points of convergence—and divergence—between Perlman's Zoroastrian politico-spiritual vision and Porete's spirituality of the 'simple soul.'

Perlman's definition of the text 'as a sort of manual to help others' is, for example, an apt description because Porete's work was written in Old French, instead of Latin—the language of the Church—and, as such, her words could have been understood by those literate 'common people' she refers to in her work.[307] Perlman too is correct in drawing out the subversive implications of Porete's work, because the text was believed to contain several heretical claims that undermined the doctrines of the Church. Despite these claims of heretical subversion, *The Mirror* is not 'a profoundly anti-Christian work.' Porete assuredly speaks of the 'simple soul' as existing in a spiritual state that has no express need for the ministrations of the Church. As Joanne Maguire Robinson notes, Porete's spirituality 'shifts the focus of Christian

[305] *Ibid*, p. 205.
[306] *Ibid*, p. 206.
[307] Porete. *The Mirror of Simple Souls*, p. 26.

and the fear of freedom into people's "character armour." The net result was the reproduction, generation after generation, of the basic conditions essential for the manipulation and enslavement of the masses.'[26] While this 'authoritarian social system' could encompass the more immediate effects of capitalist social relations, Reich would later extend his critical analysis into a condemnation of 'four to six thousand years of authoritarian mechanistic civilisation,' a perspective that lends itself to Perlman's primitivist critique of civilisation.[27] Reich's extended history of mass social repression is indebted to the anthropological work of Bronislaw Malinowski and his contention that there existed a non-repressive, matriarchal culture in a preceding age before the rise of patriarchal civilisation.[28] On this historical basis, Reich could also conclude that beneath these layers of 'character armor' there existed an originally beneficent and good human nature—a 'Biologic core'—that had simply been corrupted by these institutionalised processes of civilised repression.[29]

Whether viewed in terms of capitalism or six thousand years of patriarchalauthoritarian civilisation, Reich's definition of radical social transformation necessarily entailed 'psychological emancipation' from this 'armor.'[30] If 'a sick society resulted in sick men and women,' then the 'curing of the self could cure a society.'[31] Critical of a reductive Marxist materialism that believed individual transformation could wait till 'after' the Revolution—personal change that will ''come later,' 'automatically,' or, as a 'by-product' of a revolution'—Reich explored the 'delicate balance between inner and outer,' between internal and external repression, as well as

[26] Brinton. *The Irrational in Politics*, p. 30.
[27] Corrington. *Wilhelm Reich*, p. 130.
[28] *Ibid*, p. 130; Wilhelm Reich. *The Invasion of Compulsory Sex-Morality*. New York: Farrar, Straus and Giroux, 1971.
[29] Chasseguet-Smirgel and Grunberger. *Freud or Reich*, p. 199.
[30] Makari. *Revolution in Mind*, p. 398.
[31] *Ibid*, p. 398.

internal and external transformation.[32] As Reich maintained, without 'psychological emancipation,' even purported critics of the existing order of things could articulate their programme for radical change through the repressiveness of their own 'character armor.' Although this 'delicate balance' would falter with Reich's growing insistence upon the curative power of the orgasm and genital sexuality—a position that, like his 'vegetotherapy,' reduced introspective analysis to insignificance—'armor' highlighted how personal transformation could never be reduced to a derivative adjunct of mass social change: the personal was now inextricably bound to questions of the political.[33]

Within the pages of *Against His-story, Against Leviathan*, Perlman will not enter into any extended discussion of Reichian psychoanalytic theory and its political implications. All that is mentioned is this idea of 'armor' and a reference to the Reichian image of being 'rigid.'[34] Still, Perlman's text carries over some very basic Reichian assumptions, specifically in regards to the entwinement of individual subjection with political, economic, and societal subjection. Most apparent is the contention that individual or 'internal' repression is intimately entwined with 'external' repression. When Perlman therefore enters into an excursus on the 'armoring' of individuals—the manufacture of *zeks*—he too emphasises a process of internalised repression; that Leviathan is, as already noted, never simply 'external' to the individual. Leviathan's 'armor' is not, as Perlman remarks, 'worn on the outside;' rather, it 'wraps itself around the individual's insides. The mask becomes the individual's face. Or, as we will say, *the constraint is internalized*.'[35] Through this internalisation of external constraints and pressures—a classic Reichian motif—the individual 'becomes what Hobbes will think he

[32] Brinton. *The Irrational in Politics*, p. 30; Makari, *Revolution in Mind*, p. 398.

[33] Wilhelm Reich. *The Sexual Revolution: Toward a self-regulating character structure*. New York: Farrar, Straus and Giroux, 1974.

[34] Perlman. *Against His-story, Against Leviathan*, p. 38.

[35] *Ibid*, p. 38.

and self-denial' and also dispels with notions of original sin—that the human is a fallen being.[299]

For Perlman, the 'mirror' to which Porete refers is a reflective spiritual receptacle and conduit through which 'a repressed Christian' is transfigured into a 'free human being.'[300] Interpreted through his Zoroastrian dualism, this spiritual mirror is said to reflect a 'Zarathustrian light' directly into the individual's soul, 'a light so bright that it blinds, shocks the individual out of the dark Leviathanic pit, wakes her from the centuries of stony sleep.'[301] Invoking that other major structuring duality of Life against Death, as well as 'outside' against 'inside,' Perlman considers how 'Outside the pit there's undreamt-of joy, there's exultation, not in an Afterlife but in Life.'[302] The earlier mentioned 'wakened person,' blinded by this 'Zarathustrian light' now recognises 'the repressiveness, the sinfulness, of the separations; she recognises her oneness, her kinship with all that is; she recognises herself as Life, as Earth, as Deity.'[303]

The liberated 'simple soul' has become from Perlman's perspective identical with his free spirited mystical 'An-archists' and his 'An-archic and pantheistic dancers.' This is so not only because Porete is again considered to be a pantheist—'her oneness, her kinship with all that is'—but also for the posited antinomian conclusions reached by this 'wakened person.' Perlman thus considers the 'simple soul' to be one who 'enjoys the sexual act, and knows that the Sin is in the priests and their doctrine.'[304] This 'simple soul' also concretises this antinomian desire in the physical destruction of the more tangible, concrete manifestations of 'armored' repression. As Perlman writes, the 'simple soul' now 'turns to sweeping

[299] *Ibid*, p. 205.

[300] *Ibid*, p. 205.

[301] *Ibid*, p. 205.

[302] *Ibid*, p. 205.

[303] *Ibid*, p. 205.

[304] *Ibid*, p. 205.

and Western apophatic or 'negative' theology—Porete's text was later determined to hold several heretical implications by the Church, charges that served as the catalyst for Porete's public execution in 1310.[297] In what follows, I would like to consider Perlman's appropriation of Porete and her text in accordance with his vision of 'self-liberation' as an antagonistic struggle of Life against Death, 'state of nature' against Leviathan. By way of a comparative reading of *The Mirror of Simple Souls*, I would also like to consider how Porete's work does not easily conform to Perlman's politico-spiritual war because her own message of spiritual joy and living exaltation incorporates an all important 'negative' element: a dying to self through self-transcendence.

Section Five: Simple Souls

Porete's *The Mirror of Simple Souls* is of particular significance in response to the question of 'self-liberation' in Perlman's essay because he defines her work as 'a sort of manual to help others remove their armor.'[298] Defined in these Reichian terms, Porete's work is understood, in words quoted earlier, as a guide for others 'to overthrow the separations, to remove the masks and armors, to return to the original unity, the lost community of free loving kin.' Despite the Christian inspiration of the text, Perlman goes on to define *The Mirror of Simple Souls* as a 'profoundly antiChristian work' closer in inspiration to his own Zoroastrian dualism, since the text is from his perspective a refutation of 'Christian humility

[297] On Porete's importance for apophatic theology, see Michael Sells. *The Mystical Languages of Unsaying*. Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1995. On Porete's trial and execution, see Sean L. Field. *The Beguine, The Angel, and The Inquisitor: The trials of Marguerite Porete and Guiard of Cressonessart*. Notre Dame: University of Notre Dame Press, 2012.

[298] Perlman. *Against His-story, Against Leviathan*, p. 205.

is,' that is, an 'armored' *zek* 'filled with springs and wheels, with dead things, with Leviathan's substance.'[36] The *zek's* inner life is reduced to a serviceable component of Leviathan's machinic, artificial body, much as he now becomes a repressed agent and instigator of Leviathan's 'war of extermination' against Nature and the Body.

Similarly, if 'the constraint is internalised,' if the 'armor' is an external imposition, Perlman like Reich is led to conclude that the 'individual's living spirit' is an originally beneficent and good human nature that has only been corrupted by the imposed, but internalised artificial constraints of Leviathan and the machinations of an 'authoritarian mechanistic civilisation.' As Perlman's primitivism boldly attests, before this armouring of the individual, there is an original 'state of nature' as much within as without, a position that again reinstates some of the problems with Reich's own conception of the self: ahistoricism and essentialism. In more political terms, liberation from Leviathan's 'armor' is not for Perlman something that will ''come later,' 'automatically,' or as a 'by-product' of a revolution.' Personal transformation cannot be subordinated to broader social, political and economic transformations.

Perlman captures this sense of inner and outer transformation in his reading of the teachings of Jesus Christ. As he writes:

> Instead of saying "Follow me," he says, "The Kingdom of God is within you." This is something very different from "follow me." This suggests that something is being repressed internally as well as externally, that liberation can only begin with self-liberation, that the repressive armor must be cast off or cast out – and this removal of the armor is something an individual can only do himself.[37]

[36] *Ibid*, p. 38.

[37] *Ibid*, p. 109.

Through this Reichian inspired interpretation of Jesus Christ's "The Kingdom of God is within you" Perlman reaffirms the importance of 'self-liberation' from Leviathan's 'armor,' if indeed suggesting that any broader social, political and economic transformations must emerge from or begin with this path of 'self-liberation.' As this reference to Jesus Christ also attests, 'self-liberation' from Leviathan's 'armor' has in Perlman's essay entered into questions of spiritual transfiguration. Perlman enjoins his revolutionary political background in a Reichian psycho-politics with his understanding of the spiritual realisation of the 'individual's living spirit.'

Certainly, Reichian psychoanalysis is not entirely averse to such points of convergence. While Reich is hostile to 'mysticism' in *The Mass Psychology of Fascism*, where it is defined as 'the primary cause of all political reaction,' Reich's vision of the sexually liberated and integrated personality devoid of its repressive 'character armor' intuits a spiritual state of peaceful harmony between body and soul.[38] As Charles Rycroft remarks, the later Reich attended to a vision of 'God' through Jesus Christ as a mystical 'vegetative harmony of the self with nature.'[39] Even in his earlier work, Reich considered that 'successful psychotherapy leads patients to a view of their relationship with nature which resembles the religious conception of pantheism.'[40] This is not to suggest a direct continuity between Reich and Perlman on this front—though, as I will discuss, Perlman's own pantheism is indeed related to his Reichian heritage. However, this marriage of the 'living spirit' with a Reichian psycho-politics of 'self-liberation' is not unfounded.

[38] Wilhelm Reich. *The Mass Psychology of Fascism*. Harmondsworth: Penguin Books, 1970, p. 161.

[39] Charles Rycroft. *Reich*. London: Fontana, 1971, p. 77. See also Wilhelm Reich. *The Murder of Christ: The emotional plague of mankind, Vol. 1*. New York: Noonday Press, 1966.

[40] Rycroft. *Reich*, p. 78.

a 'Dionysian' self that does actually continue to negate—without limits—by way of a 'horrible mixture of sensuality and cruelty.'

Ultimately, Perlman's definition of 'self-liberation' in the pages of *Against His-story, Against Leviathan* can do no more than set Life against Death. His vision of a life of wholeness, unity, and oneness recreates in an inverted guise the dualities and divisions that this life of unity has sought to overcome. Perlman's work has not resolved the problems with Brown's 'very informative book' because his 'celebration of Life' in the context of 'self-liberation' has excluded and not given 'satisfaction' to death; and, this 'shadow of nothingness' subsequently resurfaces in Perlman's work in the form of a malignant and destructive 'aggressive negativism.' Perlman cannot provide for an understanding of 'self-liberation' through the reconciliation of these structuring oppositions, and all their attendant connotations, because these oppositions are bound to a politico-spiritual war that would see one half of this duality annulled. Perlman's politics of 'self-abandon' cannot, in turn, propose a message of 'resurrection,' other than in the form of Brown's one-sided and apocalyptic 'resurrection of the body.'

Still, I would however like to suggest that there are indications of this alternative conception of 'self-liberation' in Perlman's essay. Perlman may side entirely with Dionysus, but the 'Apollonian' still lingers in his work. Again, this alternative is discernible within one of those spiritual luminaries Perlman references. The figure in question is Marguerite Porete. A mystic of the Fourteenth century, Porete was associated with the Beguines of southern France, a lay religious movement that extolled apostolic poverty and communal living in a non-monastic setting.[295]Porete is best recognised for her publication of the spiritual treatise *The Mirror of Simple Souls*.[296] An important statement of Beguine spirituality—

[295] On the Beguines, see Laura Swan. *The Wisdom of the Beguines: The forgotten story of a Medieval Women's Movement*. New York: BlueBridge, 2014.

[296] Marguerite Porete. *The Mirror of Simple Souls*. Vancouver: Soul Care Publishing, 2011.

selfdefense against the monster rending her asunder.'[294] If Perlman's pantheist therefore 'recognises herself as Life, as Earth, as Deity,' the 'an-archic and pantheistic dancer' is directly and intuitively implicated in the 'Biosphere's self-defense.' The resistance of these 'an-archic' pantheists to Leviathan's 'war of extermination' is given license and justification through Perlman's monism, since these pantheists are immanently attuned to and at one with Life and Nature.

While confirmation of Perlman's radicalised reading of pantheism, it is also apparent that this militant exuberance necessitates the destruction of this other mechanistic 'unity' that turns the natural world into 'Leviathanic excrement.' There is nothing at all peaceful and serene in Perlman's vision of pantheistic 'oneness with all that is.' In fact, there still lingers here a 'shadow of nothingness' in Perlman's vision of 'unity' or, to borrow from Brown's Freudian and Hegelian terminology, a lingering 'aggressive principle of negativity' and 'aggressive negativism' projected outwards at the world. Perlman's militant pantheists emphasise 'the primacy of Being,' but they too are possessed of a surprising degree of wilfulness, if not a concerted will to power. They still want to transform the world by saying 'No' to it through negation and destruction. Their struggle against Leviathan still belongs to the world of time, becoming, and the destructive struggles of an abyssal 'Nothingness which manifests itself as negative or creative action.' Perlman's 'an-archic and pantheistic dancers' experience 'affirmation and eternity'—through spiritual identity with Earth, Life, Deity, 'Mother Earth'—but their militant exuberance still entails the destructive negation of this world, a world that consists not of totalising unities, but finite, particular and fragile living beings. In this sense, Perlman's pantheistic 'self abandon' reclaims one of the more disconcerting facets of Brown's 'utopia of *Fusion*:'

[294] *Ibid*, p. 266.

Indeed, this intersection of psychoanalysis with spirituality and 'selfliberation' is pivotal to the thesis of another important psychoanalytic figure in *Against His-story, Against Leviathan*: Norman O. Brown and, in the words of Perlman, his 'very informative book,' entitled *Life Against Death: The psychoanalytical meaning of history.*[41] Contemporary with Herbert Marcuse's *Eros and Civilization*, Brown's *Life against Death* exemplifies the 1960s counter-culture's politicisation of consciousness.[42] For counter-cultural theorist Theodore Roszak, Brown—more so than Reich and Marcuse—is a far better approximation of the counter-culture's ideals because of its overt spiritual intuitions or, more aptly, its marriage of secular aims and aspirations through Freudian psychoanalysis with insights drawn from the world's spiritual traditions, particularly from Western esotericism, German Romanticism, and Eastern mystical traditions.[43]

While Perlman lauds Brown's 'very informative book,' and does so in the specific context of the 'armoring' of the *zek* that I have just referenced, Brown's thesis and influence is not actually as clearly discernible in Perlman's essay as is Reich's concept of 'armor,' apart perhaps from Perlman's invocation of the antagonistic duality that constitutes its title: Life against Death, a division structurally analogous to the division of 'state of nature' against Leviathan. Even though Perlman elides the specific question of why Brown's work is so important for the purposes of his essay, I would here like to en-

[41] Perlman. *Against His-story, Against Leviathan*, p. 33; Norman O. Brown. *Life Against Death: The psychoanalytical meaning of history.* Middletow: Wesleyan University Press, 1959.

[42] Herbert Marcuse. *Eros and Civilization.* London: Sphere Books, 1969.

[43] Roszak. *The Making of a Counter Culture*, p. 97. For other accounts of Brown's influence, see Richard King. *The Party of Eros: Radical social thought and the realm of freedom.* Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1972; Yiannis Gabriel. *Freud and Society.* London: Routledge & Kegan Paul, 1983, pp. 193–215; David Burner. *Making Peace with the 60s.* Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1996, p. 263. For a contemporary reappraisal of Brown's work, see David Greenham. *The Resurrection of the Body.* Lanham: Lexington Books, 2006.

ter into an extended comparative analysis of Brown's work alongside *Against His-story, Against Leviathan.* As I will consider, such a comparison will not only highlight some of the contradictions that arise from this forced, strained marriage of Reichian with Freudian psychoanalysis, but also, and most importantly, draw attention to the problems surrounding Perlman's conception of a spiritualised 'self-liberation' from Leviathan's 'armor.'

Section Two: Life against Death

The relationship in Brown's text between spirituality, psychoanalysis, individual subjection, and 'self-liberation' hinges precisely upon the text's blatantly dualistic title: Life against Death. The title alludes to the key Freudian psychoanalytic terms, *Eros* and *Thanatos*—the life and death 'instincts,' which could just as fruitfully be rendered—from the German *Trieb*—as 'drive,' 'impulse,' 'pulsion,' or, 'impelling force.'[44] Whether conceived as 'mythical beings, superb in their indefiniteness' or as approximations of actual biological drives inherent to all living beings, the life and death instincts are the final manifestation of a long series of structuring dualities in Freud's thought.[45] Following from earlier dualities between love and hate, sex and self-preservation, the pleasure-principle and the reality-principle, Freud finally 'insists that the instincts are two and only two,' even while incorporating much of these earlier approaches under the rubric of Life and Death.[46]

Eros, for example, shares in earlier connotations with love and the pleasureprinciple. In Brown's words, 'Eros is fundamentally

[44] Bettelheim. *Freud and Man's Soul*, p. 105.

[45] Brown. *Life against Death*, p. 78.

[46] *Ibid*, p. 78. See also Matei Georgescu. 'The Duality Between Life and Death Instincts in Freud.' *Contemporary Readings in Law and Social Justice.* Vol. 3 No. 1. 2011, pp. 134–139.

outsiders [in the 'state of nature'] *introduces a certain dualism into an otherwise consistent monism*,' even if 'this dualism is not disturbing' to the mechanical monists themselves because their 'monism is self-confirming. Everything is artifice, and whatever is not will soon be artifice. There is nothing outside but raw materials waiting to be processed and transformed into Leviathanic excrement, the substance of the universe.'[292] For Perlman, a 'consistent monism' is in a contradictory sense constitutively dualistic because its unity is a contrived excrescence, a deathly 'armor' as it were, founded upon the aggressive expropriation of that original unity of Life and Being in the 'state of nature.'

Though, Perlman's pantheistic monism is itself founded upon 'a certain dualism.' Following the 'dialectical imagination' of Brown, Perlman's pantheistic monism serves only in the affirmation of *Eros*—the exuberant unity, interdependence and 'oneness' of Life, Being, and Nature—against *Thanatos*, against death, finite particularity, independence, separation, division, 'Nothing,' and non-being. His overcoming of all oppositions and dualities through recourse to a state of pantheistic 'oneness' is contradictorily founded upon the dualistic opposition of Life against Death. His monism is moreover founded upon the political duality of 'state of nature' against Leviathan, the 'outside' against the 'inside.' When Perlman thus writes that mechanistic monism 'is not a description but a prescription, a program, a military strategy' against the 'outside,' against the 'state of nature,' I too would note how Perlman's pantheistic monism is itself an inverted 'prescription,' 'program,' and 'military strategy' for 'outsiders,' 'Renegades,' and 'an-archic and pantheistic dancers.'[293] As Perlman writes towards the conclusion of his essay, the 'struggle against Leviathan, against His-story, is synonymous with Life;' and, immediately after states that such a struggle in the name of Life '*is part of the Biosphere's*

[292] *Ibid*, p. 289.

[293] *Ibid*, p. 289.

he too concludes his vision of self abandoned 'possession' in a state of monistic and pantheistic 'oneness.' While Perlman defines his pantheism in a somewhat pluralistic manner—a toleration of all gods and goddesses as distinct but ultimately unified manifestations of Life, Nature, Being, or 'Mother Earth'—he will not refer to this pluralism in polytheistic terms—the belief in many gods, goddesses, and spirits. He cleaves rather to the monistic definition of pantheism: that 'the divine is all-inclusive and that man and Nature are not independent of God, but are modes or elements of his [her] Being.'[290]

Perlman thus suggests that 'self abandon' to a state of pantheistic 'oneness' resolves and overcomes the dualities, divisions, and separations of the 'armored' self or 'Western spirit' with its concomitant 'war of extermination by Spirit against Nature, Soul against Body.' However, Perlman's recuperation of this state of 'oneness' and 'unity' actually sits rather discordantly within Perlman's text because of his express criticisms of monism. The monism to which Perlman critically attends is not, of course, the pantheistic monism he lauds, which is primarily informed by an organic holism, but the mechanistic monism of Seventeenth and Eighteenth century Enlightenment Rationalists, Freemasons, and Illuminists. These mechanistic monists view the cosmos as 'nothing but a vast artifice, a machine, a clock wound up by the Great Artificer, the Mathematician.'[291] Here too there is monistic 'oneness' and 'unity,' but this union is for Perlman an artificial excrescence commensurate with the authoritarian excrescence of Leviathan and its own imposed, contrived unity.

The problem for Perlman is that 'outside' this mechanistic unity there remains the original pantheistic unity: the 'state of nature.' In these terms, Perlman may pronounce, 'the fact that there are still

[290] Anthony Flew (ed.). *A Dictionary of Philosophy*. London: Pan Books, 1979, p. 261.

[291] Perlman. *Against His-story, Against Leviathan*, p. 289.

a desire for union (being one) with objects in the world.'[47] For Freud himself, a 'readiness for a universal love of mankind and the world represents the highest standpoint which man can reach.'[48]Eros therefore embodies pleasure in this loving encounter with the world and others; it fosters and unifies life. Despite these associations with love, unity, and the promotion of life, Eros is not exclusively synonymous with sexual intercourse and procreation. Eros is distinct from Reich's insistent focus upon a healthy genital sexuality and 'orgastic potency.'[49] Eros is rather a 'delight in the active life of all the human body' or polymorphous perversity.[50]

Contrary to the pleasures of *Eros*, Freud posits *Thanatos*, the death-instinct, which incorporates elements of the reality-principle as well as questions of hate and aggression. In dissociation from the pleasurable unifications of *Eros*, *Thanatos* is that 'contrary instinct seeking to dissolve those [larger] units and to bring them back to their primaeval, inorganic state.'[51] Where *Eros* had remained implicit in Freud's theory of human sexuality, *Thanatos*—an inherent death instinct or drive to selfextinction in all living beings—was and remains one of the most controversial and divisive innovations in Freud's thought.[52] Reich will, for instance, completely reject the death instinct because for him human 'suffering has its origin in the outside world, in repressive society;' as such the morbidity inherent to 'the death instinct does not exist.'[53] While Freud also held reservations towards his own hypothesis of a death instinct, he too felt it a necessary specula-

[47] Brown, *Life against Death*, p. 49.

[48] Sigmund Freud. 'Civilization and its Discontents,' in Peter Gay (ed.). *The Freud Reader*. Vintage: London, 1995, p. 744.

[49] Robinson. *The Freudian Left*, p. 17.

[50] Brown. *Life against Death*, p. 35.

[51] Freud. 'Civilization and its Discontents,' p. 744.

[52] Makari. *Revolution in Mind*, pp. 317–318. On the influence of Freud's 'death drive,' see Todd Dufresne. *Tales from the Freudian Crypt: The death drive in text and context*. Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1999.

[53] Chasseguet-Smirgel and Grunberger. *Freud or Reich*, p. 106.

tion, and refused to consider—with Reich—that the 'death-instinct is a product of the capitalist system.'[54] This difference is due, in part, to Freud's longstanding concerns with death through mourning, melancholia, and suicide, as well as concerns with the imbrication of pleasure and pain in masochism; the interminable nature of some analyses—that analysand's oftentimes enjoyed their suffering; and, the compulsion to repeat in those who had suffered deeply traumatic and painful experiences.[55]

Essentially, Freud sought to maintain through the 'mutually opposing action of these two instincts,' a theoretical basis for an instinctual dualism that could recognise the problems of the human condition in terms of a 'deep conflict in human nature itself.'[56] The theory of the instincts encapsulates what Bruno Bettelheim has described as Freud's attempts to comprehend the inherent ambivalence of the human 'soul' or *psyche*.[57] Such an understanding of human ambivalence is an implicit rejection of a psychological monism that supports 'only the most placid view of our inner life.'[58] The theory of the instincts is, for example, distinct from Reich's own psychological monism, with its originarily beneficent human nature—a 'Biologic core'—wherein 'all internal conflict has been made to disappear' and replaced 'with the concept of purely external constraints.'[59] From Freud's perspective of human ambivalence, the diminution of social constraints may indeed lessen internal conflicts, but it will not resolve this 'deep conflict in human nature.'

Of interest, such an understanding of the human psyche is a perspective Reich will tentatively return to in some of his final theoret-

[54] Freud. 'Civilization and its Discontents, p. 754; Freud quoted in Colin Wilson. *The Quest for Wilhelm Reich*. London: Granada, 1981, p. 171.

[55] *Ibid*, p. 761. See also Sigmund Freud. 'Beyond the Pleasure Principle,' in Peter Gay (ed.). *The Freud reader*. London: Vintage, 1995, pp. 594–625.

[56] Bettelheim. *Freud and Man's Soul*, p. 107; Brown. *Life against Death*, p. 93.

[57] Bettelheim. *Freud and Man's Soul*, p. 107.

[58] *Ibid*, p. 107

[59] Chasseguet-Smirgel and Grunberger. *Freud or Reich*, p. 135.

that other important, 'Apollonian' figure in the Western tradition, the Delphic oracle, and her injunction to know thyself through introspective self-knowledge.[286]

Whether Perlman is referring to the 'complete mental breakdown,' ecstatic, Bacchanalian revelry, or erotic 'love feasts,' his envisioning of 'self-abandon' is in all instances implicated in the return to a state of original wholeness—without division and separation—where people are possessed by or abandoned to Life and Being. I would here like to take particular note of the spiritual implications of this state of 'possession,' which appears to be the end goal and aspiration for 'self-liberation' in Perlman's text. As I would maintain, Perlman's end goal of self abandonment is an aspiration mirrored in Reich's 'vegetative harmony' of body and soul and in Brown's utopia of 'fusion' set alongside his 'turn to Spinoza:' a direct, intuitive experience of pantheism. As Perlman speaks of those medieval 'Free Spirits' he deigns mystical 'An-archists,' 'They are pantheists. They say Nature is deity, every existing thing and every living being is divine.'[287] Through 'possession,' the 'mystical An-archist' 'recognises her oneness, her kinship with all that is; she recognises herself as Life, as Earth, as Deity.'[288] The experience of pantheism provides for a 'return to the original unity, the lost community of free loving kin' because within this pantheistic unity there are no opposites or oppositions, no divisions or separations: all is one with Life, Earth, or Deity. Perlman even restates the centrality of pantheism to his own politicospiritual 'vision' when he heralds at the conclusion of his essay the return of contemporary 'An-archic and pantheistic dancers [who] no longer sense the artifice and its [Leviathan's] linear His-story as All.'[289] Much as Perlman reasserts a psychological monism through his allegiance to Reich,

[286] *Ibid*, p. 54.

[287] Perlman. *Against His-story, Against Leviathan*, p. 205.

[288] *Ibid*, p. 205.

[289] *Ibid*, p. 302.

is possible, they must first intimately realise that everything is possible through the overcoming of fundamental social taboos.[282]

In *Against His-story, Against Leviathan*, Perlman draws particular attention to the documented—or imputed—sexual ecstasies of ancient mystery cults as well as heretical sects of the Middle Ages and Czech Reform period. The Adamites or *pikards*—discussed in Part One in relation to their apocalyptic vision—are notably lauded in Perlman's text for their eroticisation of the 'love feast,' or Christian *agape*: a feast held by early Christians that commemorated the Last Supper as well as Christian fellowship. In Perlman's definition, 'love play and sex are integral to the feast.'[283] For Perlman, the Adamites reconstitute themselves into a community of 'free loving kin' through these 'love feasts' by drawing together the personal with the social: 'self-abandon' through the erotic overcoming of the division between Self and Other is consecrated in the formation of a social bond based not upon 'competing interests' but that of erotic 'mutuality and interdependence.'[284] The 'love feast' also contains an antinomian and transgressive element; through 'love play and sex,' the Adamites overturn social and religious taboos, much as they overturn social distinctions of rank and hierarchy. Still, Perlman's politics of 'uninhibited erotic fulfilment' also reconstitutes the dualities it has purportedly overcome because of its 'radical subordination of mind to body.'[285] His monistic conception of the self coupled with this sexual politics of immanent and orgiastic release recreates an inverted dualism of body against mind. Dionysian 'ecstasy, Bacchic frenzy, [and] transgression of the rational limits of intelligence' are everywhere triumphant in Perlman's vision of ecstasy, a vision that accords little respect to

[282] *Letters of Insurgents*, pp. 680–682.

[283] *Ibid*, p. 205, 223. On the historical basis of the Adamites' sexual libertinism, see Cohn. *The Pursuit of the Millennium*, p. 220; Jeffrey Burton Russell. *Witchcraft in the Middle Ages*. Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1972, pp. 127–128.

[284] Torgovnick. *Primitivist Passions*, p. 15.

[285] Fuchs. *The Limits of Ferocity*, p. 43.

ical writings. While there is also Reich's development of 'orgone energy' and his own, externalised version of the 'death instinct' in the form of DOR—'deadly orgone energy'—there are other indications where Reich's concept of 'armoring' is no longer bound exclusively to the 'internalisation of external pressures.'[60] Reich now explores armouring in terms of a self-armouring through an inherent conflict in human consciousness. As Reich now argues, 'self-awareness contains within itself the risk of becoming alienated [armoured] both from others and from the instinctual self,' just as 'rending oneself to one's passions and to the desire to fuse with the Other can be experienced as a threat to one's sense of identity.'[61] 'Armor' in this sense is not simply imposed from without in the form of a 'congealed social process;' 'armoring' is a human response to the anxieties engendered by self-consciousness and the tensions that may arise from an awareness of the difference between Self and Other, and the ambivalent emotions and anxieties precipitated by separation and sexual union. As Rycroft further notes, this change in perspective directed Reich away from the political bigotry implicit in his original theory of 'armor.' If, for example, this 'armor' reflects decidedly human, internal conflicts—and is not simply an excrescence imposed by authoritarianpatriarchal civilisation—the stance of the psychoanalyst shifts from one of belligerent, politicised disdain to one of understanding: that the 'armored' are not in this sense 'villains' but 'victims of an inescapable hazard of the human condition.'[62] It is a shift moreover that Perlman will not make, since the 'armored' in his text remain consummate 'villains'—the repressed and repressive agents of Leviathan.

While Reich will return to this idea of a 'deep conflict within human nature,' one of the main reasons he earlier rejected Freud's instinctual dualism, and the death instinct, in particular, was its ex-

[60] Chasseguet-Smirgel and Grunberger. *Freud or Reich*, p. 188; Rycroft. *Reich*, p. 46.

[61] Rycroft. *Reich*, p, 94–95.

[62] *Ibid*, p. 95.

treme political pessimism: the notion that human destructiveness was in some way innate and irresolvable. Indeed, the 'deep conflict' that inheres in the 'mutually opposing action' of *Eros* and *Thanatos* is central to Freud's movement from questions of self-destruction and self-annihilation to questions of the inflicting of suffering upon others through aggressive violence, hatred, and sadism. As Freud maintains, 'a portion of the [death] instinct is diverted towards the external world and comes to light as an instinct of aggressiveness and destructiveness. In this way the instinct itself could be pressed into the service of Eros, in that the organism was destroying some other thing, whether animate or inanimate, instead of destroying its own self.'[63] Aggression in this sense is an attempt to resolve or, at least, placate the deep, inner conflicts within the individual by pressing the death-instinct into the 'service' of *Eros*. 'Aggression' becomes here 'an act of self-preservation.'[64]

That Freud's instinctual dualism could, as Reich duly noted, hold political and social repercussions will find confirmation in that seminal text Perlman himself references: *Civilization and its Discontents*. In this work, the discontents of the individual are transcribed onto the discontents of civilisation.'[65] In specific relation to the life-and-death instincts, Freud considers how civilisation is itself torn between two conflicting impulses: an externalised aggressiveness, reflected in both institutionalised warfare and human dominion over the natural world, and the opposed movement towards union into 'ever larger units,' or what Freud describes as a 'readiness for a universal love of mankind and the world.'[66] The extroverted aggressiveness of the death-instinct—through the destruction of 'some other thing'—is bound to the creative development of 'civilisation,' but, in contradistinction, it

[63] Freud. 'Civilization and its Discontents,' p. 754.

[64] Havi Carel. *Life and Death in Freud and Heidegger*. Amsterdam and New York: Rodopi, 2006, p. 126.

[65] Freud quoted in Gabriel. *Freud and Society*, p. 198.

[66] Freud. 'Civilization and its Discontents,' p. 756.

transformation' as an act of immediate, immanent, and apocalyptic consummation. 'Self abandon' is presented as a shattering and 'breakdown' of consciousness or, in lieu of Reich, an orgasmic explosion, a release and discharge of repressed energy. As Perlman writes of the psychic-spiritual liberation of *zeks*, 'his innards would explode, his armor melt, his mask fall.'[280] Much as Perlman disregards those 'Apollonian' forms of 'self-transformation,' he too abandons their essentially patient and temporal element—that the processes of personal introspection, self analysis and contemplation require time, not its abolition by means of an apocalyptic consummation of desire. Like Brown and Marcuse before him, Perlman's apocalyptic version of 'self-liberation' as exuberant fulfilment attests to his utopian reassertion of the primacy of Being and the eternal now against Becoming, time, and temporality.

Insofar as Perlman occludes both the introspective and processual, patient workings of 'Apollonian' forms of 'self-transformation,' he too places repeated emphasis upon immanent and bodily forms of 'self abandon.' As with Brown's 'Dionysian consciousness,' physical ecstasy is paramount in precipitating these apocalyptic transformations of the 'individual's living spirit.' Dance and revelry, music and song are thus emphasised throughout *Against His-story, Against Leviathan*.[281] Though, the most prominent example of immanent 'self abandon' is Perlman's allegiance to a Reichian politics of sexual liberation and to the erotic overcoming of the division between Self and Other through 'uninhibited erotic fulfilment.' Indeed, his vision of 'free loving kin' is a long-standing theme in Perlman's work, such as in his *Letters of Insurgents*, where incest is bound to its central theme of insurgency: that in order for insurgents to realise anything

[280] *Ibid*, p. 269.

[281] *Ibid*, p. 302.

he is also incapable of offering any substantive alternative to this 'fundamental ideology' of returning to the 'original unity' because his Reichian monism and his vision of an inner 'state of nature' offers no complex, dynamic understanding of the human *psyche* that would preclude this fall to 'infantilism' and a reactive, romanticised celebration of the 'complete mental breakdown.'

In further comparison with Brown, Perlman's celebration of madness as 'self abandon' concludes in the disparagement of those 'Apollonian' forms of 'selftransformation' that rely upon self awareness, such as therapeutic introspection, selfanalysis, and spiritual contemplation, a point already witnessed in Perlman's disparaging comments on the 'miserable failures' of psychoanalytic practice, and mirrored in Reich's insensitivity to the speech of his analysands, and Brown's dismissal of 'talk from the couch.' Of course, Perlman certainly makes allowance for the 'Apollonian' world of dreams and the 'inner world of fantasy' in his work. As noted in Part One, Perlman believes 'dreams are the stuff the world is made of.' However, dreams and fantasies only hold meaningfulness for Perlman if they are realised and acted upon in the world—as wishes and 'self-fulfilling prophecies.' For psychoanalysis, dreams and fantasies hold meaningfulness, but such meaning is derived from their interpretation through personal introspection and self-analysis, a critical perspective that more often problematises the original meaning of said dream or fantasy, along with its attempted actualisation in reality.[279]

Through Perlman's occlusion of introspective forms of 'self-liberation,' he too repeats Brown's exuberant image of 'self-

London: New York University Press, 1986; Janine Chasseguet-Smirgel. *The Body as Mirror of the World*. London: Free Association, 2005.

[279] 'It has been recognised in the psychoanalytic literature that, although an unfulfilled wish may be involved in creating a neurotic condition, the resolution of the neurotic condition does not inhere in the satisfaction of the wish.' David Bakan. *Disease, Pain, & Sacrifice: Toward a psychology of suffering*. Chicago: Beacon Press, 1968, p. 123.

also 'opposes this programme of civilization' and the striving for a more 'universal love' of humanity and the world.[67] Hence, the conflict and 'discontents' of civilisation, torn as it is between Love and Hate, Life and Death.

In response to these 'discontents,' Freud held a number of differing political and social perspectives. One formula proved quintessentially conservative and is the basis for Reich's accusation of pessimism: *homo homini lupus*, 'man is a wolf to man.'[68] The death drive becomes nothing more than 'a hypothesis of innate evil.'[69]From this perspective, 'Civilization has to use its utmost efforts in order to set limits to man's aggressive instincts and to hold the manifestations of them in check by psychical reaction-formations.[70] The problem with this perspective is that civilization's 'utmost efforts' to curb aggression are still essentially repressive and so only exacerbate from Freud's position the neurotic, repressed character of the individual and civilisation. Furthermore, in even suggesting that 'the inclination to aggression is an original, self-subsisting instinctual disposition in man,' Freud undermines the very possibility of therapeutic healing through analysis.[71]

To counter this extreme pessimism, Freud takes consideration of the communist perspective: 'man is wholly good and is well-disposed to his neighbour; but the institution of private property has corrupted his nature…If private property were abolished, all wealth held in common, and everyone allowed to share in the enjoyment of it, ill-will and hostility would disappear among men.'[72] While Freud does not actually refute the significance of Communism's aspirations for social and economic equality, he still con-

[67] *Ibid*, p. 756.
[68] *Ibid*, p. 749.
[69] Carel. *Life and Death in Freud and Heidegger*, p. 126.
[70] Freud. 'Civilization and its Discontents,' p. 750.
[71] *Ibid*, p. 755.
[72] *Ibid*, p.750.

siders its 'psychological premisses' to be 'an untenable illusion.'[73] Much as Freud refuses Reich's psychological monism and his definition of 'armor' as the imposition of 'externalised pressures,' so too will Freud refuse to concede that human aggression and violence are a mere excrescence imposed from without or derivative of economic, social, and political inequalities that will dissipate 'after' a political Revolution. For Freud, 'aggression is in man, not just in the institutions.'[74] In terms of his understanding of instinctual conflict, Freud maintains that human aggression will, even under a communist regime, find a means of reemerging in some new guise and on some new level of antagonism.[75] As he writes in this context, 'it is always possible to bind together a considerable number of people in love, *so long as there are other people left over to receive the manifestations of their aggressiveness*.'[76] One last hope of Freud lies in the reassertion of 'eternal Eros' in its 'struggle with his equally immortal adversary,' the death instinct.[77] In a position that does not effectively resolve the antagonism he has so problematised, Freud concludes his response to the discontents of civilisation by setting Life against Death.

Brown's thesis and the title for his work are direct references and responses to these rather sombre conclusions in Freud's *Civilisation and Its Discontents*. Unlike those thinkers he collectively deigns 'neo-Freudians,' who abandoned the deathinstinct because of its pessimism, Brown accepts the life and death instincts as the 'basal concepts of psychoanalysis,' essential to a description of human ambivalence and to the explanation of repression.[78] Brown essentially concurs with 'Freud's fundamental perspective that the evil [hate] in man is not to be explained away as a superficial

[73] *Ibid*, p. 751.

[74] Chasseguet-Smirgel and Grunberger. *Freud or Reich*, p. 67.

[75] Freud. 'Civilization and Its Discontents,' p. 752.

[76] Emphasis added. *Ibid*, p. 751.

[77] *Ibid*, p. 772.

[78] Brown. *Life Against Death*, p. 76.

the Body, certain primitivists conclude that the mediations of symbolic thought and language—all human works of 'sublimation' in a Freudian context—are an inherently repressive imposition of civilisation. Hence, John Zerzan may state that language is the 'fundamental ideology' of civilisation because it institutes as 'deep a separation from the natural world as self-existent time.'[275] As with Brown's advocacy of 'regression to the primary narcissism of an undifferentiated ego and id,' this emphasis upon 'return' to a lost plenitude does not so much indicate psychic wholeness as it problematically suggests an extremely narcissistic 'infantilism'—the attempt to return to 'the unity of opposites that existed in childhood,' a condition where one was 'the omnipotent, protected being, able to enjoy delightful egocentric pleasures and, further, the desire never to leave that stage, never to grow old, nor face change and death.'[276] Even 'reasoned' primitivists, such as David Watson, have remarked of this primitivist extremism, and the suggestion that these attempts to demolish language as much as 'self-existent time' amounts to an unconscious desire to 'return to the womb.'[277] As Chasseguet-Smirgel also notes, this 'belief in the illusion of the possibility of returning to the lost unity, a unity lost ever since the moment of primary separation' is itself the 'fundamental ideology' of all extremist politics, whether of the Left or Right.[278] While Perlman does not necessarily reach Zerzan's extreme conclusions,

[275] Zerzan. *Elements of Refusal*, p. 31.

[276] On these intersections between narcissism and infantilism, see also Christopher Lasch. *The Culture of Narcissism: American life in an age of diminishing expectations*. New York: Norton, 1991.

[277] George Bradford. 'Confronting the Enemy: A response on time.' *The Fifth Estate*. Vol. 18 No. 3, 1983, p. 8. George Bradford is the pseudonym of David Watson.

[278] Chasseguet-Smirgel and Grunberger. *Freud or Reich*, p. 14. Chasseguet-Smirgel's critique of utopian political ideologies is developed in Janine Chasseguet-Smirgel. *The Ego-Ideal: A psychoanalytic essay on the malady of the ideal*. London: Free Association Books, 1985; Janine Chasseguet-Smirgel. *Sexuality and Mind: The role of the father and the mother in the psyche*. New York and

Ahriman to desist from extinguishing the light'—Perlman states a converse position to dialogue and discussion: 'it is a good time for people to let go of its sanity, its masks and armors, and go mad, for they are already being ejected from its pretty polis.'[273] Though, in speaking of the futility of dialogue, Perlman too introduces a certain solipsistic element into his vision of going mad. The mad are apparently more sensible than those still trapped within the parameters of ordinary consciousness, but they are also incapable—and unwilling—of communicating their wisdom with anyone else.

This movement from 'self-abandon' to madness is, in turn, inscribed into Perlman's conception of the liberated self. With his refusal to accept a state of instinctual ambivalence or inner division and discord—this discord is for him nothing more than an internalised excrescence, a 'congealed social process'—Perlman cannot, for instance, follow Kristeva's suggestion that the 'becoming of each and every subject' consists in a series of negations and splittings, divisions and separations, a 'work of the Negative' that if undone or shattered—through a return to an earlier undifferentiated plenitude—would conclude only in 'psychotic confusion' and 'madness.' Perlman's inner 'state of nature' fails in its ability to recognise that the 'complete mental breakdown' and the incapacity 'to know where you end and the world begins' through 'possession' are not necessarily sources of healing, but rather indications of personal suffering that should not be idealised and romanticised simply because they defy the limits of ordinary, 'mundane' consciousness.[274]

The acritical pursuit of unmediated reunion with the lost unities of an inner 'state of nature' is moreover endemic to primitivist literature. With this constant maligning of separation and division as products of civilisation's estrangement from Nature and

[273] Perlman. *Against His-story, Against Leviathan*, p. 301.
[274] Fuchs. *The Limits of Ferocity*, p. 60.

excrescence on a basically good human nature, but is rooted in a deep conflict in human nature itself.'[79] While Brown remains far too dismissive of 'the factor of environmental frustration' in Freudian psychoanalysis—that 'external pressures,' such as child rearing practices and the inter-personal dynamics of the family, very much influence the psychic life of individuals—he too recognises that in Freud's instinctual theory 'the trouble goes deeper.'[80] As Brown writes, 'it is one of the sad ironies of contemporary intellectual life that Freud's hypothesis of an innate death instinct, which has been received with horror as the acme of pessimism, actually offers the only way out of the really pessimistic hypothesis of an innate aggressive instinct.'[81]

Brown's 'way out' from this 'pessimistic hypothesis' can be discerned in his shift away from Freud's instinctual dualism—Life against Death—to that of an instinctual dialectic—Life with Death. He emphasises the dialectical interrelationship of Life and Death as distinct from their seemingly interminable, warring opposition, a dialectic Brown discerns in Freud's 'basic tendency' in his final works 'to 'reconcile,' 'synthesize,' [and] 'unify' the dualisms and conflicts with which the human being is beset.'[82] As Freud writes of the Life and Death instincts in one of his final writings, 'There can be no question of an antithesis between an optimistic and a pessimistic theory of life; only the simultaneous working together and against each other of both primordial drives, of Eros and the death drive, can explain the colorfulness of life, never the one or the other all by itself.'[83] This change of emphasis is so significant because Brown will no longer define the warring conflicts of *Eros* and *Thanatos* as innate and biologically given 'instincts' inherent to all living beings. These antagonisms and, in consequence, the

[79] *Ibid*, p. 93.
[80] *Ibid*, p. 93.
[81] *Ibid*, p. 93.
[82] *Ibid*, p. 57.
[83] Bettelheim. *Freud and Man's Soul*, p. 111.

neuroses they precipitate, are borne of a distinctly human conflict. As Brown argues, other living organisms maintain a certain equilibrium or undifferentiated unity between Life and Death—'animals let death be a part of life, and use the death instinct to die.'[84] Humans however have been sundered from this instinctual integrity. There is a disturbance and discord within the human being that has broken down a dialectical relationship between Life and Death into a dualistic one. This disturbance is not what Brown would describe as an awakening to 'the consciousness of death,' but rather, and quite specifically, the fear of death and subsequent 'flight from death.'[85] As Brown elucidates, 'Man is the animal which has separated into conflicting opposites the biological unity of life and death, and has then subjected the conflicting opposites to repression.'[86] The dualistic antagonism of which Freud speaks is in Brown's dialectical estimation the consequence of 'deep and secrets acts of repression'—a constitutive 'flight from death'—that will not 'yield to a mere reshuffling of our society's institutional structures.'[87]

Still, this 'flight from death' is not simply bound to the fear of selfannihilation. The fear and subsequent repression of death has for Brown other important associations and parallels. The most important of these associations is the anxiety of separation from the original plenitude that is the relationship between the pre-Oedipal mother—the first love object—and the child, or what Brown de-

[84] Brown. *Life against Death*, p. 95.

[85] *Ibid*, p. 95. For other psychoanalytic discussions of this 'fear of death,' see Otto Rank. *The Trauma of Birth*. New York: R. Brunner, 1952; Ernest Becker. *The Denial of Death*. New York: Free Press, 1973; Robert Jay Lifton. *The Broken Connection: On death and the continuity of life*. New York: Simon & Schuster, 1979; Daniel Liechty (ed.). *Death and Denial: Interdisciplinary perspectives on the legacy of Ernest Becker*. Westport: Praeger Publishers, 2002; Jerry S. Piven. *Death and Delusion: A Freudian analysis of mortal terror*. Greenwich: Information Age Publishers, 2004.

[86] Brown. *Life against Death*, p. 97.

[87] Roszak. *The Making of a Counter Culture*, p. 95.

sequence 'the aim of the radicals is to overthrow the separations, to remove the masks and armors, to return to the original unity, the lost community of free loving kin.'[270]

Where Brown locates his return to a state of instinctual 'fusion' within the ecstasies of a 'Dionysian consciousness' and the 'shattering of the *principium individuationis*,' Perlman too consistently defines this project of 'self-liberation' and the restoration of this originally whole condition of non-separateness as 'selfabandon' and a state of 'possession.'[271] Perlman's 'self-liberation' entails the abandonment of the self to a state of ecstasy that assaults and shatters the individual's 'armored' autonomy and independence. 'Self-liberation' equals the destruction of a 'false' self because this self is but an excrescent mask obfuscating one's true Self. Through 'self-abandon,' the divisions of Self and Other, Body and Soul, Inside and Outside are overcome and 'the original unity' is restored. Paradise lost is regained.

As with Brown's wish 'to abolish every dualism' through an experience of 'oneness with the world,' Perlman's own emphasis upon 'self abandon,' the shattering of ordinary consciousness, and the restoration of an 'original unity' concludes also in the 'sentimentalising of mental illness.' The 'complete mental breakdown' is thus for Perlman a site of potential recuperation from Leviathan's deathly 'armor' because it evidently destabilises the self and foregoes the dubious 'sanity' of those autonomous and independent selves who live and work 'inside' Leviathan.[272] Perlman even returns to this dichotomy between madness and sanity towards the conclusion of his essay. Referring to the futility of dialogue—'People waste their lives when they plead with

[270] Perlman. *Against His-story, Against Leviathan*, p. 205.

[271] *Ibid*, p. 11.

[272] *Ibid*, p. 187. For one of the more influential expressions of madness as a site of recuperation from the insanity of society, see R.D. Laing. *The Politics of Experience and The Bird of Paradise*. Harmondsworth: Penguins Books. 1967, pp. 84–107.

most importantly, the ways in which this determines Perlman's conception of 'selfliberation.' In the following section, I would therefore like to consider how Perlman's Reichian inspired vision of 'self-liberation' in its dualistic 'celebration of Life' against Death re-establishes many of the features—and problems—with Brown's 'Dionysian consciousness' and the subsequent occlusion of an inner 'labor of the Negative' or any notion of 'self-liberation' understood in terms of the patient, 'Apollonian' workings of introspective self-analysis.

Section Four: 'Self-abandon'

As noted in an earlier section, Perlman's Sartrean existentialism does not easily lend itself to either Marcuse's or Brown's defence of a liberated unconscious. However, Perlman's Reichian ideal of an originally beneficent 'Biologic core'—the 'individual's living spirit' or inner 'state of nature'—does fulfil a similar function in Perlman's essay to that of a liberated unconscious. Again, this 'living spirit' is devoid of repression, but it has also been repressed—beneath layers of socially conditioned 'armor.' Furthermore, Perlman's 'living spirit,' like Brown's 'noumenal' unconscious, is not only devoid of repression, but also devoid of division and separation—between Self and Other, Body and Soul. This 'living 'spirit' is an original monistic unity—a state of 'fusion'—where there are no separations and divisions, constraints and pressures. In lieu of Brown's reading of the Freudian unconscious, there are no limits in this inner 'state of nature.' 'Self-liberation' thus entails the destruction of a repressive and divisive 'armor,' and the subsequent return to a state of wholeness and plenitude. 'Self-liberation' restores the 'living spirit' to its original unity, banishing Leviathan's 'armor' that limits, represses, denudes, empties and reduces the individual to 'Nothing.' As Perlman writes of 'the wakened person,' this person 'recognises the repressiveness, the sinfulness, of the separations;' and, in con-

scribes as the original 'state of nature.'[88] The fear of death is thus in equal part removal from this plenitude into the 'anxiety of separation from the protecting mother.'[89] Both death and separation from an original, protective 'state of nature' are here correlated with each other because they both share fears and anxieties over lack, loss and absence. An example of this convergence is Freud's description of the *fort-da* game in his *Beyond the Pleasure Principle*, 'where Freud's grandchild plays with the wooden reel by throwing it way, emitting a long o-o-o-o (standing for *fort*, gone), and sometimes rediscovering it.'[90] For Liran Razinsky, this 'concrete action language of the child' is not only associable with the repetitive efforts to represent the absence of the child's mother, and thus 'live more easily' with this absence but also, in lieu of other similar games played before a mirror, there is here an attempt '*to represent his own absence.*'[91] In both instances, he fails in his task 'to represent a disappearance' and a vanishing because there is always a return and a reappearance, but this constant, traumatic repetition of making present an absence is a means also of coping with these anxieties, and so learning to live with these losses, whether the loss of the mother or the ultimate separation of death.[92]

Insofar as Brown emphasises a primordial 'flight from death' and the anxieties of separation through repression, the human being in Brown's estimation is left with 'the problem of what to do with its own repressed death.'[93] Concerning this problem, Brown recapitulates Freud's understanding of an 'extroversion of the death instinct,' a projection of the death-instinct outwards towards the world and towards 'some other thing' through a now

[88] Brown. *Life Against Death*, p. 46.
[89] *Ibid*, p. 102.
[90] Liran Razinsky. *Freud, Psychoanalysis and Death.* Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2012, p. 272.
[91] *Ibid*, p. 272.
[92] *Ibid*, p. 272.
[93] Brown. *Life against Death*, p. 95.

hostile encounter between Self and Other, Soul and Body, Human and Nature.[94] Aggression is again considered foundational to this extroverted death-instinct insofar as 'the desire to die,' under the sign of fear and repression, is 'transformed into the desire to kill, destroy, or dominate.'[95] In the words of Otto Rank, 'the death fear of the ego is lessened by the killing, the sacrifice of the other; through the death of the other, one buys oneself free from the penalty of dying, of being killed.'[96] Through death's inherent association with 'the negation of life,' the death instinct is transformed under the sign of repression into 'an aggressive principle of negativity.'[97] In 'flight from death,' humanity affirms death through the destruction or, more aptly, the negation of life, an 'aggressive negativism' Brown associates with Goethe's Mephistopheles—the spirit who always denies.[98]Borrowing further from Alexandre Kojève's reading of the Master-Slave dialectic in Hegel's *Phenomenology of Spirit*, this repressed death becomes 'that negativity or nothingness which is extroverted into the action of negating nature and other men.'[99] As with Freud, Brown extends these observations of individual repression into a psychoanalytic interpretation of civilisation. Where, for instance, 'animals let death be a part of life and use the death instinct to die,' humanity instead 'aggressively builds immortal cultures and makes history in order to fight death.'[100]From Brown's perspective, 'civilization' is borne of this 'flight from death' and the anxieties

[94] *Ibid*, p. 96

[95] *Ibid*, p. 96

[96] Otto Rank quoted in Ernest Becker. 'The Nature of Social Evil,' in Daniel Liechty (ed.). *The Ernest Becker Reader*. Seattle: University of Washington Press, 2005, p. 214.

[97] Razinsky. *Freud, Psychoanalysis and Death*, p. 16; Brown. *Life against Death*, p. 97.

[98] Brown. *Life against Death*, p. 97.

[99] *Ibid*, p. 96. Alexandre Kojève. *Introduction to the Reading of Hegel*. New York: Basic Books, 1969.

[100] Brown. *Life against Death*, p. 95.

alectical perspective Brown criticises in *Life against Death*. Brown had earlier problematised this desire for a more 'coherent unity' because of its extirpation of 'death,' the 'principle of independence and separation,' in favour of Life and *Eros*, the 'principle of unification or interdependence.' Indeed, 'Love's Body' has nothing anymore to do with the corporeal fragility and finite particularity of individuals, with 'concrete human beings, with their concrete bodies, their concrete though repressed desires, and their concrete neuroses.'[269] 'Love's body' is now synonymous with the 'one mind and one body' of globalisation. Brown has again attempted to abolish all dualisms through what would now appear to be a thoroughly more political 'fusion;' but, 'Love's body' has only gone to yet another extreme by abandoning independence in favour of interdependence. In one sense, this provides a response to those critics who saw little practical political significance in Brown's 'utopia of *Fusion*.' However, his political transformation has bound selftransformation to the reorganisation of modernity's 'gigantic material processes of intercommunication;' and, this position is hardly anymore of an alternative to that vulgar materialism Reich criticised in his own time through its reduction of personal transformation to a mere 'by-product' of mass social change. More essentially, Brown has not transcended the duality of Life against Death because he has elided his own message that Death as much as Life 'demands satisfaction.'

While I therefore find Brown's thesis problematic for its reinstatement of that fundamental dualism it has sought to overcome—Life against Death—I too find it, from a comparative standpoint, helpful in considering these tensions in Perlman's *Against His-story, Against Leviathan*. Brown's movement between dialectic and 'fusion,' separation and unity, aids in defining the problems with Perlman's exclusive 'celebration of Life,' his politicised rendering of the duality of Life against Death and,

[269] *Ibid*, p. 278.

Where Brown, for example, earlier spoke of self-love through 'self-acceptance, self-activity, [and] self-enjoyment,' and did so even in relation to Spinoza, Brown now increasingly emphasises the radical, transformative possibilities of the dissipation of the individual self.[263] He speaks now without reservation of 'the dissipation of all human subjectivity, the disintegration of the ego or self in "decentered" impersonal, collective structures and processes.'[264] Brown now approves of the subsumption of the individual, and the individual's body, within a greater and more all-encompassing body, which he deigns 'Love's body,' derived from the title for his sequel to *Life against Death*.[265] Brown now upholds Spinoza's claim that 'Men can desire…nothing more excellent for the preservation of their being than that all should so agree in all things that the minds and bodies of all should compose, as it were, one mind and one body.'[266] While this vision of 'one mind and one body' is not devoid of political implications in Spinoza's philosophy, Brown enjoins this position to Negri's postMarxist politics of the 'multitude.'[267] As Brown writes, this political vision of 'one mind and one body' would serve 'to rectify the flaw in modernity; to arrive at one world; to reorganize the gigantic material processes of intercommunication released by modernity into a *coherent unity*; call it Love's body.'[268]

This globalised 'one mind and one body' coupled to the radical 'disintegration of the ego or self in "decentered" impersonal, collective structures and processes' is however precisely the undi-

nio Negri. *The Savage Anomaly: The power of Spinoza's metaphysics and politics*. Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1991.

[263] Cf. Norman O. Brown. 'Apocalypse: The place of mystery in the life of the mind.' *Harper's* May 1961, p. 48.

[264] Brown. 'The Turn to Spinoza,' p. 122.

[265] Norman O. Brown. *Love's Body*. New York: Vintage Books, 1966.

[266] Brown. 'The Turn to Spinoza,' p. 122.

[267] *Ibid*, pp. 118–123; Michael Hardt and Antonio Negri. *Empire*. Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 2000.

[268] Emphasis added. Brown. *Life against Death*, p. 128.

of separation. It is the estranged project of aggressively building 'immortal cultures,' which in Brown's reading not only include all human cultures, but also all acts of human sublimation—'every symbolic and spiritual creation'—so as to stave off such foundational fears and anxieties over death and separation.[101] This is the rather unedifying portrait of culture and civilisation as mass neurosis: a collection of frightened human beings who 'huddle into hordes as a substitute for parents and [who] save themselves from independence, from 'being left alone in the dark."[102]

In that civilisation is an attempt to assuage the fear of death while channelling its repression into the aggressive act of building 'immortal cultures' through this sublimating negation of the body and nature, Brown considers civilisation's 'flight from death' a markedly fractured, contradictory, and inconsistent project. This is because the 'flight from death' is not only an attempt to banish death and separation through the aggressive building of 'immortal cultures' but also, and paradoxically, a constantly frustrated attempt to restore those lost unities and plenitudes of infancy and childhood before the advent of separation, albeit in estranged cultural, political and economic forms. In this sense, the repression of death is also a 'return of the repressed' through 'fixation to the repressed past.'[103] The contradictory desire for reunion with a lost unity is here always thwarted because this 'flight from death' is still predicated upon the rejection of reality, that is, the rejection of death and separation. The constant yearning for the return to a state of plenitude is ultimately fractured and doomed to repeated failure.

Indeed, this dialectic of return and separation is for Brown the very fulcrum of 'history' and 'progress,' a psychoanalytic reading of history that will prove central to the ideas of another important

[101] Gabriel. *Freud and Society*, p. 209.

[102] Brown. *Life against Death*, p. 99. See also Geza Roheim. *The Riddle of the Sphinx: Or, human origins*. London: Hogarth Press, 1934, p. 214.

[103] Brown. *Life against Death*, p. 97.

influence in Perlman's essay: Turner and his definition of the alienated sojourn of the 'Western spirit.'[104] As Brown elucidates, this desire for return to a lost unity and plenitude institutes a 'forward-moving dialectic which is at the same time an effort to recover the past.'[105] Historical progress is in this sense an estranged 'forward-moving dialectic' that tries to recover in the future a plenitude that has been lost but cannot be restored because of the other side of this dialectic that forever frustrates such efforts at restoration: the 'flight from death' and from reality.[106]Humanity is instead delivered over to an endless historical 'restless quest,' a state of 'Faustian discontent,' dissatisfaction, and endless becoming that cannot restore this lost wholeness because the desire for reunion remains still repressive and estranged, built as it is upon the flight from the realities of death and separation.[107]

What is far worse from Brown's perspective is when the aggressive 'extroversion of the death instinct' and this 'restless quest' for an original plenitude are unified. Following Freud's more pessimistic conclusions in *Civilisation and Its Discontents*, Brown refers again to an unconscious desire to bring an end to this 'Faustian discontent,' but the end in question is here achieved through a most aggressive and violent cataclysm, a cataclysm that governed the paranoid atmosphere of Brown's own time: global nuclear annihilation. The 'fear of death' is finally overturned in this aggressive manner by means of the 'peace of death'—the forcible return of all life on earth to its inorganic state.[108]

Brown's 'instinctual dialectic' could here, of course, be considered even more pessimistic than Freud, because at least he proposed the hopeful return of death's 'immortal adversary:' Eros, the force which unifies. However, from Brown's dialectical

[104] Turner. *Beyond Geography*, p. 66.
[105] Brown. *Life against Death*, p. 97.
[106] *Ibid*, p. 97.
[107] *Ibid*, p. 27.
[108] *Ibid*, p. 269.

tions.[261] In equal part, Brown is critical of the patient, processual workings of therapy and introspective self-analysis because they do not encompass that sense of a more immediate, instantaneous and intoxicated gratification of desire that underlies his own Dionysian and apocalyptic vision of 'self-transformation.' As with his dismissal of 'Apollonian consciousness,' Brown has failed to overcome a mind-body dualism. He more simply exalts bodily forms of immanent and immediate 'self-transformation' while depreciating the significance of these patient, 'Apollonian,' and sublimating forms of 'self-transformation' that work through and place great emphasis upon the meaningfulness of dreams, the 'inner world of fantasy,' and 'swift interpretation of the deepest layers of the unconscious.' Indeed, Brown's Dionysian 'great work of self-transformation' resuscitates—in a polymorphously perverse guise—the problems with Reich's fixation upon bodily orgasm and his concurrent failure to walk a delicate balance between inner and outer transformation. Brown's 'utopia of *Fusion*' has by the conclusion of *Life against Death* abandoned the 'dialectical imagination' which had earlier served as the impetus behind his discovery of a 'way out' from the interminable warring conflict of *Eros* and *Thanatos*.

These tensions in Brown's work between dialectic and 'fusion' coalesce in his explicit abandonment of the 'dialectical imagination' of Hegel in the pages of one of his last books, *Apocalypse and/or Metamorphosis*, a title that is itself emblematic of the tension running through Brown's work as a whole: transformation as a final, definitive apocalyptic consummation of desire or the more patient, processual workings of a dialectical metamorphosis. In this work, Brown abandons German Romantic philosophy for Spinoza, a 'turn to Spinoza' inseparable from his increasing sympathies for the post-Marxist political philosophy of Antonio Negri.[262]

[261] *Ibid*, p. 157.
[262] Norman O. Brown. 'The Turn to Spinoza,' in Norman O. Brown. *Apocalypse and/or Metamorphosis*. Berkeley: University of California Press, 1991; Anto-

the re-emergence of this 'Dionysian consciousness' and its 'great work of self-transformation.'[255] To transform the self is to destroy the ordinary, 'mundane' self through 'ecstasy, Bacchic frenzy, transgression of the rational limits of intelligence.'[256]

The problem however with Brown's 'Dionysian consciousness' is that its 'fusion' of opposites only serves to resuscitate the dualisms it has purportedly abolished and overcome.[257] Unwilling to observe any limits, Brown's 'body mysticism' ultimately privileges *Eros* and its search for direct, unmediated union by way of a liberated *unconscious*, and fails on all counts to give any satisfaction to *Thanatos* and its principles of separation and independence. Where Brown exalts 'Dionysian consciousness' he too explicitly and purposefully excludes without any possibility of reconciliation the other half of Nietzsche's duality: 'Apollonian consciousness,' which embodies ideals of self-awareness, self-consciousness, dream and the 'inner world of fantasy.'[258] Similarly, Brown's attempts to overcome a mindbody dualism through acts of Dionysiac exuberance—song, dance, and intoxication—serve only in excluding the importance of psychoanalytic and therapeutic healing through inner contemplation and introspective self-analysis.[259] With his exclusive emphasis upon exuberant and ecstatic acts of 'self-transformation,' Brown condemns psychoanalytic therapy or 'talk from the couch' for its failure 'to direct the libido back to the external world.'[260] Psychoanalysis is conceived as 'sublimation mysticism' in 'flight from the material world and from life,' a spiritual path Brown finds reflected not only in Western traditions of Christian mysticism but also shamanic tradi-

[255] Brown. *Life against Death*, p. 157.

[256] Fuchs. *The Limits of Ferocity*, p. 53.

[257] Christopher M. Gemerchak. 'The Site of Sublimation: From dualism to the dialectic.' *Tijdschrift voor Filosofie*. Vol. 65 No. 3, 2003, pp. 439–463.

[258] Brown, *Life Against Death*, pp. 157–158.

[259] *Ibid*, p. 141.

[260] *Ibid*, pp. 138, 157.

perspective, the life-instinct under the sign of repression remains just as malignant as the death-instinct; and, as Freud proposes, the life-instinct precipitates this extroversion of the death-instinct. As such, it remains just as problematic to speak of the reassertion of *Eros* in response to the malignant negativity of an extroverted death instinct. Instead, Brown proposes a more hopeful possibility in the dialectical reconciliation of life with death, *Eros* with *Thanatos*. Brown is in this sense proposing a movement beyond that antagonistic duality that forms the title of his work: Life against Death. It is no longer a question of denying the death instinct and reasserting *Eros*, but rather the 'abolition of repression' which makes of death 'an aggressive principle of negativity.'[109]

Brown's envisioning of this reconciliation is indebted to the 'dialectical imagination' of German Romantic philosophy, and specifically to the work of Georg Wilhelm Hegel, or, more correctly, Kojève's influential reading of Hegel.[110] As befitting this association with Kojève, Brown's Hegel is not the philosopher of an abstract 'Absolute Spirit', but 'a more human Hegel, Hegel the psychologist, Hegel trying to transcend the traditional paranoia of philosophers and find the essence of man not in thinking but in human desires and human suffering.'[111] In place of an abstract 'Spirit' moving through History towards 'Absolute Spirit,' Brown treats Hegel more as a psychoanalyst whose understanding of the human 'spirit' or 'soul' is always understood in terms of an embodied individual, 'a specific person, with a unique and concrete narrative' rather than that of an abstract mind.[112] Brown adopts, in particular, Hegel's dialectical understanding of 'Spirit,' but this dialectic is now brought within the realm of Freudian psychology. Brown's psychological dialectic is now a tripartite movement from an initial 'primal unity' of

[109] Brown. *Life against Death*, p. 269.

[110] Alexandre Kojève. *Introduction to the Reading of Hegel*. New York: Basic Books, 1969.

[111] Brown. *Life against Death*, p. 95.

[112] Carel. *Life and Death in Freud and Heidegger*, p. 188.

non-separateness in the instinctual integrity of the life and death instincts; differentiation and the fracturing of this 'primal unity' through separation and the antagonistic division of life against death; and, the possibility of a 'higher harmony' that reintegrates and reconciles life with death.[113]

In terms of this 'higher harmony,' Brown refers to a death instinct that is 'reconciled with the life instinct only in a life which is not repressed, which leaves no 'unlived lines' in the human body, the death instinct then being affirmed in a body which is willing to die. And because the body is satisfied, the death instinct no longer drives it to change itself and make history.'[114] 'Man,' Brown continues, would now 'be ready to live instead of making history, to enjoy instead of paying back old scores and debts, and to enter that state of Being which was the goal of his Becoming.'[115] In these terms, the reconciliation of Life with Death entails an acceptance of one's own finiteness and mortality. Instead of aggressively projecting nothingness outwards in the form of an 'aggressive negativism,' this nothingness or 'negation of life' would be accepted and reintegrated, so ending humanity's harried and estranged 'flight from death.'

While Brown associates this transfigured, reconciled Hegelian 'spirit' with a distinctly psychoanalytic consciousness, he too believes psychoanalysis articulates perennial spiritual concerns, particularly of the Western Judaeo-Christian tradition.[116]Challenging the portrait of Freud as a strict atheist, Brown finds that Freud, while very much attentive to the 'substitute-gratifications' of religious belief, still discerns in them 'the immortal desires of the human heart,' desires that are distorted and displaced through re-

[113] Brown. *Life against Death*, pp. 83–84.
[114] *Ibid*, p. 269.
[115] *Ibid*, p. 28.
[116] *Ibid*, p. 24.

ness which does not negate any more,' is not consciousness as such, but a liberated *unconscious* because, as both Freud and Marcuse also recognised—with very divergent conclusions—'in the id [the unconscious] there is no negation, only affirmation and eternity.'[249] 'Dionysian consciousness' reclaims the lost unities of the unconscious and thus restores access to the 'noumenal' ground of reality that ordinary consciousness has concealed by means of its constitutive divisions between Self and Other, Body and Soul.[250] The overflowing of the 'Dionysian consciousness' is the 'shattering of the *principium individuationis*' through which the 'individual forgets himself completely' and is abandoned to a 'vision of mystical Oneness' and 'universal harmony,' wherein 'all the rigid, hostile walls which either necessity or despotism erected between men are shattered.'[251]

For Brown's 'Dionysian consciousness,' 'there are no limits' since the limit has been extinguished in the abolition of all oppositions and dualities.[252] Even though Brown expresses concern that an unrestrained unconscious—what he calls the 'Dionysian witches' brew'—leaves open the excesses of the Marquis de Sade, the politics of Hitler, and Nietzsche's 'horrible mixture of sensuality and cruelty,' this Dionysian freedom is still upheld as the ideal for the resurrected body unbound from repression.[253] 'Dionysian consciousness' reclaims the eroticism of the polymorphously perverse body, and this reclamation is for Brown made possible through 'uninhibited erotic fulfilment.'[254] The imbrication of song, dance, and intoxication are therefore considered equally pivotal to

[249] Fuchs. *The Limits of Ferocity*, p. 53.
[250] *Ibid*, p. 53.
[251] Friedrich Nietzsche. *The Birth of Tragedy & The Genealogy of Morals*. New York: Anchor Books, 1956, pp. 22–23.
[252] Fuchs. *The Limits of Ferocity*, p. 58.
[253] Brown. *Life against Death*, p. 158. For a critique of the eroticisation of violence in Brown's work, see chapter four in Fuchs. *The Limits of Ferocity*, pp. 40–52.
[254] *Ibid*, p. 61.

that equates resurrection with denial of the human condition, as Nirvana does.'[243] As Freud himself suggests, the 'Nirvana principle' is not a sign of the acceptance of death and human mortality but rather a '"death-wish."'[244]

Brown's 'utopia of *Fusion*' has by way of a different, circuitous route arrived back at Marcuse's utopia of *Eros* with its problematic elision of death, finitude and mortality in favour of a more profound and primordial instinctual gratification—pure being and 'absolute fulfilment' without time and becoming.[245] Brown's 'fusion' has again failed to reconcile the opposition of Life against Death by repudiating the reality of death and separation, and attempting to overcome the 'labour of the Negative.' What I find of particular significance is how this emphasis upon 'fusion' and the restoration of a more perfect unity of being in an originary 'state of nature' forces Brown into a very particular—and still dualistic—definition of the self and self-transformation. If exuberant union with the world serves as the aspiration for a repressed humanity, Brown too is compelled to define self-transformation and the fully-realised self in equally exuberant terms.

On the basis of his 'utopia of *Fusion*,' Brown refers to the true 'great work of self-transformation' as the emergence of a 'Dionysian consciousness,' a term borrowed expressly from Friedrich Nietzsche's *The Birth of Tragedy*.[246] It is a state devoid of the boundaries and divisions between Body and Soul, Self and Other. It is a consciousness 'which does not observe the limit, but overflows.'[247] In confirmation of his attempts to overcome the 'labour of the Negative,' Brown now speaks of a 'consciousness which *does not negate any more*.'[248] Though, of course 'conscious-

[243] Fuchs. *The Limits of Ferocity*, p. 61.
[244] Torgovnick. *Primitive Passions*, p. 15.
[245] Fuchs. *The Limits of Ferocity*, p. 62.
[246] Brown. *Life against Death*, p. 158.
[247] *Ibid*, p. 270.
[248] *Ibid*, p. 270.

pression, neurosis, and sublimation.[117] Insofar as these spiritual, sublimated longings of the 'human heart' remain affirmations of the human 'spirit,' albeit distorted and frustrated, Brown concludes his vision of dialectical reconciliation between life and death with a religious symbolism drawn explicitly from Christianity: 'the resurrection of the body.'[118]

For Brown, the Christian tradition is a longing for the resurrected body, for the New Life in which 'the body will rise again, all of the body, the identical body, the entire body.'[119] While Brown attends to its religious identification with an otherworldly resurrection, he too discerns in this a trace of 'the immortal desires of the human heart' for an embodied life reconciled with death. Indeed, looking beyond psychoanalysis, Brown takes consideration of Christian mystics and seers within the Western esoteric tradition, such as Jacob Boehme and William Blake, who propose an embodied spirituality of the resurrection, or 'body mysticism' 'which stays with life, which is the body, and seeks to transform and perfect it.'[120] Brown thus concludes *Life against Death* with intimations of a psychic-spiritual apocalypse, a New Life born of this 'resurrection' which would serve to stave off the potential threat

[117] *Ibid*, p. 24. On Freud's relationship to religion and spirituality, see Hewitt. *Freud on Religion*. On Freud's relationship to Judaism, see Emanuel Rice. *Freud and Moses: The long journey home*. Albany: State University of New York Press, 1990. On Freud's parallels with the Kabbalah and Jewish esoteric traditions, see David Bakan. *Sigmund Freud and the Jewish Mystical Tradition*. Boston: Beacon Press, 1975. For Freud's interest in ancient Egyptian magical practices and mythology, see Robert W. Rieber. *Freud on Interpretation: The ancient magical Egyptian and Jewish traditions*. New York: Springer, 2012. On Freud's atheism, see Peter Gay. *A Godless Jew: Freud, atheism, and the making of psychoanalysis*. New Haven: Yale University Press, 1987.
[118] Brown. *Life against Death*, p. 269.
[119] *Ibid*, p. 271. For an earlier psychoanalytic account of the 'resurrection' see Pamela Cooper-White. '"The Power that Beautifies and Destroys": Sabina Spielrein and "Destruction as a cause of coming into being."' *Pastoral Psychology*. Vol. 64 No. 2, 2015, pp. 259–278.
[120] Brown. *Life against Death*, p. 271.

of another apocalypse that offers only annihilation and the 'peace of death.'

As this discussion has highlighted, the relationship between Life and Death, and their multivalent associations, is a defining feature of Brown's thesis. Their dialectical relationship is the hinge on which Brown draws together the problems of subjection and repression with his message of 'self-liberation' through 'resurrection,' while also proving the foundation for an attempted dialogue between psychoanalysis and Western esoteric spirituality. To return at this point to *Against His-story, Against Leviathan*, Perlman's text does not, as already noted, adhere to Brown's concerns with the psychoanalytic definition of the Life and Death instincts. Although Perlman may not refer explicitly to Brown's thesis, his text nonetheless encompasses its bold symbolism—the dualistic battle between Life and Death—and as I seek to explore in what follows, this dualism holds significance for a critical interpretation of Perlman's understanding of 'self-liberation.' The dualistic war between Life and Death is in Perlman's work a direct adjunct of the structuring politico-spiritual antagonism that guides his vision: the 'state of nature,' embodiment of Life set against Leviathan, representative of Death. Life is a synonym for the 'state of nature' as well as the individual's 'living spirit,' whereas Death is synonymous with 'Leviathan's entrails' and its 'armor,' that machinic, undead 'carcass of a worm' that fills the 'insides' of its *zeks* with 'dead things, with Leviathan's substance.'[121]

Indeed, this warring antagonism between Life and Death, 'state of nature' and Leviathan is a site for some of the most dualistic proclamations in *Against His-story, Against Leviathan.* Invoking that other structurally significant Zoroastrian inspired duality between Light and Dark, Perlman writes, 'since death is to life as Night is to Day, when Death's realm expands, Life's contracts.'[122]

[121] Perlman. *Against His-story, Against Leviathan*, p. 27.

[122] *Ibid*, p. 46.

the 'Nirvana principle' is in its Freudian definition the desire for homeostasis—the cessation rather than the increase of creative and pleasurable tension.[239] As part of his own vision of 'resurrection' and its mystical impulse, Brown finds in this 'Nirvana principle' a perfect embodiment of negativity at rest or at peace with itself, a satisfied negativity unbound from an interminable becoming and the restless strivings of the Hegelian 'labour of the Negative.' Brown's sympathy for this 'Nirvana principle' is so problematic because it possesses far more malign connotations in Freudian psychoanalysis. As Brown tentatively acknowledges, the 'Nirvana principle' does not so much amount to an acceptance of death and mortality, but rather the eroticisation of death: 'a morbid wish to die, a wish to regress to the prenatal state before life (and separation) began, to the mother's womb.'[240] The 'Nirvana Principle' is enjoined with Freud's suspicion towards the religious 'oceanic feeling,' and to those '"oceanic" stages of human development, by which he meant fetal, infantile, or what he saw as "regressive" states in which individuals do not perceive the boundaries of the self and the inevitability of subject-object relations.'[241] In this desire to return to a state of prior instinctual satisfaction, Brown's 'fusion' attests to an escape from death and separation, a 'fixation' to 'the first stages of life (and still more ante-natal life) when one was the omnipotent, protected being, able to enjoy delightful egocentric pleasures, and, further, the desire never to leave that stage, *never to grow old, nor face change and death.*'[242] The 'Nirvana Principle' does not in this sense provide a 'way out' from repression because 'it is a problematic sense of death

[239] Jean Laplanche and Jean-Bertrand Pontalis. *The Language of Psychoanalysis*. London: Hogarth Press, 1973, pp. 272–273.

[240] Brown. *Life against Death*, p. 107; Laplanche and Pontalis. *The Language of Psychoanalysis*, p. 273.

[241] Torgovnick. *Primitive Passions*, p. 15.

[242] Emphasis added. Barbara Low. *Psycho-analysis: A brief account of the Freudian theory*. London: George Allen & Unwin, 1920, p. 74.

out of language, out of reason, and into madness.'[233] The psychical repudiation of the 'work of the Negative' is not liberation, but 'psychotic confusion.'[234]

Indeed, as Fuchs notes, Brown's emphasis upon 'fusion' concludes in his 'sentimentalizing of mental illness.'[235] With his wish 'to abolish every dualism' through monistic 'fusion' and his subsequent idealisation of an experience of 'oneness with the world,' Brown is led to conclude that schizophrenia perfectly embodies this state of 'oneness' because for the schizophrenic 'what happens to the person's own body is identified with what happens in the universe.'[236] There is furthermore an element of 'infantilism' in Brown's desire to restore the lost unity of opposites in infancy.[237] Insofar as Brown has defined history as humanity's 'instinct determined fixation to the repressed past' and to the lost plenitudes of infancy, there is little sense that Brown's overt attempts to restore these lost unities are in some way an alternative or even solution to this repressed 'fixation.' If anything, this infantilism is a symptom of such a 'fixation to the repressed past.' As numerous commentators have remarked, Brown's 'fusion' of opposites hardly provides evidence of a radical caesurae with the interminable conflict of the life and death instincts because there is here again an express 'incapacity to accept separation, individuality and death,' and it is exactly this incapacity that Brown defines as the problem and not as the 'way out.'[238]

Brown's positive reappraisal of the 'Nirvana principle' is further noteworthy in this context. Bound to the death drive,

[233] *Ibid*, pp. 467–468.

[234] Kristeva. 'Holbein's Dead Christ,' p. 322.

[235] Fuchs. *The Limits of Ferocity*, p. 61.

[236] *Ibid*, p. 61.

[237] Brown. *Life against Death*, p. 45, 97.

[238] Theodore Roszak. 'Professor Dionysus.' *New Politics* Spring 1966, p. 123; Herbert Marcuse. 'Love Mystified: A critique of Norman O. Brown.' *Commentary* Volume 43 Number 2, February 1967, pp. 71–75; Christopher Lasch. *The Minimal Self: Psychic survival in troubles times*. London: Pan Books. 1985, pp. 239–240.

Speaking elsewhere of the undead carcass that is Leviathan, Perlman declares, 'From the vantage point of Death, all Life is an aberration. The languages of the two protagonists are mutually unintelligible. The very vocabularies are untranslatable.'[123] While this particular statement is again suggestive of Perlman's forced closure of dialogue with those 'inside' Leviathan—of 'untranslatable' and 'unintelligible' vocabularies—it too indicates a structurally significant scission between Life and Death without possibility of reconciliation because Life exists 'outside' in the 'state of nature,' whereas Death belongs entirely to 'Leviathan's entrails.'

Through this politico-spiritual symbolism, there would not actually appear a basis in Perlman's work for Brown's message of reconciliation between Life and Death. This dualism in Perlman's politico-spiritual 'vision' is not however derived from any sort of instinctual dualism in a Freudian sense. Perlman's dualism has no relationship to Freud's duality of the life and death instincts. This is because Freud's theory of the instincts seeks to comprehend the inherent ambivalence and internal conflicts of the human *psyche* whereas Perlman's dualistic position is derived—in a rather paradoxical sense—from his strict allegiance to a Reichian psychological monism. In repeating Reich's conception of an originally beneficent human nature—a 'Biologic core' or inner 'state of nature'—Perlman is forced to conclude that any internal conflict in the human *psyche* is really only a consequence of an external constraint that the individual has internalised. This internalised constraint is, of course, Leviathan's morbid and deathly 'armor;' and, this 'armor' is so associable with death because it is conceived as 'the negation of life' and the consequent repression of the 'individual's living spirit.'

There is definitely a 'deep conflict' in Perlman's vision of the war of Life against Death, but, unlike Freud and Brown, there is

[123] *Ibid*, p. 252.

no basis at all in his dualistic vision for a 'deep conflict in human nature itself.' Perlman's vision of Life against Death is extremely dualistic but its Reichian inspired psychological monism is 'capable of supporting only the most placid view of our inner life.' Internal conflict may still exist, but this conflict comes from without, not from within; internal discord and disturbance always and in the last instance derives from Leviathan's repressive 'armor.' In a restatement of Reich's psycho-politics, the 'armoring' of the individual is again reduced to no more than a 'congealed social process,' or, in its primitivist form, the consequence of 'four to six thousand years of authoritarian mechanistic civilisation.' 'Armoring' is nothing more than social, political and economic 'domestication'—a key term within primitivism—a process imposed from without so as to make individuals serviceable components of Leviathan.[124]

In turn, Perlman recapitulates the inherent problems with this Reichian monism. If 'armoring' is a 'congealed social process,' this theory cannot successfully account for the transition from an original 'state of nature' to this 'armored' condition within civilisation because this original plenitude, by the primitivist's own account, contains no repressive social structures to impose upon and so pervert the individual.[125] The primitivist stance must instead fall back upon a historical and economic determinism that locates this deformation of consciousness within developmental changes in the ma-

[124] 'The tame, the domesticated, try to monopolize the word freedom; they'd like to apply it to their own condition. They apply the word "wild" to the free. But it is another public secret that the tame, the domesticated, occasionally become wild but are never free so long as they remain in their pens.' Perlman. *Against History, Against Leviathan*, p. 7. This image of caged animals is not rhetoric. It derives from the primitivist assumption that humans domesticated themselves when they domesticated the natural world. See, for example, John Zerzan's discussion of agriculture in Zerzan. *Elements of Refusal*, pp. 73–87.

[125] For a work that does take account of the existence of oppressive social practices within human prehistory, see Kent Flannery and Joyce Marcus. *The Creation of Inequality: How our prehistoric ancestors set the stage for monarchy, slavery, and empire*. Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 2012.

dualistic extreme in this ideal of re-fusion, but has also failed to acknowledge that the 'force of Eros' which 'binds together' is not in Freud's work 'a settled state or a drive to homogeneity;' the 'aliveness' and ultimate 'paradox' of Eros is its 'disruption of intercourse between 'vitally different' aspects of oneself, other experiences, or ideas.'[229]

Brown also fails to account for Kristeva's reading of a Hegelian 'work of the negative' in relation to the Judaeo-Christian image of the 'resurrection:' that the internal 'splittings' or negations of the self are also the 'essential dramas that are internal to the becoming of each and every subject.' These negations are here essential to Kristeva's definition of the 'resurrection.' There is here no basis for 'return' to a state of instinctual satisfaction and 'fusion' that would amount to the restoration of a condition of non-separateness between Life and Death, Body and Soul. 'Resurrection' implies an ability to come to terms with the 'destructive anguish' of separation, rupture and discontinuity. It is not the attempt to master an absence, but 'live more easily with it.'[230] Still, Kristeva's work on the 'semiotic'—a 'time or a space logically and chronologically prior to the symbolic' world of language and 'social norms'—suggests that the 'becoming of each and every subject' is indeed a 'fragile process' that cannot simply and irrevocably shut off that which is 'logically and chronologically prior to the symbolic.'[231] Though, distinct from Brown's position, Kristeva recognises that a '"return" to the semiotic is impossible.'[232] There is no suggestion of 'restoring the unity of opposites that existed in childhood and exists in animals.' For Kristeva, 'The work of the negativity of the semiotic can only be understood from the position of the symbolic, and anything resembling a "return" to the semiotic would take the subject

[229] Nicola Abel-Hirsch. *Eros*. Cambridge: Icon Books, 2001, p. 64.

[230] Razinsky. *Freud, Psychoanalysis and Death*, p. 273.

[231] Kramer. 'On Negativity in *Revolution in Poetic Language*,' p. 467.

[232] *Ibid*, p. 468.

ing the 'placid view of our inner life' represented in a philosophical and psychological monism, as if monism were a solution to the interminable dialectical interplay of Life and Death he has sought to resolve.[222] While Brown, for instance, refers to the German Romantic's hope for a 'higher harmony' through the dialectical reconciliation of life with death, he refers more often to the 'return' to the instinctual integrity of infancy. He speaks of 'restoring the unity of opposites that existed in childhood and exists in animals.'[223] He wants 'to recover the body of infancy.'[224]Through reference to a Judaeo-Christian symbolism, Brown speaks now of a return to the 'state of nature,' the 'Garden of Eden,' because 'in infancy he [Man] tasted the fruit of the tree of life, and knows that it is good, and never forgets.'[225]

In place of a 'higher harmony,' there is here more emphasis upon returning to a state of instinctual and monistic 'fusion,' where there is no opposition between Life and Death, much as there is no opposition of Self and Other, Body and Soul. There is here more of that 'insatiable longing to regain the perfection experienced at the outset of life, before the differentiation between subject and outside world.'[226] From Brown's dialectical perspective, this ardent wish 'to abolish every dualism' through monistic 'fusion' is not a sign of the end of repression.[227] This 'fusion' is from his own dialectical standpoint repressive much as it is still implicitly dualistic because this longing for a state of pure instinctual satisfaction sides with *Eros* and thus remains in 'flight from death' by means of a failure to accept the reality of death: finitude, separation, particularity and independence.[228] In another sense, Brown has not only gone to a

[222] Fuchs. *The Limits of Ferocity*, p. 65.
[223] Brown. *Life against Death*, p. 32, 82.
[224] *Ibid*, p. 52.
[225] *Ibid*, p. 82.
[226] Chasseguet-Smirgel and Grunberger. *Freud or Reich*, p. 13.
[227] Brown. *Life against Death*, p. 55.
[228] *Ibid*, p. 55.

terial conditions of production. Indeed, Perlman is forced to repeat this economic determinism, despite his own misgivings towards it, when he binds the origins of the 'armoring' of the self to the building of irrigation canals in ancient Sumeria.[126]

Of course, Perlman's battle between Life and Death might here be considered nothing more than a potent symbolic descriptor for that overarching conflict in his work between the 'state of nature' and Leviathan. Brown's title—*Life against Death*—has far more symbolic import for Perlman than the specific content and concerns of this 'very informative book.' Certainly, many of those radical thinkers Perlman references, such as Marx and Camatte, did not fail to recognise the symbolic efficacy of such Marxian concepts as 'dead labour,' and its powerful evocation of the inherent hostility between Capital and living human beings.[127] However, as I would like to suggest, Perlman's continued allegiance to this opposition of Life against Death is not simply the repudiation of a Leviathanic 'armor' that symbolically connotes the 'negation of life.' This inherent antagonistic dualism also excises death from Perlman's politico-spiritual 'vision' and his definition of the 'individual's living spirit.'

As discussed in part one of this thesis, Perlman's underlying Zoroastrian dualism with its further investment in a Judaeo-Christian apocalyptic catastrophism is always a passage from one negative element—Night, Dark, Death—to a positive element—Day, Light, Life. In all these instances, this negative force is not integrated or accepted but expunged from the world.[128] Again, this banishment of night, darkness and death could be simply equated with Perlman's assault on Leviathan; though, in saying this, the Judaeo-Christian apocalyptic tradition that Perlman draws upon

[126] Perlman. *Against His-story, Against Leviathan*, pp. 17–19.
[127] On the theme of Life against Death in Marx, see David Hawkes. *Ideology, Second Edition*. London and New York: Routledge, 2003, pp. 95–105. For Camatte's rendering of the death drive in relation to capital, see Camatte. *The Wandering of Humanity*, p. 12.
[128] See in this thesis, pp. 50–51.

in his work is rather emphatic in its banishment of death and human suffering. Apocalyptic catastrophism is a belief that the end times 'will indeed change everything.'[129] As Cohn details, 'What lies ahead, at the end of time, is a state from which every imperfection will have been eliminated; a world where everyone will live for ever in peace that nothing could disturb; an eternity when history will have ceased and nothing more can happen.'[130] Regardless of whether Perlman actually supports this image of eternity in a state of perpetual happiness, the apocalyptic tradition he draws from is most emphatic in its denial of death.

Still, there are other indications in Perlman's essay where this apocalyptic excision of Death from Life is not so clearly apparent.[131] Perlman, for instance, makes reference to those archaic societies where death is not feared because it is considered 'an inseparable part of Life; it is Life's end.'[132] Though, here again, death understood as 'Life's end' does not signify an acceptance of death as the 'negation of life.' Perlman's understanding of human mortality better suggests the classic perspective of Epicurus, who remedies the human fear of death with the belief that death '*is nothing to us*, seeing that when we exist death is not present, and when death is present we do not exist.'[133] There is here no fear of death because death is 'phenomenologically not part of life.'[134] Death has no presence in life; it is only 'Life's end,' an ending that comes only when we cease to live and is, as such, 'nothing to us' and nothing to be feared.

[129] Norman Cohn. 'How Time Acquired a Consummation,' in Malcolm Bull (ed.). *Apocalypse Theory and the Ends of the World*. Oxford: Blackwell Publishers, 1995, p. 29.

[130] *Ibid*, pp. 29–30.

[131] Perlman. *Against His-story, Against Leviathan*, p. 110.

[132] *Ibid*, p. 33.

[133] Razinsky. *Freud, Psychoanalysis and Death*, p. 266.

[134] *Ibid*, p. 266.

one mind and one body.'[218] It is a bond predicated upon 'unifying our body with other bodies in the world in active interaction.'[219] While this immanent unity may certainly '*affirm* a world of love and pleasure,' a world in Brown's reading coincidental with the full realisation of *Eros*, the realisation of this unity in 'the one infinite and eternal substance' remains at the expense or exclusion of the finitude of death. Drawing on Hegel's critique of Spinoza, Brown recognises that within Spinoza's pantheistic 'Substance,' 'death' and finite particularity are expelled. As Hegel argues, this is because the 'substance is only pure being and simple identity, excluding all negation;' as such, 'Spinoza cannot show the necessity of there being particular things at all; the finite aspect of the universe remains inexplicable and at best contingent.'[220] As Brown further elaborates, 'individuals are reduced to mere modes in the one infinite and eternal substance of Spinoza,' insofar as 'death'—'the seed of passing away'—introduces into the world that which is finite and particular, and thus grants individuals a certain 'precious ontological uniqueness.'[221] In terms of Brown's dialectical problematic, there is the suggestion that a philosophy of Life, *Eros* and immanence does not give 'satisfaction' to *Thanatos* because of this erasure of 'the principle of separation or independence.'

The problematic implications of this exclusive privileging of *Eros* extend moreover into Brown's text with its own attendant ambiguities. For all his attentiveness to Freud's 'complex grasp of the difficulty of being,' and to the subtle interactions of the Hegelian dialectic, Brown will evade this 'difficulty of being' by recuperat-

[218] Brown. *Life against Death*, p. 128. See also Gunnar Skirbekk and Nils Gilje. *A History of Western Thought: From Ancient Greece to the Twentieth Century*. London and New York: Routledge, 2000, pp. 208–209.

[219] Brown. *Life against Death*, p. 52.

[220] Yirmiahu Yovel. *Spinoza and Other Heretics: Adventures in immanence, vol. 2*. Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1989, pp. 31–32.

[221] Brown. *Life against Death*, p. 98.

rowing from the religious symbolism of the Judaeo-Christian tradition, Kristeva also speaks of a 'resurrection' through the workings of this negativity, of a 'fundamental and psychically necessary discontinuity.'[215] These negations and splittings precipitate a 'destructive anguish,' but they also remain 'essential dramas that are internal to the becoming of each and every subject.'[216] Here then is a 'labour of the Negative' not directed outwards at the world, but rather a negativity that is a condition for human individuation and autonomy.

As a consequence of this dialectical perspective and the unmooring of 'death' from exclusive associations with a malignant and externally violent 'aggressive negativism,' to proclaim the 'celebration of Life' and Eros—'principle of unification or interdependence'—remains not simply trivial and insipid, but also potentially dismissive of the finite individual because of this forced excision of death—the 'principle of separation or independence.' Without this internal 'labour of the Negative' and the acceptance of human finitude, separation and independence are stifled by means of the individual's subsumption within the greater, immanent unity of Life or *Eros*. Brown himself equates this subsumption of the individual within the immanent unity of Life with the pantheism of Baruch Spinoza. On the basis of Brown's Hegelian and Freudian reading, Spinoza's pantheism is the total fulfilment of *Eros*: 'to unite with the world in pleasure.'[217] In social, political, and economic terms, Spinoza founds on the basis of this pantheistic monism a social bond or union through which 'the minds and bodies of all should compose, as it were,

[215] *Ibid*, p. 321.

[216] *Ibid*, p. 322.

[217] Brown. *Life against Death*, p. 51. On corollaries between Freud and Spinoza, see Alfred I. Tauber. *Freud, The Reluctant Philosopher*. Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2010, pp. 217–219.

These issues with Perlman's elision of death carry over into his discussion of mythology. This is no where more pronounced than in his mythological vision of the Goddess or 'Mother Earth' in the forms of Cybele, Demeter, and Isis. In relation to the Goddess, Perlman references 'celebrations of Nature's renewal, [and] rites enacting the death and rebirth of vegetation.'[135] Despite these images of mythical cyclicity and the movement between life, death, and rebirth, Perlman's vision of 'regeneration' always falls back upon 'celebrations of life.'[136] This ambiguity is captured elsewhere in a commentary upon the figure of the son-consort within Goddess mythology. Considering the symbolic similarities between the son-consort and Jesus Christ—a 'crucified son' who 'goes under the ground and then rises up'—Perlman maintains that by means of this sacrifice, 'death is overcome, its finality is taken away, it is reduced to the stage that proceeds renewal.'[137] There is here undoubtedly a more reconciliatory message in this reading of life, death and rebirth, a message that even draws upon a rather idiosyncratic reading of Jesus Christ's 'resurrection.' Ultimately however, in this vision of renewal 'death is overcome' and made subordinate to the celebration of Life's ceaseless, cyclical rhythms.

Indeed, Perlman's vision of the Goddess or 'Mother Earth' is too often wrought with a superficial sentimentality. Perlman's 'Mother Earth' is certainly not the Hindu goddess Kali, who devours life as much as she nurtures it.[138] Perlman's 'Mother Earth' is far removed from the ambivalent Dark/Light Mother discussed in the work of Marija Gimbutas.[139] Perlman's 'Mother Earth' is in all instances

[135] Perlman. *Against His-story, Against Leviathan*, p. 110.

[136] *Ibid*, p. 12.

[137] *Ibid*, p. 110.

[138] Ajit Mookerjee. *Kali: The feminine force*. Rochester: Destiny Books, 1988, p. 83; Lindel BarkerRevell. *The Goddess: Myths and stories*. Sydney: Lansdowne Publishing, 1997, pp. 94–97.

[139] Marija Gimbutas. *The Language of the Goddess*. New York: HarperCollins Publishers, 1991, pp. 187–275.

never the Destroyer of Life, only ever the Creator of Life. Death, pain, anguish, and suffering are decidedly absent from Perlman's vision of 'Mother Earth' and the natural world.[140] Death and suffering are instead consistently projected onto that excrescent, 'armored' Leviathan who aggressively rends 'Mother Earth' asunder with 'spears and wheels and other technological implements.' From Perlman's primitivist perspective, Leviathan is the true harbinger of Death with its unremitting war against Nature, its extermination of entire species, and its litany of 'tortures, massacres, poisonings, manipulations, [and] despoliations.' The 'state of nature,' guarded over by 'Mother Earth' is rather, in Perlman's telling depiction, a 'community of freedoms,' where death is a 'gift' given to sustain the 'freedom' of another creature.[141] While this 'community of freedoms' is an evocative image with its ecological portrait of nature as an interconnected web of life, this image of death as a 'gift' also trivialises and reduces to insignificance the place of death and suffering in life. To follow the melancholiac suggestions of William James, this 'systematic healthymindedness' is a failure 'to accord to sorrow, pain, and death any positive and active attention whatever.'[142] Perlman focuses his attention solely upon the greater totality of Life, and fails in his celebration of this totality to turn his attention to the 'small spatial scale' of Nature's interactions, and to the sufferings that befall those victims whose struggle for life in the face of death could only in the crudest sense be called a 'gift.'[143]

Further to these problems, Perlman's understanding of mythology suggests a constitutive attempt to evade or, as he phrases it, 'overcome' death. Through Perlman's allegiance to an Eliadean definition of myth as escape from the 'terror of history,' he too recap-

[140] For an alternative conception of the goddess, see Mary Condren. *The Serpent and the Goddess: Women, religion and power in Celtic England*. New York: HarperCollins Publishers, 1989, p. 209.

[141] Perlman. *Against His-story, Against Leviathan*, p. 7.

[142] James. *The Varieties of Religious Experience*, pp. 170–171.

[143] *Ibid*, p. 170.

Negative' is not then denied or extinguished, but is considered integral to Brown's message of personal 'resurrection.'[210]

From the perspective of Brown's Freudian reading of a 'more human Hegel,' this 'labour of the Negative' is not simply the enemy of Life. If death encompasses finitude, individuality and 'precious ontological uniqueness,' so too might this 'labour of the Negative' be considered integral to the processes of human individuation, and in a manner that contributes to Brown's vision of a personal 'resurrection'—of a return to life through death, through the serious, painful, and patient workings of this negativity. Indeed, Brown is not alone in this reading of Hegel's 'labour of the Negative.' The Lacanian psychoanalyst Julia Kristeva has notably drawn comparisons between Hegel's 'work of the negative' and those psychoanalytic insights into an internal, psychical negativity or discontinuity which serves as 'an indispensable condition for autonomy.'[211] It is itself part of Kristeva's general attempts to rethink Hegel's understanding of negativity without the necessity of Hegel's 'ultimate resolution of all differences in Absolute Spirit, or in the enclosed, self-contained idealist system Hegel set forth.'[212] As Kristeva maintains, human autonomy and individuation consists in 'a series of 'splittings,' or negations: 'birth, weaning, separation, frustration, [and] castration.'[213] Following Hegel's description of the painfulness, seriousness, and patience entailed by the 'work of the Negative,' Kristeva notes how these 'splittings' or negations prove a 'source of exorbitant and destructive anguish.'[214] However, bor-

[210] For a contemporary re-evaluation of Hegel's 'labor of the Negative,' see Jean-Luc Nancy. *Hegel: The restlessness of the negative*. Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 2002.

[211] Julia Kristeva. 'Holbein's Dead Christ,' in Donald Capps (ed.). *Freud and Freudians on Religion: A reader*. New Haven & London: Yale University Press, 2001, p. 322.

[212] Sina Kramer. 'On Negativity in *Revolution in Poetic Language*.' *Continental Philosophy Review*. Vol. 46 No. 3, 2013, pp. 466–467.

[213] Kristeva. 'Holbein's Dead Christ,' p. 322.

[214] *Ibid*, p. 322.

let Eros seek union and let death keep separateness.'[205] His vision of 'resurrection' always implies 'selfacceptance, self-activity, self-enjoyment.'[206]

Of course, Brown also details the potential morbidity of this 'principle of separation or independence' inherent to the death instinct. On the basis of the repression of death, this separation and independence of the individual self can also be expressed in the form of a hostile encounter of Self against Other, Soul against Body wherein death is extroverted in the form of 'an aggressive principle of negativity' or 'aggressive negativism.' Certainly, Hegel's 'philosophy of death' to which Brown refers is replete with this understanding of a 'free and self-conscious' individuality whose world is formed through the destructive struggles of an abyssal 'Nothingness which manifests itself as negative or creative action.'[207] Hegel's Judaeo-Christian vision of humanity—of 'Man's *liberty*, *historicity*, and *individuality*'—is also a vision of a restless negativity and inexorable becoming where 'Man works and fights; he transforms the given; he transforms Nature and in destroying it he creates a world, a world which was not.'[208] Brown is also however proposing the dialectical reconciliation of life with death, and this reconciliation would not necessarily extinguish this negativity and nothingness; this reconciliation would rather deprive this negativity of its destructive malignancy. As Brown quotes approvingly from Hegel's *Phenomenology of Spirit*: 'the life and knowledge of God may doubtless be described as love playing with itself, but this idea sinks into triviality, if the seriousness, the pain, the patience, and the labour of the Negative are omitted.'[209]This 'labour of the

[205] *Ibid*, p. 99.
[206] *Ibid*, p. 53.
[207] Bataille. 'Hegel, Death and Sacrifice,' p. 10.
[208] *Ibid*, p. 10–11.
[209] Brown. *Life against Death*, p. 269.

tures the mythic attempt to escape from the finality of death insofar as the awareness of death asserts life's finite, unidirectional and 'irreversible nature.'[144] Indeed, this is exactly the point that Turner emphasises in his Eliadean reading of myth, a reading that is the foundation for Perlman's essay: living mythologies with their recurrent, 'changeless patterns' offer means of escaping from the terror of history and the terror of death, 'the existential loneliness of the linear march of events towards annihilation.' While Turner notes how myth can indeed express the 'darker tides of existence,' myth's fundamental message of cyclical renewal is ultimately a means of evading 'the passage of time' and 'the linear march of events towards annihilation' through the recurrent celebration of 'the joy and play of life processes.'[145] The opposition of Life against Death in Perlman's work thus begins to assume greater substance because there is here a suggestion that Perlman is not simply opposed to the terror of a morbid and death-dealing Leviathan, but is also in flight from the terrors of annihilation and these 'darker tides of existence.'

That Perlman's elision of the 'darker tides of existence' has particular bearing upon his conception of the self and 'self-liberation' is captured elsewhere in his reading of Jean-Paul Sartre's existential philosophy. A major influence in Perlman's life and thought, Sartre's existential philosophy is introduced in his essay during his key discussion of the 'armouring' of the *zek*.[146] For Perlman, human freedom is realised and made manifest only in a life that is not 'determined by anything beyond its own nature or being.'[147] *Zeks* are however robbed of this radical freedom because they are '*not* determined by their own nature or being, by their own choices or wishes' insofar as 'the tasks they spend their days on are not

[144] Razinsky. *Freud, Psychoanalysis and Death*, p. 258.
[145] Turner. *Beyond Geography*, p. 16.
[146] On this allegiance to Sartrean existentialism, see Perlman. *Having Little, Being Much*, p. 139; Perlman. *Anti-Semitism and the Beirut Pogrom*, p. 3, 20.
[147] Perlman. *Against His-story, Against Leviathan*, p. 38.

their own.'[148] Through this physical restriction of an individual's 'choices or wishes,' Perlman perceives in this a process of internal restriction concurrent with the repressive process of 'armouring.' As Perlman writes, the freedom to realise one's 'nature or being' and one's 'choices or wishes' is so severely curtailed that freedom 'shrinks to a mere potentiality. And potentiality, Sartre will point out, is Nothing.'[149] From this Sartrean perspective on human freedom, those who do not act on their human potential—as the creators of their own meaning or value in the world—are not only slaves to the social, political, and economic order they serve, but their lives are also, in a far more disparaging sense, naughted of value and meaning—these *zeks* are nobodies, insignificant persons, and mediocrities who prefer to adopt the roles, values, and meanings of the existent order of things.[150] *Zeks* are themselves 'Nothing;' they are dead to the realisation of their human potential for freedom because they invest themselves in the 'tasks' that have been set for them instead of creating their own 'tasks' or projects.

Perlman's work essentially recapitulates the 'optimistic toughness' of Sartre's militant rendering of existential philosophy; existentialism as the idealisation of commitment, action, and decision in the world—and, certainly, these are ideals trumpeted throughout the pages of *Against His-story, Against Leviathan.*[151] As Sartre himself proclaims, 'there is no reality except in action…Man is nothing else than his plan; he exists only to the extent that he fulfils himself, he is therefore nothing else than the ensemble of his acts, nothing else than his life.'[152] If individuals are to be judged, such judgements take place solely on the basis of one's projects, involve-

[148] *Ibid*, p. 25.
[149] *Ibid*, p. 38.
[150] *Ibid*, p. 25. For Perlman's disdain towards mediocrities, see Perlman. *Having Little, Being Much*, pp. 14–15.
[151] Jean-Paul Sartre. *Existentialism and Human Emotions*. New York: Citadel Press, 1957, p. 32.
[152] *Ibid*, p. 32.

and no other—that is to say, because it dies.'[196] *Thanatos* is thus not strictly associable with a malignant drive of destruction and aggression, but is rather 'the harbinger of death, decay and finitude, as a psychic representative of mortality.'[197] *Thanatos* is 'a manifestation of the presence of death in life,' and thus 'allows us to understand ourselves as finite, limited creatures.'[198] *Thanatos* invests life 'with real meaning' because death 'gives all phenomena their singularity.'[199]

To develop this point, Brown returns to the 'dialectical imagination' of Hegel, whose work is tellingly described by Kojève as 'a philosophy of death.'[200] As Brown maintains, there remains in Hegel's dialectic 'an intrinsic connection between death and the essence of true life, individuality.'[201] For Hegel, 'the nature of finite things as such is to have the seed of passing away as their essential being.'[202] From this Hegelian and dialectical perspective, Brown may proclaim that it is not the possession of an immortal 'soul' that confers individuality and 'precious ontological uniqueness,' but rather the fragility and finitude of a mortal body.[203] If *Eros* is therefore 'the principle of unification or interdependence'—the search for pleasure and the expansion of Life through union with the world—the death instinct is, of equal significance, the 'principle of separation or independence.'[204] *Thanatos* imparts finiteness, particularity, and individuality; and, in terms of Brown's 'dialectical imagination,' he seeks to allow for both these movements: 'to

[196] *Ibid*, p. 98.
[197] Carel. *Life and Death in Freud and Heidegger*, p. 128.
[198] *Ibid*, p. 128.
[199] Razinsky. *Freud, Psychoanalysis and Death*, p. 276.
[200] Kojève Quoted in Georges Bataille. 'Hegel, Death and Sacrifice.' *Yale French Studies*. No. 78, 1990, p. 10.
[201] Brown. *Life against Death*, p. 98.
[202] *Ibid*, p. 98.
[203] *Ibid*, p. 98.
[204] *Ibid*, p. 98.

son with Brown, Perlman's 'celebration of Life' elides the 'dialectical imagination' of *Life against Death*. His forced maintenance of this antagonistic dualism ignores the dialectical role of this deathly 'adversary' in Brown's definition of the self and his understanding of 'self-liberation' through the image of 'resurrection.' In what follows, I would thus like to return to Brown's *Life against Death* and consider in more detail the role of this deathly 'adversary' in his message of 'resurrection,' and the implicit critique contained therein of this utopian 'celebration of Life,' particularly in understandings of 'self-liberation.' Though, as I will also detail, Brown's thesis is not necessarily a radical alternative to a utopia of *Eros*. In its place, Brown too proposes a utopia or what Yiannis Gabriel has called a 'utopia of *Fusion*' that serves to reinstate Marcuse's and Perlman's longing for 'integral gratification' without the frustrations of human finitude and the inexorable movement of becoming.[193]

Section Three: The Labour of the Negative

Despite Brown's Freudian association of *Thanatos* with a malignant negativity and morbid aggressivity, he too recognises as part of his dialectical thesis and his reconciliatory image of 'resurrection' that Death, as much as Life, 'demands satisfaction.'[194] The 'satisfaction' to which he refers derives from Freud's understanding of a life instinct that unifies and a death instinct that dissolves such unities. As Brown maintains, death confers upon the living a certain individual dignity or 'precious ontological uniqueness.'[195] For Brown, 'at the simplest organic level, any particular animal or plant has uniqueness and individuality because it lives its own life

[193] Gabriel. *Freud and Society*, p. 210.
[194] Brown. *Life against Death*, p. 269.
[195] *Ibid*, p. 98.

ments, and actions, the realisation, as Perlman would say, of the human potential for realising one's own 'nature or being,' one's own 'choices or wishes;' 'outside of that there is *nothing*.'[153]

From a psychoanalytic standpoint, this understanding of human freedom concludes in the refutation of the unconscious.[154] Without any recourse to the unconscious—and the tragic recognition that people are too often unaware of what they do and why they do it—*zeks* only deny their freedom through *mauvaise foi* or 'bad faith:' people lie to themselves, and prevaricate about their true motives. *Zeks* purposefully flee from their human potential into the masks and roles that have been set for them.[155] As Perlman writes of his own Sartrean position in 'Anti-Semitism and the Beirut Pogrom,' an article contemporary with *Against His-story, Against Leviathan*, 'the individual is free to choose his future; he is even free to choose to abolish his freedom, in which case he chooses in bad faith and is a *Salaud*,' a 'Bastard.'[156] In the absence of the unconscious, the contention that 'armoured' *zeks* 'know not what they do' is for Perlman a completely untenable position.[157] Acting in 'bad faith,' *zeks* 'are not ignorant for they know perfectly well what they do and also why.'[158]

Despite this shared 'optimistic toughness' towards those who act in 'bad faith,' these two thinkers differ substantially in their relationship to 'Nothing.' Where Perlman, for instance, associates this 'Nothing' with the absence of human freedom and a repressive 'armor,' Sartre considers this 'Nothing' as a precondition for human freedom. For Sartre, 'Nothingness lies coiled in the heart of

[153] Emphasis added. *Ibid*, p. 32.
[154] Jean-Paul Sartre. *Being and Nothingness*. London and New York: Routledge, 2003, pp. 72–76.
[155] *Ibid*, pp. 70–94.
[156] Perlman. *Anti-Semitism and the Beirut Pogrom*, p. 3.
[157] Perlman. *Against His-story, Against Leviathan*, p. 267.
[158] *Ibid*, p. 267.

being—like a worm.'[159]Sartre concedes that the freedom to realise one's own 'nature or being' derives from this 'Nothing,' from this 'lack of being' or, in another sense, from the lack of any essence or essential nature.[160] The 'free' human being, Sartre maintains, 'is precisely the being which makes itself a 'lack of being;" the human is that 'being which nihilates its being.'[161] In this sense, there would be no self-realisation, no realisation of potentialities, projects, and actions without the haunting presence of Nothingness.[162]

As I would maintain, Perlman has more aptly set Being against Nothingness because there is no apparent place for 'Nothing' and 'lack of being' in his conception of the fully actualised self who has realised his or her own 'nature or being.' The implication in Perlman's work is that this 'Nothing,' associable with Leviathan's deathly 'armor,' is a detraction from the path of individual self-realisation and the fulfilment of the 'individual's living spirit,' particularly so when it is recognised that this 'living spirit' assumes the status of an original, pre-existing human essence that has little bearing upon or relationship to Sartre's critique of such essentialism. Indeed, when Perlman speaks of the 'celebration of Life,' he too interchangeably speaks of an affirmation of Being. Those people who have restored their 'living spirit' by casting off an excrescent 'armor' that reduces them to 'Nothing' are for Perlman all in 'possession of Being,' possessed by Being, or 'brought face to face with the very springs of Being.'[163] They are possessed of an integral wholeness of being; they lack nothing.

[159] Sartre quoted in Martin Jay. *Marxism and Totality: The adventures of a concept from Lukács to Habermas*. Berkeley: University of California Press, 1984, p. 338.

[160] Sartre. *Existentialism and Human Emotions*, p. 65.

[161] *Ibid*, 65–66.

[162] Jean-Paul Sartre. 'Nothingness,' in Stephen Priest (ed.). *Basic Writings*. London and New York: Routledge, 2001, p. 157.

[163] Perlman. *Against His-story, Against Leviathan*, p. 12.

With Perlman's portrayal of the 'individual's living spirit' as one of wholeness in identity with Life and Being, his association of 'death,' 'Nothing,' and lack with the excrescent 'armor' of a repressive Leviathan, his portrayal of myth as the overcoming of 'unidirectional' time and death, I find Marcuse's utopia of *Eros* set against the crushing realities of *Thanatos* a far better approximation of Perlman's own 'celebration of life,' his inherent dualism, and his utopian vision of the fully actualised self in the 'state of nature.' There are still, of course, pronounced differences between these thinkers. Marcuse, for instance, locates his utopia of *Eros* in the continued progressive advancement of the bio-technological overcoming of death or, at least, in the placation of human suffering, whereas Perlman's vision of death's overcoming is situated in the Eliadean vision of myth as escape from the 'terror of history.' Marcuse's utopianism is furthermore derived from the Freudian unconscious, whereas Perlman's Reichian and Sartrean position is devoid of the unconscious, even if his vision of a repressed inner 'state of nature' assumes a similar status. Still, there is in all an underlying utopian longing for a complete, whole, unalienated existence that has effectively 'overcome death.' Both desire 'an eternity when history will have ceased and nothing more can happen.'

The problem with this comparison is that Perlman does not mention Marcuse; he refers instead to Brown's *Life against Death*, a work that, from Marcuse's own account, is opposed to his utopia of *Eros*.[191] While there are many possible reasons for this divergence, one key difference is that whereas Marcuse upholds the opposition of *Eros* against *Thanatos*, Brown speaks of the dialectical reconciliation of Life and Death. His vision of a resurrected life is predicated upon the acceptance of death, not its refusal or overcoming. As he concludes in words that have served as the title for the second part of this thesis: 'in the old adversary—a friend.'[192] In compari-

[191] Roszak. *The Making of a Counter Culture*, pp. 116–117.

[192] Brown. *Life against Death*, p. 281.

upon the duality of Life against Death, *Eros* against *Thanatos*. While the utopian possibilities of this 'Great Refusal' will assume differing forms in his work—a moderate call to overcome structural economic inequalities that bring death to millions and a more extreme message of the bio-technological overcoming of death—Marcuse proposes an 'ontology of Eros' formulated around a 'radically joyous mode of being' that has sought to 'triumph over death.'[185]

Though, as both Harries and Ramirez comment, this 'triumph is not only hubristic but also an '"inauthentic" refusal to accept the essentially limited human condition.'[186] This 'philosophy of life attempts to annihilate humanity's radical contingency, the measureless oceans of space and time between actuality and possibility into which each of us has been cast.'[187] Instead of a triumph against human alienation, this 'overcoming of alienation, when taken seriously, must alienate man from himself,' because it denies humanity its 'concrete human existence and its temporality.'[188] Indeed, this attempt to 'rescue man's being from the destructive power of time' and death remains, from the perspective of Brown's *Life against Death*, another dramatic example of the human 'flight from death' and from reality into 'formal abstraction or utopia.'[189] To follow Freud's observations, this heroic revolt against death is not so evidently a sign of bravery, but rather evidence of a belief 'in some personal invulnerability,' a defensive 'barricade against the admission of finitude' embedded within persistent feelings of 'infantile narcissistic omnipotence and an unconscious feeling of control' over that which cannot be controlled.[190]

[185] Jesse Ramirez. 'Rage Against the Dying of the Light: Herbert Marcuse and the politics of death.' *Cultural Logic: Marxist theory and practice*. 2008, clogic.eserver.org/2008/Ramirez.pdf

[186] *Ibid*

[187] *Ibid*

[188] Harries. 'Utopia and Death,' p. 152.

[189] *Ibid*, p. 151.

[190] Razinsky. *Freud, Psychoanalysis and Death*, p. 262.

What makes this point so important to this current discussion is the significant associations of death with nothingness, absence and lack. Synonymous with 'the negation of life,' death also betrays 'a lack which appears to be inseparable from human existence.'[164] As Razinsky concurs, 'ontologically, death is an absence and non-being,' and is experienced as a 'form of lack, a black hole, as it always lies beyond our possible experience.'[165] Death may lie 'beyond our possible experience,' but the emptiness of this 'black hole' 'does not allow us to ignore it' because 'death is psychically active exactly in its being absent, unclear, unsettled.'[166] This 'shadow of nothingness,' in turn, sets limits to human possibility insofar as death is the ultimate limit to what is possible by way of its constant reminder that 'time is always shortening.'[167] Death's relationship to time and its 'irreversible nature' is the constant, limiting reminder that 'we cannot leave all possibilities open all the time.'[168]Death places limits on human potential, choices, and wishes. 'Death gives reality and time their limiting force.'[169] Death introduces a certain 'lack of being'—though not necessarily in the sense that Sartre uses the term—and this lack ultimately frustrates, unsettles, and disturbs that image of a total wholeness of being to which Perlman refers in his work.[170]

Perlman's image of wholeness in defiance of death's 'shadow of nothingness' has, in fact, entered into the realm of utopia. More specifically, his vision of a life in 'possession of Being' and a life

[164] Karsten Harries. 'Death and Utopia: Towards a critique of the ethics of satisfaction.' *Research in Phenomenology*. Vol. 7 No. 1, 1977, pp. 139.

[165] Razinsky. *Freud, Psychoanalysis and Death*, p. 265.

[166] *Ibid*, p. 265.

[167] *Ibid*, p. 258.

[168] *Ibid*, p. 258.

[169] *Ibid*, p. 258.

[170] For Sartre, 'Death is in no way an ontological structure of my being, at least not in so far as my being is *for itself*.' The existentialist only encounters this 'shadow of nothingness' as a choice—as in suicide. Harries. 'Death and Utopia,' p. 138.

determined only by its own 'nature or being' devoid of lack and limitation reveals its intimacy with the utopianism of that other great counter-cultural figure of the 1960s: Herbert Marcuse. In his influential *Eros and Civilisation*, Marcuse defines the 'promise of utopia' as the 'tabooed' aspiration for the total realisation of *Eros*, the life-instinct in its Freudian sense.[171] This utopia is the promise of 'integral satisfaction' or 'integral gratification,' a life without 'want and repression.'[172] As Karsten Harries argues, Marcuse's 'ideal of pleasure' through the complete affirmation of *Eros* is a utopian wish for complete 'wholeness,' a life in which 'we are entire, complete, at one with ourselves.'[173] Marcuse's utopianism is an 'ethics of satisfaction, which makes *being at one with oneself* the goal of man's striving.'[174]

Through this utopian affirmation of a complete wholeness of being, Marcuse asserts 'the primacy of being.'[175] In turn, Marcuse claims that the 'tabooed' aspiration of humanity is concurrent with an experience of eternity. Marcuse will, in fact, unite this image of unrepressed 'integral gratification' with the experience of eternity through his Freudian observation that the unconscious is devoid of negation—a repressive 'No'—and is, as such, a realm of affirmation and eternity wherein 'every one of us is convinced of his own immortality.'[176] If, as Marcuse suggests, 'timelessness is the ideal of pleasure,' and the unconscious is the seat of this intermixture of eternity and 'integral gratification,' utopia is indeed a primordial human longing.[177]

Though, as Harries notes, this longing for eternity and 'being at one with oneself' only makes sense when humanity is no longer

[171] Marcuse quoted in *Ibid*, p. 139
[172] *Ibid*, 139.
[173] *Ibid*, p. 139.
[174] Italics in original. *Ibid*, p. 141.
[175] *Ibid*, p. 141.
[176] Razinsky. *Freud, Psychoanalysis and Death*, p. 16.
[177] Harries. 'Death and Utopia,' p. 141.

bound to the realm of time and temporality. Eternity exists only in 'realms of being beyond becoming.'[178] More exactly, the 'primacy of being' is only possible in the exclusion of that constitutive 'lack which appears to be inseparable from human existence:' death, mortality and human finitude.[179] Death ultimately frustrates the 'tabooed' longing for finally 'being at one with oneself' because death is bound to an awareness of time and temporality. Death, as noted, asserts life's unidirectional and 'irreversible nature;' it reintroduces becoming over and against the 'primacy of being.' As Marcuse himself writes, 'the brute fact of death denies once and for all the reality of non-repressive existence. For death is the final negativity of time.'[180] Where *Eros* thus supports 'the primacy of being,' *Thanatos* and death reimpose the movements of an inexorable becoming with its associations, in Marcuse's text, with the world of work-time and subordination to a repressive reality-principle.[181] Death frustrates 'man's search for final satisfaction' and absolute contentment by forever leading humanity back into confrontation with the reality of time and human finitude.[182] In turn, Marcuse's 'utopia of *Eros*' would ultimately require an 'escape from the tyranny of becoming' through the denial of death and human mortality.[183]

Of course, this escape from death is exactly what Marcuse attempts in *Eros and Civilisation*. In his utopian response to the frustrations of becoming and temporality, Marcuse proposes his 'Great Refusal' of death. He refutes those philosophers and thinkers who would 'betray the promise of utopia' by 'celebrating death as an existential category.'[184] He proposes a utopia of *Eros* predicated

[178] *Ibid*, p. 140.
[179] *Ibid*, p. 139.
[180] Marcuse quoted in *Ibid*, p. 139.
[181] *Ibid*, p. 141.
[182] *Ibid*, p. 141.
[183] *Ibid*, p. 140.
[184] *Ibid*, p. 139.

reading, is again combined with the need 'to shed the armor' of Leviathan.[191] Taoism is more simply conflated with the earlier reference to Zoroastrian dualism: the 'Way' is the purifying Light and Leviathan is the Darkness to be overcome through a war 'waged with fire, the great purifier.'

Again, this conflation of Taoism with Zoroastrian dualism remains just as problematic as Perlman's elision of the chain binding angel to demon in Blake's *Michael binding the Dragon*. It is so problematic because Perlman's Zoroastrian inspired imagery of fiery conflagrations, and wars of annihilation 'waged with fire' against an Ahrimanic darkness shares very little with Taoism and, in particular, the spiritual vision of change and transformation in Lao Tzu's *Tao Te Ching*, a founding Taoist text that Perlman actually defines as a spiritual influence or 'light' at the very beginning of his essay.[192] While the *Tao Te Ching* maintains the polarity of Yin and Yang, Light and Dark, positive and negative, the 'art of life' within this text 'is not seen as holding to *yang* and banishing *yin*, but as keeping the two in balance, because there cannot be one without the other.'[193] Indeed, the *Tao Te Ching* presents a far more sympathetic account of darkness through its express associations with Yin and its positive qualities of receptivity, emptiness, and mystery.

This understanding of a sympathetic polarity follows from the principle of 'mutual arising or inseparability.'[194] It is to acknowledge how 'any statements advocating a specific virtue, such as beauty and goodness, will imply and even create its opposite.'[195] As Lao Tzu comments:

[191] *Ibid*, p. 78.
[192] *Ibid*, p. 2.
[193] Alan Watts. *Tao: The Watercourse Way*. New York: Pantheon Books, 1975, p. 21.
[194] *Ibid*, p. 22.
[195] Jennifer Oldstone-Moore. 'Taoism,' in Michael D. Coogan (ed.). *Eastern Religions*. London: Duncan Baird Publishers, 2005, p. 262.

Porete subsequently dissociates the 'simple soul' from those who emphasise external 'works,' such as, those who do the 'works of [the] virtues' in the mortification of the body, acts of charity, and 'meditations filled with prayers.'[320] 'Works' and the 'Virtues' are problematic for two interrelated reasons. Firstly, there is still personal submission to moral strictures—'Virtues'—and, in consequence, the 'works' performed in submission to these moral strictures remain governed by a painful 'impulsive self-direction of the soul even in good directions.'[321]

Despite their submission to God and to the moral 'Virtues' through the mortification of the body and self-abnegation, Porete would suggest that such people are still 'driven' by their own wilfulness and desires, and are not therefore acting in accord with 'the peace of their inward being.' To use Porete's term, they act as 'Kings' 'because of the sufficiency that they have in their doings.'[322] While their 'works' and 'doings' entail self-abnegation and the mortification of the body, there is for Porete a veiled wilfulness evidenced even in these acts of self-denial. In contrast, Porete's spirituality with its emphasis upon 'faith' and inner contemplation, would suggest a different relationship—with God and the 'Virtues.' This is a spiritual path whereby 'the soul enjoys a freedom of spirit in which the lawful demands of nature can now be legitimately satisfied without fear of impulses to excess, and without need of the constant check of violent self-denial.'[323]

While Porete is critical of those who mortify themselves through 'works' and submission to 'virtues,' her work does not suggest that moral 'virtues' are irrelevant. The 'simple soul' does not possess total license to do whatever she wants and justify all her actions because of this intimacy with God. Just as Porete criticises the veiled wilfulness of those who submit themselves

[320] *Ibid*, p. 79–80.
[321] *Ibid*, p. 11.
[322] *Ibid*, p. 11.
[323] *Ibid*, p. 192.

to the virtues, she too is critical of those spiritual aspirants who would justify their actions based on their identity with God, or their 'oneness with all that is' in Perlman's terms. Porete will assuredly speak of submission to the 'virtues' as a form of personal enslavement, as when she writes that 'never was I free until now that I am departed from you,' and elsewhere, 'I was then your servant, but now I am delivered out of your thralldom.'[324] Furthermore, *The Mirror*, as Perlman himself intimates, suggests a definite freedom of movement and action in the world. As Porete further questions, 'Why should such souls have conscience to take that which they lack, and that which is theirs, when they have need?'[325]

Though, as already noted in reference to 'original sin,' Porete also substantially qualifies this freedom from the 'virtues.' Porete counsels against the possibility of wilful self-aggrandisement on the basis of a spiritual identity with God. As she expounds, it is 'Not that we be lords of all, free of all, but that his love for us maketh us free.'[326] For Porete, 'the one who has abandoned the virtues is not unvirtuous but, paradoxically, more virtuous than the one who lives in those terms.'[327] The 'virtues' are not abandoned as such, as they are enacted without that aforementioned sense of 'impulsive self-direction' that leads either towards 'impulses to excess' or 'violent self-denial.' The 'simple soul' has 'abandoned the virtues as a socially inscribed, publicly recognised, determinate set of normative practices,' but that is only because 'the genuinely virtuous person would be the one who cannot even recognise her own virtue.'[328] To be taken from the 'thralldom' of the virtues is actually

[324] *Ibid*, p. 7.
[325] *Ibid*, p. 35.
[326] *Ibid*, p. 2.
[327] Kangas. 'Dangerous Joy,' p. 307.
[328] *Ibid*, p. 308.

Perlman's understanding of change and transformation, resistance and opposition in this specific context better resembles the moralistic rigidity of the Negations than Blake's spiritual promise of contrarian reconciliation. Perlman's 'Fight' bears only the 'sword' of moral righteousness, Wrathfulness, and hatred. Perlman's moral position, like his political position seeks after the expeditious repression and destruction of that which is opposed. In place of the 'fruitful interchange of opinion' which is the basis of the 'contraries' and the creative life, there is here simply the negating 'blank 'No' of repression.' Perlman may profess an antinomian message of 'self-abandon' and unrepressed human desire; however, like his acritical reading of the Adamites, this antinomian release of human 'energy' unleashes *all* human energies, inclusive of hatred, wrath, and vengefulness. To return to Sutherland, Perlman's primitivism does not 'expand the perceptions and sympathies of men;' it rouses and riles with indignation—towards the atrocities of Western imperialism and colonialism—hatred—towards 'armored' 'villains' and 'bastards'—and fear—at the threat of global ecological collapse.

In saying this, there is some indication in Perlman's seventh chapter of a differing conception of change and transformation that aligns with this contrarian and dialectical reading of Blake's *Michael Binding the Dragon*. This differing account emerges from Perlman's reference to Taoism—following his introduction to Zoroastrianism—and, in particular, a brief mention of the elemental forces of water and fire, the respective symbolic counterparts of Yin and Yang.[190] Along with the parallels between Blake's image and the Taoist Yin-Yang symbol, this reference to Taoism might suggest an alternative to the Zoroastrian 'war of extermination.' The problem here is that Perlman counter-poses the Taoist 'Way' as a unitary whole to the lifeless and artificial body of Leviathan. The 'Way' of Taoism, from Perlman's politico-spiritual

[190] *Ibid*, p. 78.

critical account of both spiritual and social change emerges from Blake's 'vision.' In this politico-spiritual context, Blake's *Michael binding the Dragon* does not so boldly foretell a 'war of extermination' between opposed forces; it is more aptly a subversive attempt to reclaim a contrarian, dialectical message from this Judaeo-Christian narrative of heaven against hell, good against evil. This is certainly not to deny the element of conflict, discord, and upheaval in Blake's 'vision,' but the radical transformations to which Blake refers—spiritual, social, and political—presage a very different, transfigured understanding of radical change. Blake's contrarian dialectic attempts to offer an alternative to the repressive moralism and wrathfulness of the 'Negations,' that is, to oppose without reinscribing existing social, moral, and political antagonisms into the project of radical social transformation.

Of course, in Perlman's politico-spiritual reading of Blake's *Michael binding the Dragon*, this contrarian and dialectical alternative to spiritual and social transformation is elided in favour of an extreme, antagonistic dualism. In accord with his Zoroastrian interpretation of *Michael binding the Dragon*, Perlman speaks only of a 'war against Ahriman in the world and in the individual,' a war that is to be 'waged with fire, the great purifier,' so that 'the mask is burned off, the armor is burned out, and the Leviathan burned down.'[189] Perlman belies any sense of Blake's contrarian dialectic. His text evades this esoteric understanding of Blake's image; it is more simply utilised for the purposes of visually conveying an antagonistic struggle by the forces of Zarathustrian Light in the 'state of nature' against the Ahrimanic Darkness of Leviathan. There is for Perlman no chain binding angel and demon together in mutual struggle; there is only the promise of a 'war of extermination' between irreconcilably hostile forces. Perlman's standpoint is entirely unforgiving and makes no allowance for a movement of reconciliation.

[189] Perlman. *Against His-story, Against Leviathan*, p. 77.

to demonstrate and uphold that 'mother of virtues' Perlman so admonishes: 'humility.'[329]

The place of humility in Porete's work leads finally back to the question of Perlman's reading of Porete's spiritual awakening as an experience of 'exultation, not in an Afterlife but in Life,' that is, in terms of Perlman's politico-spiritual battle of Life against Death. Certainly, Porete's text is replete with statements of exultation, as when she writes that the liberated soul 'feeleth no joy, for she herself is joy,' and 'she loveth God in all things and all things for God.'[330] Indeed, Porete's joy would satisfy the primitivist longing for an unmediated existence because, in the words of David Kangas, her 'Joy is wholly "without why" and hence, can neither support nor legitimize any institutions. No imperium mediates joy to human life; *one is in joy in a way that is wholly without, radically prior to, any mediation.*'[331] Similarly, Perlman's emphasis upon a form of revelatory exultation in Life rather than Death and an 'Afterlife' is also, in one particular sense, an apt description because Porete's vision of divine union encompasses that Beatific Vision of God the medieval Church believed only possible in the afterlife.[332]

If Porete's divine love confers upon the 'simple soul' an experience the Church believed possible only in the afterlife, this is not to say however that death is banished from such a vision. What Perlman here elides through his Reichian and dualistic reading of Porete is that while there appears evidence of 'exultation, not in an Afterlife but in Life,' there too is an equally significant element of death and dying in this experience of divine Love. While Porete refers to humility before God, she too in a more extreme sense defines the 'simple soul' as the 'annihilated' or 'naughted' soul.[333] The 'simple soul' has been humbled to the point of annihilation.

[329] *Ibid*, p. 308
[330] Porete. *The Mirror of Simple Souls*, p. 47, 48.
[331] Emphasis added. Kangas. 'Dangerous Joy,' p. 316.
[332] Porete. *The Mirror of Simple Souls*, p. i.
[333] *Ibid*, p. 10.

The spiritual aspirant's self has been annihilated, but this process of annihilation or 'naughting' is not commensurable with either Perlman's narrative of the consummate 'armored' *zek*—the creation of a nobody, an insignificant person—or his own vision of ecstatic self abandon. The 'simple soul' has rather become 'Nothing,' an empty receptacle for God's Love.

This emptying and annihilation of the self is the 'preparative process' of 'decreation' quite common in Christian mystical expressions of divine union, wherein 'God is the king, bridegroom, and lover to whom the soul must surrender, submit, and sacrifice itself before He can 'enter in' and take possession.'[334] This is particularly so in the tradition of 'negative' theology to which Porete's work is associable.[335] Within 'negative' theology, God is affirmed as 'Nothing' and can only be experienced through negation—'No, No' or 'Neither, Neither'—because any attempt at description would immediately lessen and limit God, dragging this illimitable and transcendent 'Nothing' into the terrain of a world restricted by the dualistic and divisive choice between *this* or *that*.[336] The mystical experience of divine union within 'negative' theology is thus, in equal part, a spiritual process formed through negation and transcendence of this delimited and delimiting world. The individual must essentially 'destroy their personal desires, experiences, aptitudes, and distinctiveness in order that God can enter into their lives and take control of it.'[337]Mystical 'decreation' implies that one must 'become Nothing to all that is Nature and Creature,' a position very much distinct from Perlman's pantheistic vision of union or 'oneness with all that is.'[338] The spiritual aspirant of 'negative' theology has 'gone forth wholly from the Creature and that which is

[334] Linda Woodhead. *Christianity: A very short introduction*. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2004, p. 88.
[335] James. *The Varieties of Religious Experience*, pp. 403–404.
[336] *Ibid*, p. 402–403.
[337] Woodhead. *Christianity*, p. 88.
[338] James. *The Varieties of Religious Experience*, p. 403.

here refers to *all* human passions, emotions, and desires, inclusive of hatred and wrathfulness; and, Orc, in his revolutionary desire to destroy the world of Urizen is particularly consumed by his Wrath. As Orc pronounces: 'when I rage my fetters bind me more.'[184] For Paley, Blake's youthful Orc has not reached spiritual maturity. Orc 'has not grown up to command his prime. Instead, Orc's vital energy has degenerated into destructive wrath.'[185] Of course, Blake's contrarian dialectic makes allowance for the creative interplay of Love and Hate. Blake's Jesus may, for instance, preach the forgiveness of sins, but he also bears a message of discord and social upheaval. As Blake boldly proclaims in his 'Preface' to *Milton*:

> I will not cease from Mental Fight,
> Nor will my sword sleep in my hand
> Till we have built Jerusalem
> In England's green and pleasant land.[186]

Though, as John Sutherland maintains in a discussion of the non-violent implications of Blake's thought, this 'sword' and this 'Mental Fight' does not extend to the advocacy of 'Corporeal War.' Blake's critique of human wrathfulness and the lust for vengeance by way of the 'Negations' considers revolution 'a process not simply entailing the release of energy but having to overcome dialectically the negative figurations of energy.'[187] Blake's 'Mental Fight' is thus a path towards the discovery of 'mental weapons which will expand the perceptions and sympathies of men—not rouse their indignation, hatred and fear.'[188]

Through this understanding of dialectical transformation in the form of the 'contraries' and the 'Negations,' a more nuanced and

[184] *Ibid*, p. 118.
[185] *Ibid*, p. 120.
[186] Blake quoted in Sutherland. 'William Blake and Nonviolence,' p. 544.
[187] Kovel. 'Dark Satanic Mills,' p. 10.
[188] Sutherland. 'William Blake and Nonviolence,' p. 544.

arrayed against. For example, 'large-sounding generalities about justice and liberty' as a response to oppressive social conditions could just as easily devolve into a new abstract moral code that actively denies these very same principles to those persons deigned enemies of justice and liberty.[180] Opposition is here still fettered to the repressive intolerance of the Negations, only that this intolerance is now directed, in increasingly violent hostility, towards this fractured world of State, Empire, and Church.

As Morton D. Paley notes, Blake's later poetic mythology gives voice to these concerns over revolutionary inversion and, in particular, the quite specific 'failure of energy to redeem the world after the French Revolution.'[181] This problematic is most pronounced in one of Blake's mythological creations: Orc. A figuration of the American rather than the French Revolution, Orc is the mythical embodiment of unrestrained, impassioned energy. Orc is the committed and youthful revolutionary whose task is to surmount all boundaries and destroy all prior social fetters. Orc is 'the metaphysical rebel who denies all limits,' and is therefore the enemy of that other, aforementioned mythological figure known as Urizen—'the fixer of limits.'[182]However, Orc remains still fettered to Urizen's repressiveness. Even though Orc opposes Urizen—insofar as he sides entirely with the unbound energies of the 'Devil's party'—Orc's response is still repressive and negative since he too wants only to suppress and destroy what he opposes. Even though Orc espouses unbridled energy and passion, his understanding of radical change is not contrarian in nature, but rather formed through the repressiveness of the Negations.

Indeed, as Blake considers, unrestrained energy does not simply refer to a sensual and eroticised 'wisdom of the body.'[183] Energy

[180] Roberts. 'The Ethics of William Blake,' p. 608.

[181] Morton D. Paley. *Energy and the Imagination: A study of the development of Blake's thought*. Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1970, p. 102.

[182] *Ibid*, p. 112.

[183] *Ibid*, p.110.

visible,' a point that again reaffirms the importance of introspective contemplation for Porete and the fact that the 'simple soul' 'hath no comfort nor affection, nor hope in [any] creature that is made.' As Porete writes elsewhere, '"The Soul," saith Love, 'can no more speak of God, for she is naughted of all outward desire and of all the affections of the spirit.'[339] In being 'naughted' of creaturely desires, the 'simple soul' has become 'no more than an image of Being,' an empty receptacle, a mirrored void through which God's Love is reflected.[340]

As Stephen E. Flowers has written in the broader context of medieval heretical spirituality and mysticism, in these traditions 'the Holy Spirit descends and incarnates in individual humans, filling them individually and collectively with the undifferentiated substance of the Holy Spirit.'[341] While this incarnation might appear to preserve, foster, and enliven the individual, 'this is only an illusion viewed from the outside. In reality, the individual soul has been annihilated and the self identified with the Holy Spirit in toto.'[342] In this sense, the only reason this 'simple soul' can experience the Beatific Vision of God in this life instead of the afterlife is because the individual self has already 'died' and passed away in annihilatory union with God.

Indeed, distinct from Perlman's Reichian interpretation of Porete as 'Anarchic and pantheistic dancer,' Simon Critchley via a reading of Anne Carson's poetic account of Porete's text has identified in this element of self-extinction a more radical basis for what he calls 'mystical anarchism.'[343] For Critchley, Porete's spirituality is predicated upon a 'subjective act where the subject

[339] Porete. *The Mirror of Simple Souls*, p. 10.

[340] James. *The Varieties of Religious Experience*, p. 403.

[341] Stephen E. Flowers. *Lords of the Left-Hand Path: Forbidden practices & spiritual heresies*. Rochester: Inner Traditions, 2012, p. 141.

[342] *Ibid*, p. 141.

[343] Anne Carson. *Decreation: Poetry, essays, opera*. New York: Vintage Books, 2006, pp. 155–184.

extinguishes itself.'[344] The task of the 'simple soul' is 'to bore a hole in itself that will allow [God's] love to enter.'[345]Through the Christian ideal of the 'audacity of impoverishment,' the spiritual aspirant 'unleashes the most extreme violence against the self' by 'hewing and hacking' away at their own personality and their 'creaturely' desires.[346] They commit themselves to 'the training and submission of free will' and to 'the disciplining of the self.'[347] In 'hewing and hacking' away at the self, the 'simple soul' creates a '*nihil*,' a 'no place' and from this 'nihil' 'the annihilated soul becomes the place for God's infinite selfreflection.'[348] As Critchley maintains, 'What the Soul has created is the space of its own annihilation.'[349] The 'simple soul' has become the mirror of God's Love, even though the 'soul' can neither 'see' God nor herself, because the Self has been 'annihilated,' 'naughted,' hollowed out and reduced to nothing.

If there is then a return to Life in Porete's *The Mirror of Simple Souls*, such a return does not easily conform to Perlman's vision of immediate and immanent 'selfabandon' and ecstatic release from Leviathan's 'armor.' In reading Porete through Reichian psychoanalysis and Brown's erotic exuberance, Perlman has failed to recognise that the message of a renewed spiritual life in *The Mirror of Simple Souls* is inseparable from a process of self-transcendence and negative 'decreation.' Perlman fixates solely upon Porete's description of the end-state of this spiritual process—a process he equates with a pantheistic sense of 'oneness with all that is'—and thus ignores the annihilatory, transcendent dimensions of Porete's vision of joyous exaltation in God's Love and her indebtedness to the Christian mystical tradition of 'negative' theology. Where Perl-

[344] Critchley. 'Mystical Anarchism,' p. 291.
[345] *Ibid*, p. 289.
[346] *Ibid*, p. 291.
[347] *Ibid*, p. 295.
[348] *Ibid*, p. 291.
[349] *Ibid*, p. 291.

Blake's political radicalism, Blake looked upon mental strife and discord as 'a phase of politics and upon politics as an acting-out of mental strife.'[175] Forming a mirror of each other, inner and outer worlds reflect the repressive divisiveness of the Negations. For Blake, under the reign of the Negations, the State privileges Order at the expense of liberty; Empire divides everyone against each other in ruthless competition; and, a religious priesthood suborns humanity to the Church and to the punitive will of a God so abstracted from the living world that its task is now set to 'torment Man in eternity for following his Energies.'[176]

From this vision of the decidedly fractured, repressive world of the Negations, Blake boldly proclaims his visionary opposition to this world of Empire. Inspired by the French Revolution of 1789, Blake's *The Marriage of Heaven and Hell* provides poetic-philosophical support for this opposition as well a hopeful promise of social and spiritual transformation.[177] Though, Blake's distinction between the 'contraries' and the 'Negations' also presents an implicit critique of revolutionary forms of social transformation, a critique that became ever more explicit upon Blake's discovery of the violent turn of the French Revolution through the reign of the Terror and the political reaction of Napoleon Bonaparte.[178] As E.P. Thompson notes, Blake supports revolutionary social transformation and change, but his dialectical spiritual 'vision' also recognised how revolutionaries were not themselves exempt from the spectral presence of the 'Negations.'[179] Revolutionaries could, from Blake's dialectical perspective, prove just as morally righteous, judgemental, and repressive as the forces they are

[175] David Erdman quoted in John Sutherland. 'William Blake and Nonviolence.' *The Nation*. April 28, 1969, p. 543.
[176] Blake. 'The Marriage of Heaven and Hell,' p. 196.
[177] *Ibid*, p. 201.
[178] Joel Kovel. 'Dark Satanic Mills: William Blake and the critique of war.' *Capitalism Nature Socialism*. Vol. 21 No. 2, 2010, p. 10.
[179] Thompson. *Witness Against the Beast*, p. 221.

I would also note that in Blake's mythology, Urizen is not simply reducible to an evil, Leviathanic 'armor' that is to be purged and annihilated. In its accord with 'Reason,' Urizen is a figure deserving of redemption; he is to be reconciled with 'Energy' in a contrarian fashion.[168] This redemptive position is also in no way restricted to the world of myth. Blake's ethical standpoint is itself a radical form of Christian forgiveness.[169] For Blake, 'The spirit of Jesus is continual forgiveness of sins.'[170] As Erin Lafford maintains, Blake does not condemn people for their fragmentation; rather, 'Blake attempts to 'gentle' and forgive fragmented individuals.'[171] Blake might therefore criticise mental *states* of fragmentation and disintegration as well as those who are ruled by their *spectres*, as symbolised in Urizen; but, he does not believe sin and righteous condemnation 'should be imputed to persons.'[172] 'It avails nothing to blame men for what they are or do; the only reasonable attitude to men whose characters and actions are the consequences of *states* is one of forgiveness.'[173] To do otherwise, one only serves to reinstate the repressiveness of the Negations with its crude moralism.

While the Negations are bound in this sense to the repressions of a stultifying morality and a reductive, dogmatic rationality, Blake too draws the spiritual fragmentation of the Negations into a social context. These Negations infuse every facet of social life.[174] In Blake's understanding, individual repression and social oppression are entwined. As David Erdman has remarked of

[168] William Blake. 'The Book of Urizen,' p. 259.

[169] Jeanne Moskal. *Blake, Ethics, and Forgiveness*. Tuscaloosa: University of Alabama Press, 1994; H. Wilson Curry. 'William Blake: Poet of Divine Forgiveness.' *The Expository Times*. Vol. 80 No. 12, 1969, pp. 371–374.

[170] Richard Roberts. 'The Ethics of William Blake.' *The Hibbert Journal*. Vol. 17, 1919, p. 670.

[171] Erin Lafford. '"Asking with Tears forgiveness": Weeping as 'gentling' in Blake's *Milton*. *Literature Compass*. Vol. 11 No. 2, 2014, p. 118.

[172] Roberts. 'The Ethics of William Blake,' p. 662.

[173] *Ibid*, p. 662.

[174] Marshall. *William Blake: Visionary anarchist*, pp. 46.

man takes account of Porete's mysticism, he does no more than speak of a spiritual experience that 'shocks' the individual into a state of 'self abandon'—a single, ecstatic, orgasmic explosion. He fails to attend to the introspective and contemplative dimensions of Porete's mysticism, as well as its important elements of detachment and separation from the world—the 'simple soul' is 'naughted of all outward desire' and has 'become Nothing to all that is Nature and Creature.'

Porete's work demonstrates that the mystical effort to become 'no more than an image of Being' has only a superficial relationship to Perlman's 'celebration of Life' and possession by Being. There is certainly a message of radical joy in all this, but such joy is not experienced in that worldly, creaturely, and embodied sense to which Perlman's Reichian psycho-politics is referring. Such joy is for Porete still entangled in the world of *this* or *that*, the world of attachments to Nature and Creature; it is still fundamentally wilful and selfish. When Porete says that the 'simple soul' 'feeleth no joy, for she herself is joy,' this statement is not simply a declaration of an extreme sense of personal happiness and contentment. The 'simple soul' 'feeleth no joy' and is herself Joy because the 'simple soul' is 'Nothing,' a mirrored void of God's Love that has sacrificed all 'personal desires, experiences, aptitudes, and distinctiveness' for this higher order of experience. This radical joy entails a dying to self, a painful, difficult, humbling process quite removed from Perlman's ecstatic, immediate, orgiastic gratifications.

Perlman's removal from Porete's 'preparative' processes of self-annihilation would, in fact, return to a problem discussed earlier in relation to Brown's 'Dionysian consciousness.' In the absence of mystical self-transcendence, the symbolism of mystical union with God and immersion in God's Love gives way instead to a thoroughly more worldly project of self-aggrandizement, the inflation of one's ego, and an extreme narcissism that claims for

one's actions—even 'wrong' actions—the status of perfection.[350] Unbound from that 'mother of virtues'—humility—the mystical statement 'Because I am God, I can do no wrong' transmogrifies into something with amoral and antinomian implications: a belief that even 'wrong' actions are justifiable because those who commit these acts are perfect and have subsequently risen beyond 'the worldly dialectic of conventional morality,' have stepped 'beyond good and evil.'[351] Here again, God's Love gives way to a 'horrible mixture of sensuality and cruelty.'

In saying this, I too would note that Porete's mystical self-annihilation and Critchley's radical reading of negative 'decreation' do not correspond with the dialectical image of 'resurrection' I have explored earlier in relation to Brown—of life with death, interdependence with independence, union with separation. Porete's mysticism certainly introduces an element of self-transcendence that is decidedly lacking in Perlman's Reichian politics of 'self abandon,' but this self-transcendence is also a negating of the individual self in ''(w)hole' union with God.'[352] As Patrick Wright has explored, Porete's 'subject of annihilation' is consumed by the image of sacrifice.[353] 'The audacity of impoverishment' in Porete's work is the audacity of a sacrificial offering or forfeiture: to make of one's self a sacrifice.[354] A state of rest and peacefulness in the 'image of Being' is therefore achieved by means of this premature death of the self. Self-annihilation is again an overcoming of this mortal, finite world and the 'inclination towards nothingness to which nature tends.'[355]Human existence

[350] Grosso. *The Millennium Myth*, p. 54–55.

[351] *Ibid*, p. 55.

[352] Critchley. 'Mystical Anarchism,' p. 290.

[353] Patrick Wright. 'Marguerite Porete's *Mirror of Simple Souls* and the subject of annihilation.' *Mystics Quarterly*. Vol. 35 No. 3–4, September/December 2009, pp. 82–85.

[354] On these associations between Christianity, audacity and sacrifice, see Bakan. *Disease, Pain, & Sacrifice*, pp. 124–128.

[355] Critchley. 'Mystical Anarchism,' p. 289.

interplay of heaven and hell, good and evil, energy and reason has been sundered and torn apart. As with the religious dualism underlying the denigration of the body's 'energies,' opposites have been dualistically set against each other. 'Contraries' have broken apart and have given way instead to what Blake calls 'Negations.' These 'Negations' remain 'opposed forces' that seek ultimately 'to suppress the other as quickly as possible.'[163] They 'simply deny and seek to destroy each other.'[164] In contrast with the sympathetic polarity of the 'contraries,' 'Negations' are built upon the repression of their opposite. As Punter elucidates, 'the 'Negation' stands for the blank 'No' of repression, the 'contraries' for the fruitful interchange of opinion which results in progress.'[165] Where contraries marry action and passivity in the movement between Energy and Reason, Negations exert considerable energy in the denial and repression of its opposing force. In this repressive formulation, the moral dictates of Reason arbitrarily brand as 'evil' the energetic flux of bodily and sensual passions; the rational Soul is divided from a now corrupt Body, a Body which must itself be repressed and made to conform to the dictates of a negating, 'angelic' morality; and, a repressive Reason is ultimately destructive of the creative imagination, because it tries to deny 'it any validity as a means to knowledge.'[166] This is the form of materialistic rationalism that Blake elsewhere brands as 'Urizen'—a possible punning of 'Your Reason'—a tyrannical mythological figure who is perpetually dividing and measuring.

Of note, Perlman will visually adopt an image of 'Urizen' in his essay to represent one of the many faces of Leviathan.[167] Though,

[163] Nurmi. *Blake's Marriage of Heaven and Hell*, p. 22.

[164] *Ibid*, p. 22.

[165] Punter. *Blake, Hegel and Dialectic*, p. 98.

[166] Nurmi. *Blake's Marriage of Heaven and Hell*, p. 21.

[167] William Blake. 'The Book of Urizen,' in William Blake. *The Selected Poems of William Blake*. Ware: Wordsworth, 1994, p. 259; Perlman. *Against His-story, Against Leviathan*, p. 47.

cumference of energy.'[157] Reason imparts form and structure to human endeavours; it is the basis for creative expression in all spheres of life. Energy—associable with the devil, profane evil, and hell—provides embodied vitality and flux, which draws upon bodily, earthly passions and desires. Energy stimulates and enlivens.[158] While there are certainly indications in *The Marriage of Heaven and Hell* that Blake sides more with the 'Devil's party' through emphasis upon the chaotic flux of 'evil' energy against the staid principle of 'angelic' reason, his contrarian 'vision' clearly suggests a 'binding' element through the interplay of both forces.[159] Only through the embrace of both elements is there the possibility of living in 'a Human world of vision and imagination.'[160] As David Punter notes, Blake is not advocating 'evil' and atrocious acts in the name of human creativity.[161] His dialectic in a more simple, if still subversive fashion redresses the religious associations within the Judaeo-Christian tradition of the profane 'energies' of the body with the demonic and 'evil.' Blake suggests that 'the reinstatement of human energy is necessary' as a counterpoint to this extreme dualism, but he is not, in turn, advocating the unmediated liberation of human 'energy' because such a perspective is still dualistic and would only 'repeat the process of petrifaction,' albeit in an antinomian direction.[162]

Blake so emphasises the redemptive element in the dialectical movement of the contraries because of the suggestion that the world has been deprived of creative 'vision and imagination.' The world belongs instead to divisive fragmentation; the creative

[157] Punter. *Blake, Hegel and Dialectic*, p. 114.
[158] Nurmi. *Blake's Marriage of Heaven and Hell*, p. 21.
[159] *Ibid*, p. 197.
[160] *Ibid*, p. 21.
[161] Punter. *Blake, Hegel and Dialectic*, p. 106. See also Michelle Leigh Gompf. *Thomas Harris and William Blake: Allusions in the Hannibal Lecter novels*. Jefferson: McFarland & Company, 2013.
[162] Punter. *Blake, Hegel and Dialectic*, p. 106.

in a world of inexorable becoming, division and separation is abandoned in the return to a state of spiritual plenitude and wholeness that would, in this Christian context, equal the perfection of Man before the Fall.[356]

While I therefore remain critical of Perlman's interpretation of Porete, I too hold reservations towards the self-annihilatory message of Porete's mystical selftranscendence and, in equal part, Critchley's attempts at 'utilizing Porete as a model for radical politics.'[357] In contrast, and by way of conclusion, I would like to consider a conception of the self and 'self-liberation' that does not culminate in selfannihilation, self-abandon, or even that 'armoured' autonomous self Perlman associates with the 'Western spirit.' I would here return in a tentative, critical manner to the 'dialectical imagination' of Brown and to his adoption of the image of 'resurrection' in relation to a redeemed image of *Thanatos*. As already noted, Freud's controversial positing of a death instinct was not simply—as Reich thought—the conservative attempt to posit a malignant drive of destruction and aggression, a 'hypothesis of innate evil.' *Thanatos* is not—as Reich, Marcuse and Perlman would have it—a harbinger of evil and psychic repression; it is more aptly understood as 'the harbinger of death, decay and finitude, as a psychic representative of mortality.' *Thanatos* is 'a manifestation of the presence of death in life;' it 'allows us to understand ourselves as finite, limited creatures.' Neither should this be construed as an entirely tragic and morbid conception of life, because as Freud also argued transience and impermanence confer value, meaning, and beauty; *Thanatos* helps explain and even intensify 'the colorfulness of life.'

Through this emphasis upon mortality and finitude embedded within the meaning of *Thanatos*, Freudian psychoanalysis does not

[356] *Ibid*, p. 292, 294.
[357] Wright. 'Marguerite Porete's *Mirror of Simple Souls* and the subject of annihilation,' p. 64.

give way to 'the conquest of death.'[358] *Thanatos* disturbs and undermines all 'idols of permanence and eternity.'[359]Freudian psychoanalysis does not, in turn, 'foster the illusion of omnipotence and immortality;' it 'serves up reality—the inevitability of death,' much as it serves up the reality of unconscious drives and impulses.[360] The reality of death, mortality, and human finitude are not overcome, but accepted as the precondition for a renewed life. The acceptance of 'a life contaminated by Thanatos' would, in turn, imply a very different understanding of 'self-liberation.'[361] If *Thanatos* is, for example, associable with the presence of death in life, it too suggests that the self is pervaded with a fundamental sense of absence, loss, and limitation. Psychoanalysis is not in this sense a path of complete psychic wholeness, but rather the patient, processual and painful discovery that the self is always at a loss: lacking, unsettled, disturbed and divided.[362]There is, in the words of Kristeva, consciousness of and coming to terms with 'an erotic, death-bearing unconscious' and an 'uncanny strangeness' within ourselves.[363]To take admission of this lack, loss, and disturbance might therefore prove a significant and liberating discovery in itself, a discovery that leads not towards an exalted 'primacy of being,' but rather a more considered response to 'the difficulty of being.'

[358] David Adams. 'Myth and Dogmas in 1920: The Fundamentalist-Modernist controversy and Freud's "death drive,"' in Stathis Gourgouris (ed.). *Freud and Fundamentalism: The psychical politics of knowledge*. New York: Fordham University Press, 2010, p. 36.

[359] Carel. *Life and Death in Freud and Heidegger*, p. 135.

[360] Emanuel E. Garcia. 'Reflections on Death: Phylogeny, and the Mind-Body problem in Freud's life and work,' in Emanuel E. Garcia. (ed.). *Understanding Freud: The man and his ideas*. New York and London: New York University Press, 1992, p. 161.

[361] Adams. 'Myth and Dogmas in 1920,' p. 37.

[362] Judith Viorst. *Necessary Losses*. New York: The Free Press, 2002.

[363] Julia Kristeva. 'Might Not Universality Be…Our Own Foreignness?,' in Donald Capps (ed.). *Freud and Freudians on Religion: A reader*. New Haven & London: Yale University Press, 2001, p. 333.

opposites. It subsequently remains distinct not only from a radical dualism, but also from 'a bland monism which denies the real existence of opposition.'[151] *Michael binding the Dragon* is in this sense a restatement of Blake's essentially dialectical 'vision.'

This dialectic is most pronounced in Blake's aptly-titled poetic-philosophical treatise of 1790, *The Marriage of Heaven and Hell*. Indeed, the frontispiece for this work will again visually express a number of angels and demons embracing each other. For Martin K. Nurmi, this 'marriage' of opposites—angel and demon, heaven and hell, good and evil—again captures the dialectical element in Blake's thought, or what is more specifically referred to in this work as the creative movement of the 'contraries'—opposites that 'pull in different directions,' but ultimately work together 'with mutual respect and love.'[152] Blake here 'marries' opposites to each other and this contrarian interplay is considered essential to the creative 'vital nature of Human life.'[153] 'Contraries,' as Nurmi elaborates, 'when allowed to interact without constraint, impart motion and a tension that make it [life] creative.'[154] In Blake's own terms: 'Without contraries is no progression. Attraction and Repulsion, Reason and Energy, Love and Hate, are necessary to Human existence.'[155]

Of these specific 'contraries,' the interplay of reason and energy predominate in *The Marriage*; though, they align with other equally important reconciled 'contraries:' angel and devil, good and evil, heaven and hell.[156] Reason—associable with the angelic, moral goodness, and heaven—serves as 'the bound or outward cir-

[151] David Punter. *Blake, Hegel and Dialectic*. Amsterdam: Rodopi, 1982, p. 110.

[152] Martin K. Nurmi. *Blake's Marriage of Heaven and Hell: A critical study*. New York: Haskell House Publishers, 1957, p. 75

[153] *Ibid*, p. 49.

[154] *Ibid*, pp. 19–20.

[155] William Blake. 'The Marriage of Heaven and Hell,' in William Blake. *The Selected Poems of William Blake*. Ware: Wordsworth, 1994, p. 196.

[156] *Ibid*, p. 196.

whiteness of the Angel and the dark, chromatic body of Satan. In one sense, the image is an apt, visual introduction to Perlman's seventh chapter and its opening discussion of the Zoroastrian, politicospiritual struggle between the Light of Ahura Mazda and the Darkness of Ahriman. Though, this is also a rather superficial rendering of both this image and the subversive implications of Blake's spiritual 'vision.' As Milton Klonsky elucidates, this image, in both a graphic and philosophical sense, shares far more with the balanced interplay of opposites represented in the Taoist Yin-Yang symbol. Indeed, *Michael binding the Dragon* shares remarkable visual parallels with this symbol. Apart from its circular contrast of black and white, light and darkness, it too is closer to this symbol because of one specific visual flourish: Blake has drawn a single chain binding together angel with demon, light with dark, heaven with hell. As Klonsky notes, 'Michael, binding the Dragon, has also been bound to him, and by the same chain.'[148] Their struggle is not a 'war of extermination,' but a representation of the necessary interplay—the 'binding' together—of opposed forces.

Even without specific reference to Taoism—which I will return to shortly—this theme of reconciliation between opposites is a defining feature of Blake's thought. As Christopher Rowland maintains, Blake does not accept the traditional Judaeo-Christian perspective of a 'struggle between light and darkness, good and evil, which could only be resolved in the future with the triumph of God.'[149] Rather, 'he seeks to explain it [the struggle] by reference to differing kinds of divine activity, both of which are needed in some kind of dialectical relationship, to achieve spiritual maturity, and any kind of change, political included.'[150] Blake's spiritual 'vision,' along with his understanding of all forms of human creativity, is formed through the dialectical interplay of

[148] *Ibid*, p. 65.

[149] Christopher Rowland. *Blake and the Bible*. New Haven and London: Yale University Press, 2010, p. 84.

[150] *Ibid*, pp. 84–85.

Conclusion

The foregoing discussion has sought to demonstrate the tensions in Perlman's articulation of the 'individual's living spirit' and 'self-liberation.' While first considering Perlman's significant debt to Reich's concept of 'character armor,' I turned from Reich to a comparative analysis of another major psychoanalytic work that contains spiritual aspirations: Brown's *Life against Death*. Following Brown's 'dialectical imagination,' I considered how Perlman perpetuates this antagonistic duality of Life against Death, even if Perlman's Reichian position actually leads to the refutation of a Freudian notion of instinctual ambivalence. I particularly emphasised how these structuring oppositions in his work serve to restrict Perlman's definition of the liberation of the 'individual's living spirit,' and to the abandonment of Brown's reconciliatory message of 'resurrection.' As noted, Perlman repeats some of the more troubling and problematic features of Brown's utopian ideal of 'fusion.' Far from overcoming the interminable conflict of Life and Death, this ideal of 'fusion' leads only to further extremes through the privileging of Being over Becoming; emphasis upon a state of pantheistic unity and interdependent wholeness against separation and independence; and, the promotion of a politics of 'self-abandon' and erotic exuberance that discards with more patient and introspective forms of selftransformation.

In order to discern a possible alternative to this position, I turned finally to the influence of Marguerite Porete's *The Mirror of Simple Souls*. I noted how Perlman simply imposes his structuring antagonism of Life and Death onto Porete's work, defining her text through a Reichian politics of sexual liberation, pantheism, and an experience of 'oneness with all that is.' Through a close reading of Porete's work, I suggested that Perlman's Reichian heritage serves to ignore the mystical, selfannihilatory and self-transcendent dimensions of *The Mirror of Simple Souls*, along with its more introspective and contemplative dimensions. In questioning

whether this process of mystical 'self-annihilation' can be equated with Brown's Freudian reading of the 'resurrection,' I suggested an alternative to both 'self-annihilation' and 'self-abandon' in the form of a psychoanalytic understanding of the 'resurrection:' an acceptance of and coming to terms with a self that is always at a loss.

transformation that has quite specific implications for 'gentle' and reconciliatory understandings of resistance. I too however would like to demonstrate how Perlman more often elides their promise of reconciliation, forcibly interpreting them through this message of a revolutionary militant, politico-spiritual warfare.

Section Three: The Marriage of Heaven and Hell

I would like to begin this discussion of Perlman's textual identity with a 'sterile conventional militancy' through comparison with one of the major visionary—and visual—influences in his essay: William Blake. I am particularly concerned with Perlman's incorporation of one of Blake's images, an image that opens his first, extended interpretation of the religious dualism within Zoroastrianism in the seventh chapter of *Against His-story, Against Leviathan*.[146] The image in question is the 1805 watercolour painting, *Michael binding the Dragon*, a title alluding to the Book of Revelations and to the angel Michael's battle with Satan. As written in Revelations:

> And there was a war in heaven: Michael and his angels fought against the dragon; and the dragon fought and his angels, And prevailed not; neither was their place found any more in heaven. And the great dragon was cast out, that old serpent, called the Devil, and Satan, which deceiveth the whole world: he was cast out into the earth, and his angels were cast out with him.[147]

To express this struggle, Blake places Angel and Demon in a circular embrace with dramatic contrasts between the luminescent

[146] Perlman. *Against His-story, Against Leviathan*, p. 76.

[147] Revelations 12:7–9 quoted in Milton Klonsky. *William Blake: The seer and his visions*. New York: Harmony Books, 1977, p. 65.

slavement to a demonised Enemy and a message of vengeful hatred, which here finds confirmation in the violent imagery of the Judaeo-Christian apocalyptic tradition as well as the chiliastic violence and 'holy war' ideology of the Taborites. Perlman does not consider—in lieu of Toynbee's problematic—how the Adamite's wrathful hatred can be considered a quintessential example of 'sterile conventional militancy.' There is here again only a morally rigid dualism and politico-spiritual war that sets friend against enemy, Us against Them. In this same vein, the Adamite's affective, communal bond—the 'love feast'—is heavily circumscribed; it does not broaden their circle of compassionate concern. Their love for each other is closed and bounded, and actually bolsters their militant disdain towards outsiders as well as their sense of spiritual election—their role as 'avenging angels'—above and against those 'evil ones who remain outside the mountains.' The Adamites here answer crisis with crisis, destruction with destruction, hate with hate, violence with violence. Their resistance is not in Toynbee's terms a creative response to the challenges of disintegration, but rather a sterile and rigid reaction that reinscribes existing schisms, rifts, and antagonisms into the search for a social alternative.

In these terms, I find that Perlman's politico-spiritual 'vision' actually recuperates and reinstates the problems of a 'sterile conventional militancy' that Toynbee criticises in his work. In what follows, I would like to explore this problem in more detail by considering the ways in which Perlman in other areas of his text repeats these problems of a 'sterile conventional militancy,' and, in turn, evades a more dialectical understanding of change and transformation, resistance and opposition. While still informed by Toynbee's dialectic of challenge-and-response, I am here interested in making comparisons with other major spiritual influences in Perlman's text. Such influences include William Blake, Lao Tzu's *Tao Te Ching*, and the figure of the trickster in world mythology. Through comparisons with these particular examples, I will consider how they provide a thoroughly more dialectical conception of change and

Part Three: Encounters with Leviathan

The preposition 'against' is synonymous with opposition, contrast, and contradiction. Such contrast may indicate nothing more than the relatively benign location of someone in relation to something else. It too however possesses far more extreme connotations. Instead of establishing or identifying a relationship, 'against' elicits that sense of a sundering of relations. It denotes an acute sense of hostility and antagonism, a statement of conviction, of forceful and forthright opposition. 'Against' becomes a setting apart or turning away that may assume the form of contestation, subtle derision, contemptuous disdain, fulminating hatred, or even a 'war of extermination.' In the title of Perlman's essay, the preposition 'against' is repeated twice, and this opposition very much draws upon this latter definition of the word: opposition as extreme hostility and animosity, as the refusal of a relationship. Through this doubling and repetition of 'against,' Perlman quite emphatically affirms his opposition to the twin forces of His-story and Leviathan.

Perlman so emphasises his opposition to these forces because as much as his journey through 'His-story' attends to those innumerable manifestations of Leviathan—Empires, States, and psychic-spiritual repression—his main purpose has been that of 'telling a story about human resistance.'[1] However, for all this emphasis upon resistance, there are indications throughout *Against His-story, Against Leviathan* that there is nothing more fraught with danger than being 'against.' Perlman may boldly

[1] Perlman. *Against His-story, Against Leviathan*, p. 245.

affirm his opposition to Leviathan, but he too speaks in his essay of a 'problem of resistance.'[2] This 'problem' is so pronounced because the Leviathan that Perlman stands 'against' is itself a creature of opposition, antagonism, and inversion. The danger of resistance is again the danger of inversion; that, in the very act of standing 'against' Leviathan, the resisters themselves troublingly reinscribe their opposition within its antagonistic terrain and become what they oppose.

As I would like to consider in what follows, Perlman's politico-spiritual 'vision' reinstates this 'problem of resistance' through its troubling re-inscription of the antagonisms Perlman attributes to Leviathan and the 'Western spirit.' To consider these issues, I will in section one attend to Perlman's politico-theoretical background. I will explore, in particular, the dialectical problematisation of resistance in one of Perlman's major influences: Guy Debord's *The Society of the Spectacle*. Following a discussion of Debord's definition of the 'problem of resistance' through the ideal of theoretical and practical 'Coherence,' I note how Perlman's position in his later essay diverges from this dialectical problematic, emphasising instead an extremely dualistic position where the force being opposed—Leviathan—turns opponents into a 'mirror image' of what they stand against. In section two, I consider one of the few extant references in Perlman's essay to a dialectical understanding of resistance: Arnold J. Toynbee's *A Study of History*. Taking consideration of his dialectic of 'challengeand-response,' I emphasise the spiritual and affective dimensions of Toynbee's problematisation of resistance. As I argue, resistance in Toynbee's understanding falls to an uncreative sterility when it is consumed by a 'stimulus' of reactive hatred that turns the art of social transformation into a war.

Through comparison with Toynbee, I turn in section three to Perlman's identity with this form of militant politico-spiritual

[2] Emphasis added. *Ibid*, p. 32.

problematise the explicit *continuity* between the militancy of the Adamites and the militancy of the Taborites by way of their shared practice of politico-spiritual warfare and their apocalyptic conviction to not simply 'await the destruction of the godless by a miracle,' but 'to carry out the purification of the earth themselves' through the merciless extermination of demonised, impure enemies.[145] Perlman will exempt the Adamites from critique for three main reasons. Firstly, he has already established that resistance does not have to be explained or justified: resistance is just self-defence. Secondly, he is unwilling to identify 'guerrilla bands' and 'terrorists' with the dangers of militancy because such violence is small-scale and de-institutionalised. It is a decentralised, insurgent form of organisation devoid of the rigors of the institutionalised 'war machine:' the machine that apparently transmutes resisters into 'policemen and jailers.' Lastly, the Adamites practice 'love feasts' and communal 'self-abandon,' acts Perlman identifies with the removal of Leviathan's excrescent 'armor' and the subsequent spiritual recuperation of the 'state of nature.' The Adamites here conform to Perlman's definition of a successful response to the encroachments of Leviathan: '*withdrawal* from the entrails of Leviathan.'

Perlman's reading of the Adamites is problematic because he has again only concerned himself with the content of their practical resistance, even if this terroristic content is rather troubling in itself. He does not recognise anything malign in those jubilant militants who combine guerrilla tactics with the antinomian 'love feast.' When aligned together, these oppositional practices prove distinct from the militant 'Organisation' and its monstrous transmutation into a 'mirror image' of what it opposes. These features do not indicate a 'stimulus' of overpowering incapacitation, but rather a 'stimulus' of renewed strength. What Perlman here evades in his positive treatment of the Adamites is the inherently reactive militant form of this libertine, decentralised resistance: emotional en-

[145] *Ibid*, p. 212.

> Like other Taborites, the Adamites regarded themselves as avenging angels, whose mission it was to wield the sword throughout the world until all the unclean had been cut down. Blood, they declared, must flood the world to the height of a horse's head; and despite their small number they did their best to achieve this aim. From their island stronghold they constantly made nocturnal sorties – which they called a Holy War – against neighbouring villages; and in these expeditions their communistic principles and their lust for destruction both found expression. The Adamites, who had no possessions of their own, seized everything they could lay hands on. At the same time they set the villages on fire and cut down or burnt alive every man, woman and child whom they could find; this too they justified with a quotation from the Scriptures: 'And at midnight there was a cry made – Behold, the bridegroom cometh…' Priests, whom they called incarnate devils, they slaughtered with particular enthusiasm.'[144]

Perlman acknowledges this historical portrait of the Adamites as an extremely violent Christian heretical sect. While he, in turn, reprimands historians—like Cohn—who rely upon historical depictions of the Adamites composed by their executioners, Perlman's reading of the Adamites does not in itself suggest any notable divergence from Cohn's comments. Cohn's depiction does not differ from Perlman's own description of 'daring radicals' whose Biblically-inspired righteousness against 'evil doers' could grant justification to 'every present atrocity.'

Although Perlman can therefore speak of the dangers of the rigid military organisation of the Taborites, he refuses to problematise the Adamites' own violence. In lieu of Cohn, he too fails to

[144] Cohn. *The Pursuit of the Millennium*, pp. 220–221.

warfare. To explore this problem, I make comparisons with several of the major spiritual influences in Perlman's work: William Blake, Lao Tzu's *Tao Te Ching*, and the figure of the trickster in world mythology. In all these comparisons, I maintain that Perlman evades the dialectical figurations of resistance in Blake and the *Tao Te Ching*, and also fails to acknowledge the inherent moral ambivalence of the trickster, preferring instead to remain within a simplistic moral universe of good versus evil that reinvokes stark, unequivocal affirmations of opposition 'against' Leviathan, notably through an inverted primitivist politics of the 'frontier.' In section four, I attempt to discern an alternative conception of resistance in Perlman's text. I draw particular attention to those 'gentle' examples of resistance that replace this politico-spiritual warfare with a message of social reconciliation. I also attend to this 'gentle' element in Perlman's own radical background, particularly in relation to the Quakers and the non-violent anarchism of Judith Malina and Julian Beck.

Section One: The dialectic of coherence-and-incoherence

That Perlman maintains an enduring concern with a 'problem' inherent to opposition and resistance is best exemplified in his 1976 novel *Letters of Insurgents*. This cautionary and far more hesitant approach to resistance is given form through the fictional character of Yarostan Vochek, who voices his—and Perlman's—anxieties over both past and present involvements in labour radicalism. As Yarostan discourses:

> I know and those around me know that the conditions which open up a possibility for a new life also give rise to forces which negate life. Human life itself has this double character. Growth takes place through cell di-

> vision, through the realization of the potentialities carried within each cell. Yet the ugliest form of death also takes place through cell division. Such death is also a growth, one that annihilates potentiality and replaces living cells with monstrosities…Just as the power of one cell to split into two is the power that turns against the further division of living cells, so the power that enables us to move together out of slavery to a terrain where the free development of each individual becomes possible is the power that turns against our ability to move at all.[3]

Through the metaphor of cancer—the 'ugliest form of death'—Perlman considers how the 'problem of resistance' inheres within resisters and the very act of resistance: the desire for a new life may actually 'give rise to forces which negate life.' While Perlman still maintains the antagonism between Life and Death discussed in earlier sections of this thesis, his discussion upholds a thoroughly more dialectical formulation than that of Life against Death, because this cancerous negation is born not of some external, corrosive force parasitising on the living, as in Perlman's representation of Leviathan in *Against His-story, Against Leviathan*; this negation is rather formed from this very creative impulse towards change, transformation, resistance, and opposition. Here, 'the power that enables us to move…is the power that turns against our ability to move at all.' Resistance, in this sense, is never so simple and uncomplicated a process since the 'problem of resistance' resides no longer or solely on the side of that which is opposed, but on the side of the resisters themselves.

The implication that the 'problem of resistance' can be understood in terms of a dialectic internal to the process of resistance—and the resisters themselves—is not, of course, a purely fictional insight on Perlman's part. This idea of a dialectical problematic is

[3] Perlman. *Letters of Insurgents*, p. 195.

While the Adamites prove sexual libertines amongst themselves and evade the military rigidity required of a 'functioning war machine,' their desire for a 'peaceful Eden' in no way encompasses a message of what Toynbee would call 'gentleness.' As Perlman notes in reference to a revolutionary political terminology with far greater contemporary resonance, 'The Adamites combine traits of those we will call guerrilla bands and terrorists.'[140] As terrorists and guerrillas, the Adamites are for Perlman the 'most violent' of the radical Christian sects, even more so than the Taborites, which is quite a remarkable statement in itself when he speaks of how the Taborites 'fight furiously, [and] viciously,' and also 'observe none of the gentlemen's rules of war.'[141] The Adamites are in Perlman's terms the 'most violent' because they, unlike the Taborites, remain entirely committed to the restoration of the 'state of nature:' their desire for the 'peaceful Eden of the imminent future *justifies every present atrocity*.'[142] As he interprets the spiritual inspiration behind their justification of terroristic violence, 'In the view of the Adamites, "all the evil ones who remain outside the mountains will be swallowed up in one moment": all the evil doers are to be killed, all the houses destroyed, every last entity of the old world to be wiped out.'[143] The Adamites are for Perlman committed 'spirited revolutionaries'—and are all the more violent towards the 'evil doers' of the 'old world' because of this revolutionary commitment to their own 'self-fulfilling prophecies' of a new world cleansed and purified of the old order.

In his *The Pursuit of the Millennium*—a text Perlman admonishes—Cohn further details the Judaeo-Christian inspiration behind the Adamite's terroristic commitments. As Cohn writes in an extended passage,

[140] *Ibid*, p. 220.
[141] *Ibid*, p. 219.
[142] Emphasis added. *Ibid*, p. 220.
[143] *Ibid*, p. 220.

icises quite specific militant tactics and strategies—the role of the leader, hierarchy, discipline, and the idolatry of the 'The Organisation.' For Toynbee however, the problem of a 'sterile conventional militancy' or politics of the 'sword' is not strictly one of content but form. Through Toynbee's dialectical problematisation of resistance, the form of militancy precedes such specific, practical issues. The form of militancy in Toynbee's conception is this reactive, uncreative 'stimulus:' wrathful hatred and emotional enslavement to a demonised Enemy. From this understanding of militancy, the politico-spiritual warfare of Perlman's *Against His-story, Against Leviathan* does not indicate an alternative 'stimulus' of renewed strength but rather gives license to such militant hatred.

Perlman's critique of militancy is moreover quite inconsistent because there are instances in his essay where Perlman will laud and identify his 'vision' with a 'sterile conventional militancy.' There is no more troubling example of this acritical appraisal of militancy than in Perlman's treatment of the Bohemian Adamites or *pikarti*, a radical antinomian sect that broke off from the Taborites during the time of the Czech Reform period, and that have been referred to in both Parts One and Two of this thesis for their central importance to Perlman's narrative of 'return' to the 'state of nature.' Unlike his critique of the Taborites' military organisation, Perlman praises the Adamites for their sexual libertinism and their 'love feasts,' but also for the important fact that they 'reject all institutions, including the institutions required by a functioning war machine.'[138] The Adamites reject the 'armor' of military rigor, discipline, and structured organisation and instead embrace the task of removing their 'armor' through ecstatic, communal acts of 'self-abandon.' They are for Perlman a perfect example of a community attempting to restore a 'peaceful Eden of the imminent future.'[139]

[138] *Ibid*, p. 220.
[139] *Ibid*, p. 223.

a defining feature of one of Perlman's major theoretical influences: Guy Debord's *The Society of the Spectacle*. A founding work of the Situationist International, Debord's text is most recognised for its strident Marxist critique of consumer capitalism and the tyranny of 'representation,' 'image,' and 'spectacle' in the governance of everyday life.[4] Debord's text is not however simply a contemporary retelling of Marx's critique of the commodity fetish; it is also a work of practical and theoretical strategy in the revolutionary transformation of society that critically responds to the history of modern European revolutionary thought.[5]Resistance, the question of how to resist, and the problem of resistance are therefore of supreme significance in *The Society of the Spectacle*.

For Debord, resistance hinges precisely upon the dialectical 'coherence' of thought with action, theory with practice, or what might also be termed *praxis*. Both the success and failure of resistance return always in Debord's work to these fundamental questions of dialectical 'coherence' and its negative counterpart: 'incoherence,' the breakdown of the relationship between thought and action. Debord's concern with dialectical 'coherence' is explicitly indebted to Hegel and the Hegelian dialectic. In Debord's estimation, all the major radical currents that emerged in the Nineteenth century—the individualist anarchism of Max Stirner, the collectivist anarchism of Bakunin, and Marxism—all 'grew out of a critical confrontation with Hegelian thought.'[6] Debord, in equal part, carries on this project of a critical confrontation with Hegel in the Twentieth Century. In terms of this dialectic

[4] Anselm Jappe. *Guy Debord*. Berkeley: University of California Press, 1999.
[5] Stevphen Shukaitis. ''Theories are made only to die in the war of time': Guy Debord and the Situationist International as strategic thinkers.' *Culture and Organization*. Vol. 20 No. 4, 2014, pp. 251–268. See also Jonathan Purkis. 'Towards an Anarchist Sociology,' in Jonathan Purkis and James Brown (eds.). *Changing Anarchisms: Anarchist theory and practice in a global age*. Manchester: Manchester University Press, 2004, p. 41. On Debord as revolutionary, see Len Bracken. *Guy Debord: Revolutionary*. Venice: Feral House, 1997.
[6] Debord. *Society of the Spectacle*, p. 78.

of 'coherence,' Hegel is so emphasised because he is one of the first philosophers to recognise the interrelationship of thought and action in human consciousness and human participation in the process of historical transformation. In Hegel, 'the thought of history' is reconciled to practical transformation within history, of human participation 'in the labor and struggles which make up history.'[7] 'The subject of history' for Hegel as for Debord 'can be none other than the living producing himself, becoming master and possessor of his world which is history.'[8] However, as Debord continues, Hegel only interprets and philosophises about 'a world which makes itself' through historical, practical transformation. Hegel only understands this transformation 'in thought.'[9] The dialectical reconciliation of thought with action is sundered. This is for Debord particularly evidenced in Hegel's 'Absolute Spirit' because this 'Spirit' is now detached from those living, embodied subjects of history who participate in 'the labor and struggles which make up history.' Hegel here reaches the conservative conclusion that the 'total history of Spirit' and the 'labor and struggles which make up history' are already complete. 'The subject of history' is, in turn, restricted to the 'absolute hero,' those leaders and Statesman who incarnate this 'Absolute Spirit.' Instead of recognising that the 'world which makes itself' is still an ongoing task in which all participate, Hegel turns to a historical determinism and defends the existent order, becoming a philosopher of history and acceding to 'the glorification of what exists.'[10]

In Marx's 'critical confrontation with Hegelian thought,' Debord recognises an attempt to return Hegel to 'coherence.' Challenging the trite observation that Marx's inversion of Hegel consists in 'putting the materialist development of productive forces

[7] *Ibid*, p. 73.
[8] *Ibid*, p. 74.
[9] *Ibid*, p. 76.
[10] *Ibid*, p. 76.

fesses a consistent theme of politico-spiritual warfare. Perlman inscribes 'spirit' into an antagonistic, morally rigid 'war of extermination' that draws from the vengeful imagery of the Judaeo-Christian apocalyptic tradition. When Perlman writes, for instance, how the religious sect known as the Cathars 'borrow the Christian terms Good and Evil, but they give these terms Zarathustrian contents: Good means Ahura Mazda or Light; Evil means Ahriman or Darkness,' I would simply note that it is Perlman who is actually borrowing these 'Christian terms.'[137] His politico-spiritual 'vision' is still heavily indebted to the dualistic antagonisms of the Western JudaeoChristian tradition. Unlike Toynbee's own Goethian inspired dialectic, Perlman has not in any way attempted to resolve these dualistic antagonisms of the JudaeoChristian tradition: he more simply utilises them in the righteous condemnation of that which he stands 'against.'

Furthermore, Perlman's primitivism resuscitates a militant politics of the *limes* or the 'frontier' because of its consistent counter-position of positively conceived 'outside agitators,' 'barbarians,' and 'heretics' against the 'armoured' and the civilised inside Leviathan. With resistance devoid of a 'threshold'—a meeting place for the interaction of 'outside' and 'inside'—Perlman's text reasserts the stark dividing lines of the colonial 'frontier,' albeit inverted and reconfigured by means of this celebration of the 'outside.' Through this primitivist politics of the 'frontier,' the sheer disjointedness of modernity—its uncertainties, ambiguities, and contaminations—are banished in favour of the firm and certain conviction of a dividing line that has length but no breadth.

In saying this, I can also acknowledge that Perlman is critical of militancy, and refers specifically to the overpowering incapacitation of militant acts of resistance—in both a historical and contemporary context. Though, Perlman's criticisms are more correctly directed towards the *content* of militant resistance. He crit-

[137] Perlman. *Against His-story, Against Leviathan*, p. 185.

slaved to the divisive, antagonistic terrain of the world it has renounced and stands against.[136]

Understood in these terms, Toynbee's dialectic of challenge-and-response could be said to provide Perlman's work with an alternative to Debord's 'Coherent critique' and the breakdown of resistance into 'incoherence.' It too suggests a dialectical understanding of change, transformation and resistance that stands in closer accord with the spiritual and visionary inspiration behind *Against His-story, Against Leviathan* with its use of poetry, religious symbolism, and mythology. With Toynbee's emphasis upon a spiritual and emotional 'stimulus,' the 'problem of resistance' is again restored to a problem pertaining to resisters themselves. This is not to contend that Perlman's own reading of Toynbee necessarily entails this specific interpretation. Toynbee is only mentioned briefly in Perlman's essay; and, there is little detail concerning what actually differentiates a 'stimulus' of creative, revivified strength from a 'stimulus' of overpowering incapacitation in the context of resistance. I have therefore tried to offer an interpretation of Toynbee's work that duly attends to those issues of resistance that stand in contrast with Perlman's dualistic portrait of resistance. I have thus looked at an internal dialectic of resistance instead of 'two movements which pull in diametrically opposed directions,' and emphasised the emotional life of the resister rather than the Reichian vision of excrescent 'armour' corrupting 'daring radicals.'

Indeed, in comparison with Toynbee's problematic, I find that Perlman's politico-spiritual 'vision' more often gives license to that reactive and uncreative 'stimulus' attributable to a 'sterile conventional militancy:' wrathful hatred and emotional enslavement to a hated object. As I have explored throughout previous sections of this thesis, Perlman's *Against His-story, Against Leviathan* pro-

[136] On the militant dimensions of Debord's politics, see Andrew Hussey. *The Game of War: The life and death of Guy Debord.* London: Jonathan Cape, 2001.

in the place of the journey of the Hegelian Spirit moving towards its encounter with itself in time,' Debord instead considers Marx's major contribution to consist in the inversion of Hegel's contemplative stance.[11] Marx recognises that 'the thought of history can be saved only by becoming practical thought.' Debord essentially reaffirms the value of Marx's proclamation in his 1845 'Theses on Feuerbach:' 'philosophers have only *interpreted* the world in various ways; the point is to *change* it.'[12] Marx renews the Hegelian dialectic through the affirmation of a revolutionary *praxis*. For Debord, 'Marx ruined Hegel's position as *separate* from what happens, as well as *contemplation* by any supreme external agent whatever. From now on, theory has to know only what it does.'[13]

Though, as Debord further argues, there remains in Marx 'the *untranscended* heritage of the *undialectical* part of Hegel's search for a circular system.'[14] This undialectical and incoherent element is the economistic determinism in Marx's thought, and his dependence upon the theoretical 'science' of political economy. Failing to completely transcend Hegel's contemplative stance, Marx reinstates the historical determinations of 'Absolute Spirit' by way of the mechanistic determinism of 'the blind development of merely economic productive forces.'[15] While ostensibly refuting the mystical dimension of Hegel's 'Absolute Spirit,' Marx's 'scientific' historical materialism remains just as theoretically abstract and deterministic as this 'Spirit' only that it is now projected onto the movement of 'economic productive forces.' As a practical consequence, 'What becomes important is to study economic development with patience, and to continue to accept suffering with a Hegelian tranquillity, so that the result remains "a grave-

[11] *Ibid*, p. 80.
[12] Marx. 'Theses on Feuerbach,' p. 158.
[13] Debord. *Society of the spectacle*, p. 80.
[14] *Ibid*, p. 80.
[15] *Ibid*, p. 80.

yard of good intentions."'[16]Revolutionary struggle, change and transformation in a 'world which makes itself' give way instead to the Marxist laws of historical development; revolutionary *praxis* is suborned to the socialist project of a quantitative and incremental restructuring of the 'anarchy of production.'[17] However ambiguous Marx's stance towards such historical determinations, incoherence returns in this privileging of thought and theoretical speculation over an embodied, revolutionary practice.

Still, this separation of thought from practice is not coeval with passivity or mere contemplation. Rather, this 'incoherence' corresponds to the *undialectical* deformation of both thought and practice. This is what Debord terms ideology or, 'the coherence of the separate,' a stance contradictorily founded upon the incoherence of thought and practice.[18] Under the reign of ideology, practice emerges from the tyranny of theoretical abstractions. Ideology reinstates religious idolatry because human consciousness reifies its own creations and now forces the living to revere these externalised human constructs—an 'Idea,' an 'Organisation,' or some confluence of these two. Ideology grounds itself in the incoherence and division of thought from practice, and thus already begins to mirror the ideological separations of the existent order. In reference to the ideological foundations of Marxism, Debord speaks, for instance, of the idolatrous tyranny of theoretical abstractions, such as Marx's economistic determinism and his laws of historical development. As Debord argues, 'the deterministic-scientific facet in Marx's thought was precisely the gap through which the process of "ideologization" penetrated.'[19] Marxist ideology emerges from Marx's theoretical incoherence—his allegiance to the 'science' of political economy and a mechanistic historical determinism.

[16] *Ibid*, p. 84.
[17] *Ibid*, p. 81.
[18] *Ibid*, p. 105.
[19] *Ibid*, p. 84.

these are important questions in themselves. With Toynbee, militants do not simply become what they oppose because they organise themselves into a 'war machine.' Rather, in the spiritual and affective terms of Toynbee's critique, militants fail in their response to the 'disintegrating society' because they too are heirs of a more thoroughgoing disintegration—a 'split' or 'fall'—that may prove the basis for positive acts of creation much as it can serve in this instance as the basis for inversion and uncreative sterility.

To borrow from the language of Debord, Toynbee's dialectic is capable of recognising coherent and incoherent forms of change and transformation. Though, Toynbee's dialectic is not simply reducible to questions of the relationship between thought and action, theory and practice. Certainly, Debord's ideal of *praxis* and Toynbee's ideal of 'positive creation' are both very attentive to 'the operation of human will' in the process of historical change. However, unlike Toynbee's dialectic of 'challenge-and-response,' Debord's emphasis upon coherent 'theory' and coherent 'thought' does not necessarily extend to a concern with emotion and affect and to the 'conflicting psychic forces' of Love and Hate. In equal part, Debord's work is generally contemptuous of the 'spiritual-religious side of Man's nature' as it is for all 'outlandish superstitions (Zen, spiritualism, "New Church" mysticism, and other rubbish such as Gandhiism and Humanism).'[135] For Toynbee, resistance falls to incoherence not because of the absence of coherent *praxis*; rather, as in the case of 'sterile conventional militancy,' resistance falls to incoherence when its opposition is more reaction than response. In its failure to creatively respond to both the schisms of the 'disintegrating society' and also these 'schisms in the soul,' militant resistance declares war against the existent order of things even while remaining emotionally and spiritually en-

[135] Members of the Situationist International. *On the Poverty of Student Life*, p. 18.

to a hated object. 'Sterile conventional militancy' is in this sense as much a politics of hate as it is a politics of the 'sword' because the militant response to disintegration—a social war—not only requires a discernible Enemy, but it also entails a severing, sundering, and negating of relations with this Enemy, even if this severance is quite contradictory in that the militant 'act of secession' is still emotionally enslaved to what it opposes and stands against.

Of course, as in the apocalyptic scenario of revolutionary violence, this militant hatred towards a demonised Enemy still possesses an affective bond of love directed towards an oppressed social minority or majority. Though, as noted, love does not by necessity encompass a message of 'gentleness.' In the context of a 'sterile conventional militancy,' love—for one's group or Cause—can serve to bolster and intensify hostile, conflictual relations with those outside this circle of empathetic concern. Unlike Toynbee's 'gentle way'—with its transfigured response to external and internal schisms—militancy fails to attend to an 'inner world' of discord, and is thus incapable of offering any alternative means of relating to others. Its 'love' is still the non-transfigured 'love' of the 'disintegrating society'—the love for the same against the different, the friend against the enemy. Much as a 'sterile conventional militancy' continues to affirm the antagonistic terrain of the 'disintegrating society,' it too continues to function through the divisive, 'split' terrain of self against other, friend against enemy, Us versus Them. No matter the extreme, apocalyptic rhetoric of 'sterile conventional militancy,' its destructive, hateful resistance to the 'disintegrating society' is neither a creative nor substantive alternative to it.

The problems of a 'sterile conventional militancy' are not in this sense simply reducible to questions of strategy, tactics, and the appropriate relationship between political means and ends, even if

Political Paranoia: The psychopolitics of hatred. New Haven: Yale University Press, 1997; Andrew A. G. Ross. *Mixed Emotions: Beyond fear and hatred in international conflict*. Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2013; Willard Gaylin. *Hatred: The psychological descent into violence*. New York: PublicAffairs, 2003.

Again, this Marxist process of 'ideologization' is not devoid of action. As Debord writes of Marxism-Leninism, which is for him the quintessential expression of ideology, this radical tradition has had quite evident practical successes, despite its ideological 'incoherence.' Rather, revolutionary practice is here founded upon the separation or alienation of theory and practice, thought and action. Alienation and separation within human consciousness is here inscribed into revolutionary practice. One major consequence of this is the creation of new hierarchies, divisions and separations founded upon the guiding dominion of thought over practice. Debord witnesses this in those revolutionary Organisations that institute a 'dictatorship of the most knowledgeable, or those who would be reputed to be such.'[20] These Organisational dictatorships are centred upon the creation of a revolutionary vanguard who have appropriated the idolatrous 'Ideas' and theories of the Organisation. This hierarchical separation extends furthermore to the practical goals and aspirations of the revolutionary organisation. In reference to Marxism-Leninism, Debord considers how the proletariat—as agents of historical transformation—are reduced to insignificant motes within the deterministic movements of the laws of Marxian historical development, much as they become serviceable components of the hierarchical structure of an incipient revolutionary bureaucracy whose goal is not only the seizure of state power, but also the seizure of the proletariat itself; the revolutionary organisation becomes, 'the party of the proprietors of the proletariat.'[21] Just as 'the deterministic-scientific facet in Marx's thought was precisely the gap through which the process of "ideologization" penetrated,' so too is it the window through which one can discern the 'return of statist and hierarchic methods of application.'[22] Refuting dialectical 'coherence,' this undialectical and 'incoherent' deformation

[20] *Ibid*, p. 91.
[21] *Ibid*, p. 102.
[22] *Ibid*, p. 90.

of thought and action, theory and practice becomes a reflection or mirror of that which it assaults and rejects, cleaving as it does to the deterministic 'science' of political economy and its emulation of authoritarian, elitist and statist political organisational models. Of course, this dialectical process of inversion is a problem that emerges not from the State or 'political economy,' but from consciousness, from the ideological 'incoherence' of resisters and revolutionaries, the very agents of social change and transformation.

On this basis, Debord concludes that 'revolutionary theory is now the enemy of all revolutionary ideology *and knows it*.'[23] Theoretical critique becomes a major facet of revolutionary struggle in its movement beyond 'the dominant society's conditions of separation and hierarchy.'[24] By revolutionary theory, Debord signifies a return to the coherence of theory and practice inherent to a revolutionary *praxis*. Debord discerns this in the organisational model of workers' councils during the early years of the Russian Revolution. As Debord argues, historical consciousness moves here from incoherence and separation to coherence. It abolishes alienation, and returns human consciousness to dialectical unity. Within the context of the workers' councils, 'the proletarian subject can emerge from his struggle against contemplation: his consciousness is equal to the practical organisation which it undertakes because this consciousness is itself inseparable from coherent intervention in history.'[25] In Debord's conception, revolutionary struggle requires all 'to inscribe their thought into practice,' that is, for everyone to become dialecticians, thus hindering those revolutionary vanguards that reinforce the deformation of thought and practice through the institution of a 'dictatorship of the most knowledgeable' and the idolatrous worship of a separate, tyrannous Idea or Organisation.

[23] *Ibid*, p. 124.
[24] *Ibid*, p. 90.
[25] *Ibid*, p. 116.

with the sword.'[132] Though, as in Perlman's retelling of the Pyrrhic victory, 'perish' does not necessarily signify military defeat; it is more a question of the betrayal of that promise of discovering a creative 'alternative to the disintegrating society.' As Toynbee continues, 'the sword can neither be compelled to bring salvation nor prevented from dealing the destruction which it is its nature to bring to pass. The would-be savior with the sword is self-condemned to self-defeat.'[133] Even in triumph, 'sterile conventional militancy' brings defeat because its apocalyptic and destructive war does not give birth to a 'New World;' its violence provides only a counterfeit form of redemption and rebirth.

'Sterile conventional militancy' is further dissociable from an act of 'positive creation' in that its reactive response to the schisms and antagonisms of the 'disintegrating society' fails equally so in responding to 'a spiritual rift which scars the souls of the individuals who 'belong' to a disintegrating society.' Much as it cleaves to existing schisms and antagonisms, militancy too fails in its response to those aforementioned 'schisms in the soul.' A 'sterile conventional militancy' does not successfully combine together a project of dynamic social transformation with inner transformation, and particularly so because it primarily locates its schisms in an external social force that is considered the real cause of disintegration.

This failure to respond to these 'schisms in the soul' is no where more pronounced than in the emotional and affective dimensions of militancy: its fall in Toynbee's terms to 'an evil passion,' to wrathfulness and resentful, indignant hatred towards a demonised Enemy. The emotional 'stimulus' as it were underlying 'sterile conventional militancy' is hatred.[134] Militancy is emotionally enslaved

[132] Toynbee. *A Study of History, Vol. V*, p. 178.
[133] *Ibid*, p. 260.
[134] For contemporary explorations of the intersections between affect, hatred and politics that I have found helpful in this context, see Julia Kristeva. *Hatred and Forgiveness*. New York: Columbia University Press, 2012; Robert S. Robins.

ment of stasis and dynamism, pause and movement that is the basis of 'positive creation.' Militancy may indeed be capable of dynamic change and it can prove extremely efficacious in its struggle against oppressive social, political, and economic structures, but it is also implicitly a reaction to them; and, as a reaction, 'sterile conventional militancy' cannot provide a genuine alternative because its resistance and opposition requires and functions through these existing schisms, rifts, and antagonisms.

Still, Toynbee does at least acknowledge how political ideologies grounded upon militant social war profess a message of hopeful rebirth and 'positive creation.' Marxism, for example, which provides 'the classic exposition of the social crisis' through 'class struggle' entails both a 'violent and destructive proletarian revolution,' but also the vision of a 'New Society in which the disposal of productive forces will be such that class conflict and the political and social apparatus that this evokes, will be eliminated.'[130] Conforming to 'the traditional Zoroastrian and Jewish and Christian apocalyptic pattern,' a 'Marxian eschatology' with its 'violent climax' of history in the Proletarian revolution concludes in a 'gentle future' after this militant, destructive disintegration.[131]

However, this eschatological vision is foundationally antagonistic because it requires the complete extinction of an offending evil; this militant eschatology is constituted through the extermination of a demonised Enemy. Despite this vision of new birth and new creation in the aftermath of militant social war, the inherently reactive nature of militancy provides little indication that this exterminatory war will ever cease. Because of the foundational antagonisms inscribed into the militant programme of 'class struggle,' the 'New Society' will require for its own continued preservation the constant discovery of social enemies. As Toynbee quotes repeatedly from the Bible, 'All they that take to the sword shall perish

[130] *Ibid*, p. 225–226.

[131] *Ibid*, p. 225.

That Perlman found inspiration in this language of dialectical coherence and incoherence would undoubtedly prove an understatement. Debord's dialectical problematisation of resistance recurs throughout much of Perlman's theoretical engagements in the late 1960s and early 1970s, a period following the political ferment of May 1968 in Paris, where Perlman first encountered the work of Guy Debord and the Situationist International. Indeed, Perlman's own personal account of these events in his *Worker-Student Action Committees*, a text co-written with fellow activist Roger Gregoire, adopts the language of Debord in defining both the revolutionary successes and failures of these events. Perlman and Gregoire explore the tensions between a 'spontaneous and *incoherent* uprising' and a '*coherent* step on the part of a determined revolutionary movement' towards the adoption of a '*coherent* revolutionary theory.'[26]

Debord's influence continued in Perlman's critical study of his former teacher Charles Wright Mills. The title alone for this work—*The Incoherence of the Intellectual: C. Wright Mills' struggle to unite knowledge and action*—is itself indicative of this dialectical tension between the coherence and incoherence of thought and action, theory and practice.[27] The text is moreover a telling statement of Perlman's own struggle to unite knowledge and action, revealing his own conflicted relationship to the universities that exposed him to this world of theoretical knowledge, but which apparently dampened his potentialities for social revolt and revolutionary transformation. As David Watson argues, Perlman's life and thought is a search for 'coherent action' in the world, a coherence that might overturn this world's 'social schizophrenia' by means of uniting 'one's split self, or at least to define the conditions of one's own coherence.'[28]

[26] Emphasis added. Gregoire and Perlman. *Worker-Student Action Committees*, p. 93.

[27] Perlman. *The Incoherence of the Intellectual*, p. 9.

[28] Watson. 'Homage to Fredy Perlman,' pp. 244–245.

While Perlman evidently found inspiration in Debord's language of coherence and incoherence, there is a troubling if not conflicted aspect to his adoption of this language because, even during his translation of *The Society of the Spectacle*, Perlman held apprehensions towards Debord's 'Coherent critique.' These reservations derived from already apparent indications in Debord's text that the coherence of thought and action in *praxis* did not necessarily secure the 'coherent' revolutionary from the ravages of 'ideologization.' In a properly dialectical fashion, the 'coherent' revolutionary could still fall to a process of inversion, and thus presage a dialectical movement into incoherence. This is for Perlman notably pronounced in Debord's insistence that members of the revolutionary organisation comply with its 'Coherent critique.' As Debord writes, 'The only limit to participation in the total democracy of the revolutionary organization is the recognition and self-appropriation of the coherence of its critique by all its members, a coherence which must be proved in the critical theory as such and in the relation between theory and practical activity.'[29] Despite the fact there are intimations of this stance in Perlman's own *Worker-Student Action Committees*—the need of 'coherent revolutionary theory' for a 'determined revolutionary movement'—Perlman found this 'self-appropriation' of the Situationist's 'Coherent critique' so problematic because of its potential to devolve into an incoherent 'rigid ideology' that the revolutionary organisation subsequently enforces in an authoritarian and vanguardist manner—the 'coherent' revolutionary is again forced to conform to an abstract, idolatrous Idea and Organisation.[30] For Perlman, removal from 'the deterministic-scientific facet in Marx's thought,' which Debord considers primary to the 'ideologization' of Marxism is no real guarantee against a 'coherent' revolutionary *theory* devolving into an 'incoherent' revolutionary *ideology*; the

[29] Debord. *Society of the Spectacle*, p. 121.
[30] Perlman. *Having Little, Being Much*, p. 74.

but is 'actually contradictory and incompatible' with this 'gentle way.'[125] This 'reaction' is 'sterile conventional militancy,' or, in another phrasing, the politics of the 'sword.'[126] For Toynbee, the uncreative sterility of a militant 'reaction' to the 'disintegrating society' is so pronounced because of the way in which it mirrors and more often intensifies the rifts, schisms and antagonisms of the 'disintegrating society.' 'Sterile conventional militancy' turns the search for an alternative into a war. As Toynbee speaks of the militant violence of 'external' and 'internal' proletariats, their assault upon the 'Dominant Minority'—the ruling class—exacerbates existing social, political and economic 'frontiers.' With militancy, there is no longer a *limen* or 'threshold' that serves as a place of meeting, interaction, and encounter; there is instead only the *limes*, the 'frontier' that cuts and divides off friend from enemy, civilisation from barbarian, inside from outside—a boundary line that has length but no breadth.[127] In founding social change on a reaction against existing social, political and economic antagonisms, militancy destroys in Toynbee's estimation the possibility of creative social transformation. For Toynbee, militancy consists of only '*two negative movements* each of which is inspired by an evil passion.'[128] The social militant 'repays injustice with resentment, fear with hate, and violence with violence when it executes its act of secession.'[129] Militancy moves from dynamic crisis and destruction to further dynamic crisis and destruction. Militancy skips a 'beat.'

For these reasons, Toynbee refers to an inherent sterility within the militant response to the challenge of disintegration because the vengefulness of this drive towards destruction consists of only 'two negative movements' and thus abandons the dialectical move-

[125] Toynbee. *A Study of History, one volume ed.*, p. 232.
[126] *Ibid*, p. 241.
[127] *Ibid*, p. 234.
[128] Emphasis added. *Ibid*, p. 369.
[129] Toynbee. *A Study of History, Vol. V*, p. 26.

ascetic 'withdrawal' as a form of escape from this world's troubles and disintegrations, these uncreative responses are '*reactions* to the pressures of disintegration.'[121] They are in Toynbee's definition reactive responses because these alternatives perpetuate the antagonisms of the 'disintegrating society,' and abandon the creative rhythm of challenge-and-response, stasis and dynamism, pause and movement that form the basis of 'positive creation.'[122] Prominent examples in Toynbee's work of this uncreative breakdown include 'passive abandon,' a 'state of mind in which antinomianism is accepted as a substitute for creativity;' 'active selfcontrol,' an attempt to re-establish order in the individual and the world through the disciplining of human passions; archaism, the attempt to escape into a past 'utopian chimera as a substitute for an intolerable present;' and, revolutionary futurism, an attempt to deny 'the necessity of undergoing all the pain of experience (*pathei mathos*) by claiming that the intermediate stages between present misery and potential happiness may be leap-frogged with one massive stride far into the future.'[123] In all these instances, the challenge of the 'disintegrating society' proves overwhelming because these reactions are all estranged from that creative 'alternating rhythm of static and dynamic, of movement and pause and movement.' Particularly in the case of the temporal discontinuity of archaism and futurism, 'both of them [are] incompatible with growth of any kind, since they both deliberately aim at a breach of continuity, and the principle of continuity is of the essence of the movement of growth in whatever terms we may try to describe it.'[124]

There remains however one 'reaction' that is for Toynbee the definitive example of an uncreative act of resistance. This is a 'reaction' that is not only considered distinct from 'gentleness,'

[121] Toynbee. *A Study of History, one volume ed.*, p. 241.

[122] *Ibid*, p. 241.

[123] *Ibid*, p. 245–247.

[124] Arnold J. Toynbee. *A Study of History, Volume VI.* Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1939, p. 169.

boundaries between the two are more porous and permeable than Debord would suggest.

Perlman's scepticism found confirmation when Roger Gregoire, fellow contributor to the *Worker-Student Action Committees*, returned to Paris following the events of May 1968 and sought membership within the Situationist International. As a condition of membership, Gregoire was required to clarify certain past radical involvements that did not conform to the Situationist's 'Coherent critique.' One such involvement included his participation with Perlman in the publication of the journal *Radical America*. Perlman subsequently received a series of letters requiring him 'to break off relations with *Radical America* as well as with all Detroiters who had conventional Leftist views,' that is, those 'who lacked even the slightest knowledge of the Situationist critique.'[31] Perlman responded, in turn, by noting that Gregoire's call for theoretical coherency came at a time in the 1970s when the Situationist International—under the auspices of Debord—was undergoing a series of political purges that concluded in the disbanding of the Situationists.[32] Perlman here took umbrage with the exceptional status of the Situationist International—that it was somehow exempt from the problems of 'ideologization' attributed elsewhere to the *enemies* of the Situationists. As Perlman writes in a letter to Gregoire of the problems with this exceptional status:

> Its bureaucrats aren't bureaucrats. Its purges aren't purges. Its ideology is not ideology: it is practice; whose practice? The anti-bureaucratic practice of the proletarians; this is the practice that justifies the intimidations, insults, confessions, purges which are necessary to keep the Coherence coherent. This Organization is unique: unlike all the Stalinist par-

[31] *Ibid*, pp. 71–72.

[32] *Ibid*, p. 72. On the disintegration of the Situationist International, see John McHale (ed.). *The Real Split in the International.* London: Pluto Press, 2003.

> ties, unlike the Second, Third, Fourth Internationals, the Situationist International is itself the world revolutionary movement.[33]

These disputes, in turn, had a pronounced personal and intellectual effect on Perlman, informing his hostile account of membership in revolutionary organisations in his *Manual for Revolutionary Leaders*, the article 'Ten Theses on the Proliferation of Egocrats,' and in the aforementioned *Letters of Insurgents*.[34] As a further consequence of these disputes, Perlman eventually abandoned the assumption that theoretical 'coherence' should provide the basis for a radical project held in common with others; though, the ideal of coherence—and the problem of incoherence—hardly disappears from Perlman's account of resistance and social change. Instead, this problematic survives, in an individualised form, as now everyone is given the choice 'to define the conditions of *one's own coherence*.'

While 'coherence' survives only in this truncated form, Perlman's later writings remain attentive to the dangers of inversion in relation even to the most theoretically 'coherent' of revolutionaries. As such, Perlman's problematisation of resistance now asks more fundamental questions of the revolutionary and the resister. The 'problem of resistance' is no longer tied to specific questions of the interrelationship of theory with practice. The more fundamental 'problem of resistance' has assumed an almost cosmic dimension; it is now a matter of Life and Death, of life-affirming forces actually giving rise to 'forces which negate life.' While this problematic—resistance as a matter of Life and Death—is most apparent in Perlman's *Letters of Insurgents*, it too is a major facet of *Against His-story, Against Leviathan*. In this work, the 'problem of resistance' concerns these more fundamental and fatal inversions of resistance, and the ways in which resisters give rise amongst

[33] Perlman. *Having Little, Being Much*, p. 73.

[34] Perlman. *Manual of Revolutionary Leaders*, pp. 256–257.

tleness.' Love for others or love for an abstract ideal—a Nation or Collective—can also prove the foundation for conflicts with those who belong outside this circle of compassionate concern. Love for others can exacerbate the social schisms, rifts, and antagonisms of a 'disintegrating society.' Toynbee subsequently emphasises the transfiguration of love through reference to this dialectic of withdrawal-and-return. Here, Toynbee draws upon the 'gentle' elements within Christianity and Buddhism that emphasise a 'loving kindness' and expansion of one's circle of compassionate concern.[119] 'Gentleness' does not equate to 'withdrawal' from the world; it instead proposes alternative ways of relating to others by withdrawing from the divisive, schismatic, and antagonistic terrain of the 'disintegrating society.' As Toynbee's interchangeable references to 'Non-Violence' and 'gentleness' further attest, this alternative holds eminently practical implications and opens explicitly onto questions of non-violent resistance, an issue he explores through Jesus Christ's aversion to revolutionary violence and, in a modern context, Gandhi's political philosophy of *satyagraha*.[120] In this sense, Toynbee defines 'gentleness' as an act of 'positive creation' in the 'search for an alternative to the disintegrating society' because it offers both a practical response to this society's schisms as well as a spiritual response to these 'schisms in the soul.'

While Toynbee refers to such positive and creative responses to the challenge of disintegration—on a microcosmic and macrocosmic level—he also attends to those alternatives that provide only a semblance of creative change. As with Toynbee's criticisms of

[119] *Ibid*, pp. 253–254. For a discussion of this element of 'gentleness' and the process of 'gentling' in the New Testament see, in particular, Stanley Hauerwas. 'Christ's Gentle Man,' in Stanley Hauerwas. *Hannah's Child: A theologian's memoir*. London: SCM Press, 2010, pp. 38–43.

[120] *Ibid*, pp. 378, 398. See also Walter Wink. *Jesus and Nonviolence: A third way*. Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 2003; M.K. Gandhi. *Non-Violent Resistance (Satyagraha)*. New York: Dover Publications, 2001.

seemingly 'evil passions' of the 'grasping' and 'craving' self but also annihilated 'any of the heart's sensations,' including compassion, pity, and love—those emotions that lead into an encounter with the other.[114] Detached now from the dualities of the 'mundane level of existence,' inclusive of the duality of self and other, the sage's 'perfect unity of consciousness' leaves neither any place for the creative reconciling of the 'schisms in the soul' nor provides any practical basis for responding to a world of division, difference, and duality. 'Withdrawal' has here become the search for and reattainment of the contented sterility of God's perfection: of pause without movement, stasis without dynamism. While Toynbee praises the spiritual achievement of this higher state of consciousness, ascetic 'withdrawal' still remains, in his dialectical estimation, a spiritually uncreative response to the challenge of disintegration because it too skips a 'beat' by falling to an extreme.[115]

When Toynbee therefore refers to 'withdrawal' in relation to 'gentleness' and 'Non-Violence,' he still emphasises the spiritual dimension of 'withdrawal' but now speaks quite emphatically of how 'the soul must find a route back into the world.'[116]As with the creative movement between 'challenge-and-response,' Toynbee will speak of a double movement of 'withdrawal-and-return.'[117] This movement from withdrawal to return is consecrated in that 'faculty which the philosophers wish to mortify, and that is the faculty of love.'[118] Love is, as already noted, one of the movements in Toynbee's dialectic, and love promises such a movement 'back into the world' because love still implies the duality of self and other.

However, Toynbee does not unreservedly promote 'the faculty of love' in that the affective bonds of love do not always and by necessity imply a message of respectful and compassionate 'gen-

[114] *Ibid*, p. 252.
[115] *Ibid*, p. 251.
[116] *Ibid*, p. 252.
[117] *Ibid*, p. 217.
[118] *Ibid*, p. 253.

themselves to the very destructive, malignant forces they are arrayed against.

As befitting Perlman's search for origins in his text, this 'problem of resistance' is situated at the very origins of 'Western civilisation:' the resistance of the Guti or Gutian to the rise of one of the very first Leviathans in the form of the early Sumerian city-states. As Perlman writes, the threat of Leviathan confronts the Guti with the question of how exactly to resist its encroachments. In Perlman's rendering, the Guti find their answer to this question amidst the most militant members of their society: hunters and warriors. The Guti therefore respond to Leviathan's advances by arming themselves militarily against it. For Perlman however, this militancy already foreshadows Leviathan's own militancy. As he writes, 'the moment the Guti constituted themselves into a permanent military organisation they ceased to be what they wanted to remain and became what they opposed.'[35] No matter how liberating the Guti's intentions, they assume an organisational model akin to the Leviathan they oppose; and, even if successful in their aspirations, 'the brave fighters succeed in defeating only themselves' because they have 'become what they opposed.'[36] They have transmuted into the military form of what they were supposed to be 'against.' Their victory is, in Perlman's rendition, a Pyrrhic victory; though, in this case, it is not a series of successes leading inevitably to defeat, as with the Roman general from whom the word Pyrrhic is derived. In a paradoxical sense, their triumph is a defeat because they have betrayed their own 'initial commitment' to the overturning of Leviathan by creating a militant organisational model equal to the warring militancy of what they oppose.[37]

[35] Perlman. *Against His-story, Against Leviathan*, p. 251.
[36] *Ibid*, p. 34.
[37] *Ibid,* p. 34.

Perlman is not, of course, simply referring to a 'problem of resistance' lodged in the distant past; he is more aptly refracting present-day radical political concerns through a historical setting. Armed militancy against this 'first' Leviathan is itself very much part of Perlman's own world. As he writes of 'our time' elsewhere in his essay, 'the metamorphosis of partisans of universal liberation into policemen and jailers will be so frequent that it will no longer seem remarkable.'[38] Here, Perlman carries on a critique of militant resistance and militant organisational methods that he had explored in many other works, from the aforementioned *Manual for Revolutionary Leaders* to his *The Continuing Appeal of Nationalism*. In these works, Perlman criticises the violent militancy and incipient authoritarianism in such contemporary militant organisations as the Revolutionary Youth Movement and the Weathermen as well as in the Third World anti-imperialist nationalisms that inspired these organisations, such as Maoism.[39] As with his problematic concerning the Guti warrior, Perlman would here again in a contemporary context emphasise a 'metamorphosis' of victims of State oppression into a 'photographic negative of the oppressor nation,' a 'mirror image' of what they had been 'against.'[40]

From these problems of inversion through acts of militant resistance, Perlman turns elsewhere in *Against His-story, Against Leviathan* to a 'problem of resistance' he had encountered in the 'Coherent critique' of the Situationist International: the problem of the Organisation. One of the most defining examples Perlman utilises in this regard is the rise of the Christian Church. Akin to Perlman's Guti, early Christian communities seek defence from religious persecution; and, this defence is found in the forging of a far more structured religious Organisation, a Church. However, this increasingly structured religious body is for Perlman the

[38] *Ibid*, p. 189.

[39] Perlman. *Having Little, Being Much*, p. 57, 60.

[40] Perlman. *The Continuing Appeal of Nationalism*, p. 56.

search for an alternative necessarily concerns the individual's 'inner world.'[108] A creative alternative is reflective of both inner and outer transformation.

One of the key examples Toynbee provides of a creative alternative to the 'disintegrating society' is what he deigns 'gentleness.'[109] Also referred to as the 'gentle way' or more simply 'Non-Violence,' 'gentleness' is distinctive for its removal or 'withdrawal' from the antagonisms and schisms of the 'Time of Troubles.' While 'withdrawal' here connotes a sense of detachment, Toynbee is careful in distinguishing this Non-Violent 'withdrawal' from the possibility of practical disengagement and physical removal from these troubles, all of which would negate any association with an act of 'positive creation.'

Indeed, Toynbee's understanding of 'withdrawal' in relation to this 'gentle way' is built upon a critique of the spiritual detachment, asceticism and quietism of 'the yogi, the stylite, and the sage.'[110] For Toynbee, the spiritual and physical 'withdrawal' of these ascetics is reflected in their transcendence and extinction of self in some higher order of spiritual experience or 'ultimate reality,' a formulation Toynbee discerns in the Hindu *Tat tvam asi:* ""That (the ultimate reality) is what thou (a human being) art."[111] Spiritual detachment and 'withdrawal' leads towards 'its logical goal of self-annihilation.'[112] However, by annihilating the self, the ascetic has also denied 'the dualism that Man's own existence implies.'[113] Ascetic 'withdrawal' has undone the 'intrusion of the Devil into the universe of God.' The ascetic has not only extinguished those

[108] *Ibid*, p. 240.

[109] Arnold J. Toynbee. *A Study of History, Volume V*. London: Oxford University Press, 1939, pp. 588–590.

[110] Toynbee. *A Study of History, one volume ed.*, p. 251.

[111] Arnold Toynbee and Daisaku Ikeda. *Choose Life: A dialogue*. London: Oxford University Press, 1976, p. 11.

[112] Toynbee. *A Study of History, one volume ed.*, p. 251.

[113] *Ibid*, p. 252.

Toynbee's musical analogy, these 'inversions' skip a beat because they fall to a discordant extreme.[103]

Through this spiritualised dialectic—and its possible breakdown—Toynbee's theory of challenge-and-response considers how 'fresh acts of creation' are in equal part the basis for acts of uncreative destruction and ruination. That which enables creative change may also precipitate uncreative, rigid, and sterile transformations that possess in Toynbee's estimation only a semblance of creativity. In Toynbee's *A Study of History*, this problematic of challenge-and-response is applied across the entire history of world civilisations. I am, of course, primarily concerned in Toynbee's application of this problematic to questions of resistance and opposition. Such questions are themselves most pronounced in the fifth and sixth volumes of Toynbee's *Study*. Here, Toynbee enters into a discussion of the 'Time of Troubles,' a time when former certainties—in the realm of ideas, politics, society, and economics—give way to uncertainty and insecurity. This is a time of disintegration; hence, Toynbee's concurrent reference to a 'disintegrating society.'[104] As Ian Hall further notes, these troubles and disintegrations are very much commensurate with Toynbee's own time and the uncertainties of modernity.[105] Of course, due to Toynbee's spiritual concerns, this disintegration is internal as well; it is an 'outward sign of a spiritual rift which scars the souls of the individuals who 'belong' to a disintegrating society.'[106]Insofar as this 'Time of Troubles' is a site of disintegration, Toynbee refers to a myriad of efforts 'to construct an alternative to the disintegrating society,' an alternative that necessarily opens onto questions of resistance and opposition.[107]Though, again, this

[103] *Ibid*, p. 234.
[104] *Ibid*, p. 241.
[105] Ian Hall. '"Time of Troubles:' Arnold J. Toynbee's Twentieth Century.' *International Affairs*. Vol. 90, No. 1, 2014, pp. 23–36.
[106] Toynbee. *A Study of History, one volume ed.*, p. 241.
[107] *Ibid*, p. 241.

'noose which will strangle the initial commitment.[41] Again attesting to the contemporary importance of this historical example, Christian 'resisters are forming the links which will bind them into what militants of our day will call The Organization.'[42] For Perlman, this organisational unity stifles the original impetus of sharing in a 'living way' because this Organisational model demands a uniformity that implicitly excludes other 'lifeaffirming' spiritual paths while also promoting the exclusive difference of Christians from all other forms of belief—what Turner describes as the '"routinization"' of Christianity. Unity for the sake of defence against persecution turns to the promulgation of an exclusive creed with which Christians try to 'convince themselves that their own group has the most valid or truest conception.'[43] With increasing religious and political authority, the Christian Church riles against the Idolatry of other spiritual paths even though, in Perlman's understanding, 'they are the ones lugging an Idol to every part of the world' in the form of an increasingly intolerant system of belief.[44] What consecrates this process of inversion is the way in which the Church overturns its original purpose—defence against persecution—and now begins an attack on those Christians who hold different spiritual beliefs and practices to 'The Organisation.' In this ultimate act of inversion, 'The Organisation' turns from defending itself from persecution to a 'war against schismatics and heretics among themselves.'[45] Again, as in Perlman's critique of militancy, this image of an 'Organisation' that falls to idolatrous arrogance, conformity, and the internal policing of its members is not strictly historical in nature; 'The Organisation' belongs to Perlman's own time, and

[41] Perlman. *Against His-story, Against Leviathan*, p. 114.
[42] *Ibid*, p. 114.
[43] *Ibid*, p. 114.
[44] *Ibid*, p. 114.
[45] *Ibid*, p. 123.

even finds correspondences with Perlman's troubled encounter with the Situationist International.

That Perlman finds an express connection between the problems of armed militancy and 'The Organisation' is confirmed in a later discussion of the religious radicalism of Hussites and Taborites of the Czech reform period during the Fifteenth century.[46] The Czech Reform period or Bohemian Reformation is a major discussion point in Perlman's text, and its importance to his narrative is a further testament to Perlman's identity with his own Czech heritage.[47] Emphasising the contemporary significance and import of the Bohemian Reformation, Perlman speaks of a 'social revolution so far-reaching it makes its subsequent French and Russian sequels seem like conservative, if terribly bloody, putsches.'[48] This 'social revolution' is considered so profound and so distinct from the French and Russian Revolutions because of the revolutionaries' commitment to restore 'the freedom of human communities in the state of nature,' wherein 'each member of the newly-risen community is already her or his own savior.'[49]

However, as with the Guti, Leviathan confronts these religious radicals, and also confronts them with that perennial question of how to resist its encroachments. The Taborites, in particular, turn to armed resistance; and, in turn, they 'suffer the same fate as the Guti who ganged up against Sumerian militarists in the Fertile Crescent.'[50] Their victory is again a Pyrrhic victory because 'The Taborites, like the Sumerians, become a mirror image of what they're fighting.'[51] Perlman highlights, for instance, one

[46] Thomas A. Fudge. *The Magnificent Ride: The first reformation in Hussite Bohemia*. Aldershot: Ashgate, 1998.

[47] On the importance of this Czech heritage, see Perlman. *Having Little, Being Much*, p. 5.

[48] Perlman. *Against His-story, Against Leviathan*, p. 216.

[49] *Ibid*, p. 217.

[50] *Ibid*, p. 220.

[51] *Ibid*, p. 222.

ther God as the spiritual agent nor Lucifer as the material one may create without their polar opposite…Both forces are necessary for creation to occur.'[97] Without this division or contradiction, there is instead only the contented sterility of God's immobile perfection.[98] There is only stasis without dynamism, pause without movement. As Toynbee summarises his Goethian inspiration, 'it is a profound truth about human life that the devil is a necessary irritator or provoker; he's a piece of grit that creates the pearl in the oyster, though it's nasty for the oyster. But the pearl is a thing of beauty and value in itself.'[99] The Devil is the Adversary but also a crucible through which creative change—and creative responses—are made possible to the challenges and ordeals of history. As in Faust's encounter with Mephistopheles, 'the human protagonist's ordeal is a transition from Yin to Yang through a dynamic act—performed by God's creature under temptation from the Adversary.'[100]

While this temptation is not, as such, unreservedly malign, change always possesses certain definable risks, an element of danger best represented in the *quid pro quo* of the Faustian bargain itself. Toynbee thus speaks of a challenge because human acts of change and transformation might not actually precipitate 'fresh acts of creation;' the challenge may overwhelm those who are so challenged.[101] There is for Toynbee the possible risk that the dialectical movement of stasis and dynamism, pause and movement may break down and give way instead to certain uncreative 'pathological inversions.'[102] These 'inversions' abandon the continual creative interplay of 'an alternating rhythm of static and dynamic, of movement and pause and movement.' In

[97] Tantillo. *The Will to Create*, p. 21.

[98] Toynbee. *A Study of History, one volume ed.*, p. 241.

[99] Arnold J. Toynbee. *Toynbee on Toynbee: A conversation between Arnold J. Toynbee and G.R. Urban*. New York: Oxford University Press, 1974, p. 111.

[100] Toynbee. *A Study of History, one volume ed.*, p. 67.

[101] *Ibid*, p. 369.

[102] *Ibid*, p. 241.

Through this esoteric reading of a 'split' within the human 'spirit' between the forces of Heaven and Hell, Love and Hate, God and Devil, Toynbee incorporates into his account of the individual the Judaeo-Christian story of the Fall: the 'original sin' of Adam and Eve's disobedience from God in eating from the Tree of Knowledge of Good and Evil under temptation from the Devil. The historical individual is in Toynbee's conception a Fallen being because of the constitutive splittings and divisions of the human 'spirit.' Certainly, this account of human sinfulness could, in Toynbee's study, amount to a rather dualistic treatment of this 'split.' Finding inspiration in Saint Augustine's *The City of God*, Toynbee will, in some of the later volumes of *A Study of History*, increasingly emphasise the need for 'faith in God's grace and a return to a Puritan consciousness of sin.'[95] In these Christian terms, Toynbee will refer to the need for the redemption of sinful, 'split' human beings through the intervention of divine grace.

However, Saint Augustine's *The City of God* is not the sole, determining influence in Toynbee's definition of this Fall and these splittings of the human 'spirit.' Toynbee also finds inspiration in Goethe's *Faust*; and, in connection to Goethe, a very different image of the Fall emerges. With Goethe, the Fall along with these divisions between Maker and Tempter, Heaven and Hell, God and Devil, are not punishment for a disobedient, sinful humanity. The 'intrusion of the Devil into the universe of God' is for Goethe an essential, necessary flaw.[96] It is an essential flaw because this constitutive 'intrusion of the Devil' is a precondition for historical change and transformation. For Goethe and Toynbee, in the absence of this 'fall' into division and the splitting of consciousness into polar opposites there is no basis for change and transformation, creation and 'birth' insofar as change requires an interaction and an encounter between opposed forces. As in Goethe's cosmology, 'Nei-

[95] Joll. 'Two Prophets of the Twentieth Century,' p. 102.
[96] Toynbee. *A Study of History, one volume ed.*, p. 369.

particularly salient historical detail: the Taborites are the first to utilise an 'armored' tank in a military engagement, taking the form of peasant carts strapped with artillery.[52] In resisting Leviathan, they assume the mechanised, 'armored' body of Leviathan with its 'springs and wheels and other technological implements.' Like the Guti, 'they ceased to be what they wanted to remain and became what they opposed.' The city of Tabor that gave the Taborites their name has now 'more in common with the Leviathan it opposes than with the free communities its radicals announced.'[53] The city of Tabor has, in fact, become 'the first modern state with a popular army driven by patriotism.'[54] Perlman here also considers the gradual abandonment of the Taborite's religious radicalism in favour of a Church structure with 'an increasingly narrow and conservative orthodoxy.'[55] Again, 'The Organisation' turns from the defence of Christians to an offensive against other Christians; the persecutions without are now turned to the heretical and unorthodox 'enemy' within.

There are many other examples of such fatal inversions of resistance throughout *Against His-story, Against Leviathan*, but they all reinstate this central problematic: resisters, revolutionaries, and insurgents transmuting into a 'mirror image' of what they oppose. There remains however a major limitation to Perlman's depiction of the 'problem of resistance' through these malignant metamorphoses and monstrous transmutations: there is nothing dialectical about these processes of inversion. Perlman's 'problem of resistance' is repeatedly discerned only through comparison with the corruptive influence of Leviathan, that is to say, a force *external* to the process of resistance—and external to the resisters themselves. Unlike the internal dialectic in Debord's 'coherent' reconciliation of thought with action, or even Perlman's cancer metaphor in *Let-*

[52] *Ibid*, p. 222.
[53] *Ibid*, p. 224.
[54] *Ibid*, p. 224.
[55] *Ibid*, p. 224.

ters of Insurgents, resistance is defeated only because of this external Leviathan that corrupts the resister's 'initial commitment.' Perlman even establishes this understanding of resistance in his discussion of the Taborites. Instead of a dialectical approach to the 'problem of resistance,' Perlman now speaks, in a more dualistic formulation, of 'two movements which pull in diametrically opposed directions.'[56] The first of these movements concerns 'withdrawal from the entrails of Leviathan,' and accords with his image of 'daring radicals and visionaries' participating in a collective project of 'self-abandon.'[57] The second movement is one of 'self-defence against the monster's attacks,' an external, monstrous assault Perlman blames entirely for the movement away from 'selfabandon' to that of 'a new rigidity' where 'masks and armors are put on, exotic visionaries are distrusted, then ostracized, finally eliminated.'[58] The 'problem of resistance' is not then anymore a matter of life and death; it is more correctly a question of Life against Death. Perlman has supplanted a dialectical understanding of the 'problem of resistance' for an essentially dualistic account. Perlman repeats a problem discussed in part two of this thesis: his projection of all negativity and evil onto an external, Leviathanic 'armor' that is subsequently internalised by the individual, corroding an originally beneficent and good human nature.[59] The 'problem of resistance' is therefore the problem of an external, malignant 'armor' that is absorbed by the resisters themselves, as if through some malign process of osmosis.

There is, of course, a possible reason for this attentiveness on Perlman's part to destructive and corrosive externalities in relation to questions of resistance. As Perlman experienced directly in the aftermath of the events of May 1968 in Paris, committed revolutionaries, such as Debord—and even Perlman himself in his *Worker-*

[56] *Ibid*, p. 221.
[57] *Ibid*, p. 221.
[58] *Ibid*, p. 221.
[59] See in this thesis, pp. 121–122

but also that this movement of 'rising and falling' is of 'the diverse order,' capable of originality and new inspiration or, to return to his discussion of 'stimulus,' always capable of evoking the most potently creative variations.[90] Even if patterns and repetitions can be discerned in this process, serving in this way to hold a predictive, even prophetic value for understandings of the present and the future, Toynbee's dialectical rhythm emphasises process over that of a final consummation of history; there is no specific conclusion or *telos* behind these movements of challenge and response.[91]

Toynbee so emphasises these dialectical—and esoteric—understandings of historical change through this alternation of opposed but sympathetic forces because he defines human 'consciousness or will,' 'spirit' and 'soul' as constitutively 'split.'[92]Drawing together themes from the Judaeo-Christian tradition, the philosophy of Goethe and modern psychology, Toynbee conceives the human 'spirit' as a site of division and internal ambivalence. In Toynbee's rendering, the human being is 'an incarnation of both his Maker and his Tempter,' God and Devil, Heaven and Hell.[93]Though, as he continues, from the perspective of the 'psychologist's analyses,' this interplay of 'God and the Devil alike are reduced to conflicting psychic forces in his soul—forces which have no independent existence apart from the symbolic language of mythology.'[94] Like Freud's *Eros* and *Thanatos*, Toynbee turns to the symbolism of mythology, poetry, and religion in order to represent a 'split' and ambivalent division in human consciousness.

[90] *Ibid*, p. 159.
[91] Cf. Cornelia Navari. 'Arnold Toynbee: Prophecy and Civilization.' *Review of International Studies*. Vol. 26 No. 2, 2000, pp. 289–301.
[92] Toynbee. *A Study of History, one volume ed.*, p. 104.
[93] *Ibid*, p. 104.
[94] *Ibid*, p. 104.

In referring always to a movement between challenge and response, Toynbee will discern something almost rhythmic in history, 'an alternating rhythm of static and dynamic, of movement and pause and movement.'[87] A dialectical movement is introduced: historical transformation is a constant meeting between challenge and response, stasis and dynamism, pause and movement. Historical change is for Toynbee an encounter, an interaction of seemingly opposed forces. Because of Toynbee's concurrent emphasis upon the 'spiritual-religious side of Man's nature,' his dialectic of challenge-and-response will find particular inspiration in the languages of poetry, mythology, and religion.[88] 'Challenge-and-response' is implicated in more esoteric expressions of change and transformation. When Toynbee therefore speaks about an 'alternating rhythm of static and dynamic,' he will find no better approximations of this movement than in the dialectical interplay of 'Yin the static and Yang the dynamic' within Taoism; the movement between the forces of Love and Hate in the pre-Socratic philosophy of Empedocles; the interactions of crisis-andpalingenesis, or death and rebirth in the Christian tradition; and, the divine wager between God and Mephistopheles, Heaven and Hell that sets in motion Goethe's *Faust* and is further enacted through the conflicted soul of the play's main protagonist.[89] For Toynbee, change and transformation understood through the movement between 'challenge-and-response' accords better with these esoteric polarities of Yin and Yang, Love and Hate, crisis-and-palingenesis, Heaven and Hell. Though, Toynbee is also careful to distinguish this dialectical rhythm from becoming the site of a new determinism borne from the rhythmic and cyclical recurrence of history. Toynbee acknowledges that 'challenge-and-response' possesses a seemingly repetitive and recurrent element,

[87] *Ibid*, p. 51.

[88] Edward Fiess. 'Toynbee as Poet,' in Ashley Montagu (ed.). *Toynbee and History: Critical essays and reviews*. Boston: P. Sargent, 1956, pp. 378–384.

[89] Toynbee. *A Study of History, one volume ed.*, p. 369.

Student Action Committees—blamed other revolutionaries for their theoretical and practical 'incoherence' instead of recognising the pronounced role of State and police repression in dismantling their radical projects. This problem even finds a fictional outlet in Perlman's *Letters of Insurgents*. In a retelling of his falling out with Roger Gregoire, the character of Tina confronts Ted Nasibu over the failure of their radical project. Tina, representative of Gregoire and the Situationists, believes 'incoherent group practice' is the primary reason for the destruction of their project, whereas Ted Nasibu bluntly states a counter position: 'it's the police that destroyed it.'[60] There is therefore a possible—and quite contemporary—reason for Perlman's emphasis upon Leviathan as the primary cause of these monstrous transmutations.

Still, even considering Perlman's critical reserve towards this problem of revolutionaries blaming the victim in the aftermath of failed revolutionary situations, *Against His-story, Against Leviathan* has abandoned a dialectical approach to the 'problem of resistance.' All that appears now is a dualistic war between the forces of Life and Death. The sheer malignancy of Leviathan simply overwhelms initially well-intentioned 'daring radicals and visionaries.' The 'problem of resistance,' in turn, loses its dialectical complexity and falls to a moralistic portrait of resistance: of an evil Leviathan corrupting 'daring radicals.' Indeed, for all his reservations towards this monstrous metamorphosis of resisters into 'policemen and jailers,' Perlman will brusquely proclaim at one point in his essay, 'I take it for granted that resistance is the natural human response to dehumanization, and therefore, *does not have to be explained or justified*.'[61] Unwilling now to even explain or justify resistance, Perlman falls back upon essentialism and the image of an inherently good human nature forced to defend itself from these corruptive and repressive externalities.

[60] Perlman. *Letters of Insurgents*, p. 824.

[61] Emphasis added. Perlman. *Against His-story, Against Leviathan*, p. 245.

However, if there is, as Perlman himself argues, a 'problem of resistance,' such a problem would actually necessitate a good deal more explanation and justification. A problem obviates such moralistic proclamations. A problem requires an attentiveness to the ways in which resistance can turn against itself or, borrowing again from Perlman's *Letters of Insurgents*, it requires a consideration of how 'the power that enables us to move…*is* the power that turns against our ability to move at all.' It requires a dialectical response to the 'problem of resistance,' lest resistance itself fall back into 'incoherence.' While the 'Coherent' dialectic of Debord is clearly no longer satisfactory for Perlman in defining this problematic, there is still need for some form of internal dialectic to understand this 'problem of resistance.'

There is however one specific instance in *Against His-story, Against Leviathan* where this dualistic moralism gives way, and Perlman adopts, if only briefly, a more dialectical understanding of the 'problem of resistance,' that is to say, a problem internal to resistance instead of being simply defined as a product of Leviathan's corruptive influence. This problematic emerges in a later discussion of the Guti warrior. Here again, Perlman refers to the betrayal of their 'initial commitment,' but now suggests that this betrayal precedes their adoption of a militant programme of resistance. As he writes, 'the communities of Guti who tried to resist the Sumerian Leviathan militarily were overpowered already *before* they set out to respond…As communities, they were incapacitated *before* they took up arms against Leviathan.'[62] Although Perlman also suggests that the Guti have failed because the intrusion of Leviathan and their act of resistance has already shattered and disturbed the cyclical rhythms of communities in the 'state of nature,' the 'problem of resistance' does now appear to precede their militant war against Leviathan.[63] The 'problem

[62] *Ibid*, p. 251.

[63] *Ibid,* p. 251.

the operation of human will.'[81]Hence, Toynbee's particular interest in the role of individuals or, more correctly, 'creative minorities' in the process of historical transformation.[82] Furthermore, Toynbee emphasises the 'spiritual-religious side of Man's nature,' a point that finds further confirmation in his sympathies for Jungian psychology.[83] While Toynbee concedes that social and material forces 'play a part in forming our spirit and our character,' his work places far greater emphasis upon the role of this 'unknown quantity'—the individual's 'spirit' or 'soul'—in the transformations of history.[84]

Emphasising this 'unknown quantity' and dispelling the 'soulless forces' of historical determinism, Toynbee transmutes cause-and-effect into a new dialectical relationship that is invoked throughout the twelve volumes of *A Study of History* and is repeated in subsequent works: 'challenge-and-response.'[85] In this new formulation, 'challenge' takes the place of the cause or 'intruding factor,' because there is no cause in the sense of interacting 'inhuman forces,' but rather the space for an 'encounter' and a 'relation' on the part of willing, conscious human beings. In turn, 'response' assumes the place of 'effect,' since 'the response to a challenge is not predetermined, is not necessarily uniform in all cases, and is therefore intrinsically unpredictable.'[86] 'Stimulus' is similarly humanised and spiritualised as it now refers even more explicitly to those 'hidden principles' and 'psychological momenta' that stimulate, inspire, and rouse individuals to respond to a challenge.

[81] Joll. 'Two Prophets of the Twentieth Century,' p. 95.

[82] Toynbee. *A Study of History, one volume ed.*, pp. 161–162.

[83] Marvin Goldwert. 'Toynbee and Jung: The historian and analytical psychology.' *Journal of Analytical Psychology*. Vol. 28 No. 4, 1983, p. 363. See also Kevin Lu. 'A Jungian Psychohistory: A.J. Toynbee's use of analytical psychology in his theory of civilizations.' *International Journal of Jungian Studies*. Vol. 6 No. 1, 2014, pp. 52–68.

[84] Toynbee. *A Study of History, one volume ed.*, p, 109.

[85] *Ibid*, p. 97.

[86] *Ibid*, p. 97.

'language of science' he has adopted. As Toynbee writes, 'Have I not erred in applying to historical thought, which is a study of living creatures, a scientific method of thought which has been devised for thinking about inanimate Nature?'[74] In attempting to formulate a historical 'social law' in scientific terms, Toynbee has deprived historical change of chance and unpredictability. His scientific model with its social laws deals only in the laboratory's world of cause-and-effect, that is, in the manufacture of results that are 'inevitable, invariable, and predictable.'[75] He has fallen back upon what he describes as the 'soulless forces' of a historical and mechanistic determinism.[76] Toynbee can therefore proclaim that his turn to the 'language of science' entails 'some mistake in method.'[77] The mistake, Toynbee recognises, emerges from two interrelated issues: treating individuals as 'inhuman forces' moving in accord with the deterministic laws of cause-and-effect, and placing more emphasis upon 'the social development of communities' or social structures at the expense of the individual.[78]

To counter this 'mistake in method,' Toynbee introduces what he tellingly refers to as an 'unknown quantity' that is 'inherently impossible to weigh and measure and therefore to estimate scientifically in advance.'[79] This 'unknown quantity' is an element lacking from Toynbee's 'social law:' individual agency and creativity, 'consciousness and will,' 'spirit' and 'soul,' 'the divine spark of creative power,' 'hidden principles' and 'psychological momenta.'[80] As James Joll comments, Toynbee 'wanted to establish the pattern of the rise and fall of civilizations, but at the same time leave room for

[74] *Ibid*, p. 97.
[75] *Ibid*, p. 97.
[76] *Ibid*, p. 97
[77] *Ibid*, p. 97.
[78] *Ibid*, p. 97. See also Arnold Toynbee. *Civilization on Trial*. New York: Oxford University Press, 1948, p. 254.
[79] Toynbee. *A Study of History, one volume ed.*, p. 109.
[80] *Ibid*, p. 78.

of resistance' is no longer externalised, since this incapacitation derives from the resisters *before* they have even taken up arms against Leviathan, before they have even constituted themselves into a 'war-machine.'

This problematic emerges out of a directly preceding reference to Arnold J. Toynbee and ideas established in his twelve-volume *A Study of History*, a comparative account of world civilisations that earned Toynbee renown—and notoriety—for its 'grand sweep of history' interspersed with its prophetic intimations of the future.[64] Perlman borrows from Toynbee the distinction between two differing 'types of stimuli' in response to the encroachments of Leviathan.[65] The first stimulus 'overpowered and incapacitated,' terms which are, of course, synonymous with the failure of the Guti's project of armed resistance—'overpowering incapacitation.' The second stimulus, in contrast, 'revived and strengthened the subject.'[66] While the word 'stimulus' may denote something that stimulates, arouses, or excites something else—a goad or spur to action—the emphasis here is directed towards the excitations and emotional arousals of 'the subject,' the Guti themselves 'before they set out to respond.' There is evidence here of an ostensibly more complex and dialectical problem embodied in the resisters themselves. This complexity might, in turn, contribute to a more dialectical explanation of those malignant inversions of resistance Perlman speaks of throughout his essay. In the following section,

[64] James Joll. 'Two Prophets of the Twentieth Century: Spengler and Toynbee.' *Review of International Studies*. Vol. 11 No. 2, April 1985, pp. 95, 103. Alexander Hutton. 'A Belated Return to Christ?': The reception of Arnold J. Toynbee's *A Study of History* in a British context, 1934–1961.' *European Review of History*. Vol. 21 No.3, 2014, pp. 405–424. For Toynbee's legacy, see Christopher Brewin. 'Research in a Global Context: A discussion of Toynbee's Legacy.' *Review of International Studies*. Vol. 18 No. 2, 1992, pp. 115–130; Michael Lang. 'Globalization and Global History in Toynbee.' *Journal of World History*. Vol. 22 No. 4, December 2011, pp. 747–783.
[65] Perlman. *Against His-story, Against Leviathan*, p. 251.
[66] *Ibid*, p. 251.

I would like to explore this aspect of Perlman's work in greater critical detail. Of course, such a discussion is severely limited if reference is made only to Perlman's text. As such, I would like to engage with the thinker which made possible this dialectical turn: Arnold J. Toynbee and his *A Study of History*.

Section Two: The dialectic of challenge-and-response

In the pages of *Against His-story, Against Leviathan*, Toynbee is accorded as much respect as Frederick W. Turner and his *Beyond Geography*. Though, such respect does not extend directly to Toynbee's *A Study of History*. While Perlman had read this work in his years at university, he devotes his admiration to Toynbee's *Mankind and Mother Earth*, a world historical narrative written towards the end of Toynbee's life that touches explicitly upon environmental concerns.[67] Perlman admires this work because, from his primitivist perspective, Toynbee abandons his earlier 'enthusiasm for history and for civilisation,' and now argues that 'Mankind is rending Mother Earth asunder.'[68] Despite this criticism, the terms Perlman adopts from Toynbee in his discussion of the Guti—'stimulus,' 'types of stimuli,' and 'response'—were all first laid out in—and are integral to—Toynbee's *A Study of History*.

The language of 'stimulus' itself informs Toynbee's initial assessment of the emergence of civilisations in part two of *A Study of History*; though, it is applied to events and challenges throughout history on both a societal and personal level. Across several chapters, Toynbee refers to 'five types of stimuli' that evince either creative or uncreative responses on the part of individuals and

[67] 'Fredy read Arnold Toynbee's *A Study of History*, a work he valued highly.' Perlman. *Having Little, Being Much*, p. 18. Arnold Toynbee. *Mankind and Mother Earth: A narrative history of the world.* New York: Oxford University Press, 1976.

[68] Perlman. *Against His-story, Against Leviathan*, p. 3.

communities: hard countries, new ground, blows, pressures and penalisations.[69] Borrowing from 'the language of science,' Toynbee maintains that these intruding factors or difficulties 'supply that on which it intrudes with a *stimulus* of the kind best calculated to evoke the most potently creative variations.'[70] This 'stimulus' is not strictly identifiable with the 'intruding factor' itself. The 'stimulus' has more in common with the response of individuals and communities, the way in which they are themselves stimulated or roused to action. On this basis, Toynbee considers whether it might be possible to propose a 'social law which may be expressed in the formula: 'the greater the challenge, the greater the stimulus."[71] He too however proposes another possible 'social law' and formula: that 'the most stimulating challenge is to be found in a mean between a deficiency of severity and an excess of it.'[72] In this revised formula, there are for Toynbee certain prescribed limits for 'creative variation' beyond which the 'greater challenge' no longer provokes a 'greater stimulus' in the individual or community, but rather has its opposite effect: the intruding factor simply overwhelms those so challenged, a point at which 'the challenge becomes so severe that the possibility of responding to it successfully disappears.'[73] From this perspective, the 'stimulus' is indeed reducible to two different and contrary forms: one provokes creativity, whereas the other brings defeat and un-creativity, or, to adopt Perlman's own terms, one leads to renewed strength, and the other to 'overpowering incapacitation.'

For all this emphasis upon social laws, 'types of stimuli,' and scientific formulas, Toynbee is ultimately suspicious of the very

[69] Arnold Toynbee. *A Study of History: The one-volume edition.* London: Thames and Hudson and Oxford University Press, 1972, p. 252.

[70] Arnold Toynbee. *A Study of History: Abridgement of volumes I-VI.* London: Oxford University Press, 1946, p. 62, p. 63.

[71] Toynbee. *A Study of History, one volume ed.*, p. 135.

[72] *Ibid*, p. 135.

[73] *Ibid*, p. 135.

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> Everybody knowing that goodness is good makes wickedness.
>
> For being and nonbeing arise together; hard and easy complete each other; long and short shape each other; note and voice make the music together; before and after follow each other.[196] Through these images of 'mutual arising,' there is a further indication that 'conventional morality—which is based on distinctions between good and bad, beauty and ugliness, value and worthlessness' can damage this awareness of polarity.[197] It creates stark distinctions and divisions in contravention of this mutual interplay inherent to the Tao.

In further contrast with Perlman's Zoroastrian inspired dualistic imagery of a cleansing, purifying fire, the *Tao Te Ching* repeatedly invokes the fluidic susurrations of water to best encapsulate the movements, changes and transformations of the Tao.

As Lao Tzu comments:

> True goodness is like water. Water's good for everything. It doesn't compete.
>
> It goes right to the low loathsome places, and so finds the way.[198]

This is not to suggest a new duality predicated upon the setting of water against fire, or darkness against light, Yin against Yang, since this opposition overturns Lao Tzu's emphasis upon a sympathetic polarity. Rather, water best symbolises the paradoxical interplay and interaction between opposite principles—of dark,

[196] Lao Tzu. *Tao Te Ching: A book about the way and the power of the way*. Boston & London: Shambhala, 1998, p, 4.
[197] Oldstone-Moore. 'Taoism,' p. 262.
[198] *Ibid*, p. 11.

receptive Yin with tempestuous Yang. Water is thus weak, gentle and soft, but is also capable of immense strength and power. Water yields and gives way to the hard and the strong, but this weakness and pliancy grants water its own strength and potency in the form of a patient but persistent resolve. Water is paradoxically soft and hard, weak and powerful, gentle and strong.[199]

This sense of paradox through the symbolism of water is carried over into Lao Tzu's discussion of the Taoist art of change and transformation. This is what Lao Tzu refers to as *wu-wei*—the art of doing by not doing, or what might be simply termed the path of least resistance.

> What's softest in the world rushes and runs over what's hardest in the world.
>
> The immaterial enters the impenetrable.
>
> So I know the good in not doing.
>
> The wordless teaching, the profit in not doing—not many people understand it.[200]

To do by not doing is thus akin to the movement of water across hardened stone, gently wearing it away without the application of direct force. Emphasis shifts here towards the creative value of nothingness, emptiness, and non-being, such as in Lao Tzu's other examples of the practical efficacy embodied in an empty bowl and the space between the spokes in a wheel.[201] *Wu-wei* is not therefore 'inaction' or total passivity. *Wu-wei* 'does not mean defeatism or withdrawal but simply being natural, taking no *un*-natural action;

[199] On the important function of paradox within the *Tao Te Ching*, see Michael LaFargue. 'Interpreting the Aphorisms in the *Tao Te Ching*.' *Journal of Chinese Religions*. Vol. 18 No. 1, 1990, pp. 34–36.

[200] Lao Tzu. *Tao Te Ching*, p. 58.

[201] *Ibid*, p. 14.

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Woodhead, Linda. *Christianity: A very short introduction*. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2004.

that is, following the natural process of Tao.'[202] Tao 'always leaves things alone, and all things will change by themselves."[203]

As numerous commentators have remarked, Lao Tzu's *wu-wei* holds eminently practical and political implications. It is suggestive of 'the strongest statement of *laissez-faire* government,' or even a profound affirmation of anarchist philosophy with its sense of natural, spontaneous organisation in the absence of centralised government.[204] At the very least, the practice of *wu-wei* suggests that Perlman's own enflamed 'war against Ahriman' along with this extreme opposition is too forceful and too grasping, despite its evident primitivist and naturalistic inspiration. This warring aspect is too rigid—in a moral and practical sense. Perlman's politico-spiritual warfare here finds no value in nothingness, emptiness, and non-being, a topic that was also discussed in a different context in Part Two of this thesis.[205] As Lao Tzu details:

> Those who think to win the world by doing something to it, I see them come to grief.
>
> For the world is a sacred object.
>
> Nothing is to be done to it.
>
> To do anything to it is to damage it.
>
> To seize it is to lose it.[206]

Direct force is simply too destructive, damaging and aggressive. Unlike the artful and balanced practice of *wu-wei*, such extreme

[202] Wing Tsit-Chan. 'The Path to Wisdom: Chinese philosophy and religion,' in Arnold Toynbee (ed.). *Half the World: The history and culture of China and Japan*. London: Thames and Hudson, 1973, p. 117.
[203] *Ibid*, p. 117.
[204] *Ibid*, p. 117. On Taoism and anarchism, see John A Rapp (ed.). *Daoism and Anarchism: Critiques of State autonomy in ancient and modern China*. New York: Continuum, 2012.
[205] See in this thesis, p. 140.
[206] Lao Tzu. *Tao Te Ching*, p. 40.

opposition only counters force with force, aggression with aggression, destruction with destruction.

In a political context, this removal from the application of direct force extends to a sustained critique of the destructive aggression of war and militancy—in whatever form.[207] As Lao Tzu discourses:

> Even the best weapon is an unhappy tool, hateful to living things. So the follower of the Way stays away from it.
>
> Weapons are unhappy tools, not chosen by thoughtful people, to be used only when there is no choice, and with a calm, still mind, without enjoyment. To enjoy using weapons is to enjoy killing people, and to enjoy killing people is to lose your share in the common good.
>
> It is right that the murder of many people be mourned and lamented. It is right that a victor in war be received with funeral ceremonies.[208]

While not unequivocally opposed to the use of violence in political contexts, Lao Tzu counsels against any sense of militant jubilation, destructive rage, or the investment of political struggles with the majesty of a divine mission of Good against Evil, because there is here no triumph, no success, and no spiritual renewal in war, only desolation and death. Those who mourn and those who grieve are thus for Lao Tzu 'the true victor.'[209] There is again strength in weakness. The Taoist does not repay hatred with hatred; the Taoist sage 'repays hatred with virtue.'[210] *Wu-wei* may in this sense prove

[207] On war and its definition as an evil force in the *Tao Te Ching*, see Sung-Peng Hsu. 'Lao Tzu's Conception of Evil.' *Philosophy East and West*. Vol. 26 No. 3, 1976, pp. 304–305.

[208] Lao Tzu. *Tao Te Ching*, p. 42.

[209] *Ibid*, p. 89.

[210] Tsit-Chan. 'The Path to Wisdom: Chinese philosophy and religion,' p. 117.

Turner, Frederick W. 'Introduction,' in Frederick W. Turner (ed.). *The Portable North American Reader*. New York: Penguin Books, 1977, pp. 1–18.

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Hobbes's sovereign monster.' In Springborg, Patricia (ed.). *The Cambridge Companion to Hobbes's* Leviathan. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2007, pp. 61–81.
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the path of least resistance, but it is equally so a path of compassion and magnanimity, even towards opponents. As Lao Tzu writes, 'compassion wins the battle and holds the fort; it is the bulwark set around those heaven helps.'[211]

Despite Perlman's acknowledgement of the Taoist interplay of Yin and Yang, his incorporation of Taoism within the warring antagonisms of a Zoroastrian dualism again suggests Perlman's elision of this Taoist message of compassionate reconciliation through *wu-wei*. As in his reading of Blake, the Tao only serves to reaffirm Perlman's politico-spiritual war between the 'state of nature' and Leviathan, the natural world against the synthetic artifice of civilisation. There is, of course, evident reason for all these stark oppositions: Perlman does not wish to enter into complicity with that beastly Leviathan he condemns. However, this concerted rejection of Leviathan consistently overextends itself to encompass a spiritual symbolism that actually promises a movement beyond the stark oppositional dualism Perlman repeatedly discerns within the forces he is arrayed against—Leviathan and 'Western civilisation.' Offering ways beyond the reactive, moralistic hatred of a 'sterile conventional militancy,' the contrarian dialectic of Blake and the watery movements of *wu-wei* are evaded and utilised for the purpose of reinvoking this politico-spiritual war against Leviathan. Dialectical figurations of contrarian reconciliation and the promise of this for a transfigured conception of resistance are overlooked in favour of these stark, antagonistic declarations of opposition—of an unequivocal stance against His-story and against Leviathan. Perlman's politicised dualities conspire against the acceptance of this element of dialectical reversal, paradox, and moral ambivalence that inheres in Blake's contraries and Lao Tzu's *wuwei* because all of Perlman's binary oppositions are set against each other within an inverted 'war of extermination.' The moral and spiritual universe of *Against His-story, Against*

[211] Lao Tzu. *Tao Te Ching*, p. 87.

Leviathan is far too simplistic and antagonistic to account for this sense of ambivalence. Specific reference to ambivalence—the co-existence of opposites—is of particular significance not only because of its centrality to the dialectical vision of Toynbee, Blake, and Lao Tzu, but also for its relationship to the third major spiritual influence I wish to discuss. The influence in question is what may be considered the very '*personification* of ambivalence' in world mythology: the trickster.[212]

The trickster is itself a surprising addition to Perlman's text, and is introduced very late in *Against His-story, Against Leviathan*. He is, in fact, introduced in the very same chapter that Perlman speaks of Toynbee's 'stimulus,' the overpowering incapacitation of the Guti warrior, and Perlman's narrative concerning the origins of Leviathan in the Sumerian city-state of Ur. Perlman refers, in particular, to the Native American trickster, drawing from the mythology of the Potawatomi, whose trickster is known as Wiske and takes the animal form of Hare and Coyote.[213] Like the trickster in numerous mythological cycles throughout the world, Wiske is a wild, untamed figure who is also in a paradoxical sense a creator or culture hero who bears language and numerous technological innovations.[214] Stories concerning Wiske are also sources of extreme humour and absurdity. Despite this humorous dimension, Perlman references one particular story concerning Wiske that highlights his malevolent and potentially authoritarian nature. Wiske is here drawn into identity with Leviathan and the position of the Lugal—the first authority or ruler—in the ancient city-state of Ur. This story is certainly not then one of humour and absurdity, but a story where Wiske 'almost became Archon over

[212] Stanley Diamond. 'Introductory Essay: Job and the Trickster,' in Paul Radin. *The Trickster: A study in American Indian mythology*. New York: Schocken Books, 1975, p. xiii.

[213] Perlman. *Against His-story, Against Leviathan*, p. 240.

[214] Richard Erdoes and Alfonso Ortiz (eds.). *American Indian Trickster Tales*. New York: Viking, 1998, pp. xiii-xv.

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Neshnabe, over free people.'[215] Unsurprisingly, from Perlman's primitivist perspective, Wiske's malevolent association with the Archon, Ruler, and Sovereign is captured in his mythological role as creator, culture-hero, and technological innovator. Wiske bears certain innovative 'gifts' to the Potawatomi—the example given is webbed snow shoes—and from these 'gifts' Perlman makes comparisons with the Lugal's—the sovereign's—own malign 'gift' of irrigation canals to the people of Ur, a 'gift' that in Perlman's telling became the basis for the Lugal's authority.[216] He too is maligned by way of association with 'linear events,' that is, historical time, because his actions are always for Perlman 'unexpected disruptions of life's rhythms.'[217] The trickster is an intrusive disturbance to the cyclical rhythms of the 'state of nature.'

In identifying the authoritarian threat of the trickster's offerings, this community of Neshnabe calls together a great Council to attend to Wiske's trickery. Realising the dangers of accepting the trickster's gifts, the council banish Wiske and cast him out of the community. From the perspective of Perlman's primitivism, the story of Wiske's banishment serves as a reminder to 'free people' to refuse the technological gifts of those who would seek to tyrannise over them.[218] For Perlman, this Native American myth of the trickster holds radical, anti-authoritarian implications. It is an express lesson in staving off and resisting the rise of authority and the machinery of centralised government.

Perlman's attitude towards the mythological Wiske conforms to his oppositional stance against Leviathan and Ahriman: the trickster is a demonic, evil, and entropic force that must be sacrificially purged from the social body to maintain the purity and freedom of those who dwell in the 'state of nature.' Like his apocalyptic vision of the Leviathanic dragon-beast discussed in

[215] Perlman. *Against His-story, Against Leviathan*, p. 240.
[216] *Ibid*, p. 240.
[217] *Ibid*, p. 241.
[218] *Ibid*, p. 241.

Part One of this thesis, Perlman's vision of the trickster is that of an Enemy subject to banishment, purgation, and sacrifice. Of course, as Perlman himself reticently notes, the Potawatomi trickster is never strictly identified as an evil, malevolent force in these myths—or any other trickster mythologies for that matter. The trickster and the 'gifts' he imparts are 'not altogether villainous to the Potawatomi.'[219] He is not a source of fear, but laughter and humour. Wiske does not conform to Perlman's proffered role of demonic, political villain, and sits uncomfortably within this Zoroastrian-Manichean framework of interpretation.

Perlman's malefic story of the trickster is actually more exception than rule. In fact, the trickster encapsulates certain features of Perlman's own message of excess and 'self-abandon' that was explored in the second part of this thesis. Despite the trickster's express associations with human culture and technical innovation, he too, as briefly noted, is a wild, chaotic force with a tendency towards total sexual licence that extends into his alternation from man to woman, and from human to animal. A representative force of unconscious, bodily urges and drives, the trickster is the '*spirit of disorder*,' the 'exponent and personification of the life of the body: never wholly subdued, ruled by lust and hunger, for ever running into pain and injury, cunning and stupid in action.'[220]

Furthermore, if the trickster is, in Perlman's depiction, a devious and conniving Archon with sinister intent, he too is in other myths a satirical figure who has the opposite effect of undermining political, social and religious authority. As Paul Radin discusses in his classic study of the Winnebago trickster myth, the tales of trickster's often destructive antics—from breaking sacred objects to the defilement of tribal rituals—provides 'an outlet for voicing a protest against the many, often onerous, obligations connected

[219] Perlman. *Against His-story, Against Leviathan*, p. 240.

[220] Karl Kerényi. 'The Trickster in Relation to Greek Mythology,' in Paul Radin. *The Trickster: A study in American Indian mythology*. New York: Schocken Books, 1975, p. 185.

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with the Winnebago social order and their religion and ritual.'[221] The trickster here certainly disrupts the social order, but this disruption has a distinctively positive, satirical effect. The trickster teaches through 'upset, reversal, [and] surprise.'[222] The trickster 'opens and frees from rigid preconception,' and does so by challenging the often absurd, laughable nature of social and political conventions, personal habits, and religious practices.[223]

For C.W. Spinks, the trickster is not a lord-in-waiting, but 'the lord of the boundaries, the hinge, the road, the edge,' and remains as such 'a performative critic, of established orders.'[224] The trickster's subversive and satirical function is not the workings of an enemy—against society—but a culture creator who plays with and upsets 'cultural categories' by 'highlighting the arbitrary nature of cultural rules and categories and constantly reminding the narrative culture that there is much beyond its own perspective and understanding.'[225] The trickster does not in this sense come to destroy 'through his misadventures, creative schemes, and ambiguous naïveté;' on the contrary, 'the trickster figure helps us reshape, validate, revolutionize, subvert, or reinforce cultural categories by re-instituting their very semiotic properties.'[226]

The trickster is not then entirely good or entirely evil; he encapsulates both extremes. He is a fundamentally ambivalent figure and, in turn, an embodiment of ambivalence. The trickster is 'at one and the same time creator and destroyer, giver and negator, he who dupes others and who is always duped himself…he possesses

[221] Paul Radin. *The Trickster: A study in American Indian mythology*. New York: Schocken Books, 1975, p. 152.
[222] Franchot Ballinger. 'Ambigere: The Euro-American Picaro and the Native American Trickster.' *Melus* Volume 17, No. 1 Spring 1991–1992, p. 21
[223] Byrd Gibbens quoted in George Carlin. *Napalm and Silly Putty*. New York: Hyperion, 2001, p. iii.
[224] C.W. Spinks. 'Trickster and Duality,' in C.W. Spinks (ed.). *Trickster and Ambivalence: The dance of differentiation*. Madison: Atwood Publishing, 2001, p. 8.
[225] *Ibid*, p. 8.
[226] *Ibid*, p. 9.

no values, moral or social, is at the mercy of his passions and appetites, yet through his actions all values come into being.'[227] In the figure of the trickster, opposites and oppositions co-exist—creation and destruction, order and chaos, good and evil. In these terms, I find the trickster's 'gift' or contribution bears only a superficial relationship to those authoritarian, civilising 'gifts' to which Perlman refers. A far more important 'gift' from this culture hero is the 'gift' of ambivalence. The trickster encompasses a moral universe that is most certainly 'capable of any excess,' but actually contributes to a more balanced position—borne in this between of the boundary—that remains in equal part freed from 'rigid preconception' and thus far more receptive to the possibilities of and need for creative change and transformation in the present.[228]

A story concerning the banishment or excision of the trickster might not then prove to be such an unambiguous example of opposition and resistance against Leviathan. At the very least, it is capable of more than one interpretation. To banish the trickster may equally as much adumbrate disaster. It serves as a warning about excising life's ambivalences and complexities, its upsets and surprises, or, to rephrase Perlman, life's 'unexpected disruptions.' The trickster's banishment concludes not, in Perlman's rendering, with a free society and a living, vibrant culture in the 'state of nature,' but rather a closed, insular, even rigid community incapable of and unwilling to accept anything 'beyond its own perspective and understanding.' Perlman, of course, as discussed in Part One of this thesis, cannot actually admit this creative role for the trickster into his own text because he has stated throughout his essay that there is in 'our age' no real culture left to 'reshape, validate, revolutionize, subvert, or reinforce.'[229] There is no place for the creative function of the trickster in a world devoid of a 'meaningful' cultural

[227] Radin. *The Trickster*, xxiii.
[228] Diamond. 'Introductory Essay,' p. xxi.
[229] See in this thesis, p. 67.

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context. The trickster can in this sense have no other function than that of an entropic force of evil disruption. Though, in turn, Perlman has deprived himself of a creative resource for positive change and transformation. All that he is now capable of doing is romanticising 'Other' cultures and demonstrating a nostalgic longing for these lost integral cultural traditions. Moreover, this banishment of the trickster suggests an equally rigid moral universe that knows nothing of the boundary, the hinge, the road, and the edge. It is rather possessed of a moral extremism and 'moral fanaticism' that thinks only in terms of 'abstract notions of pure good, [and] pure evil.'[230] Through a simplistic binary accounting of the world that denies life's ambivalences—and the trickster who embodies them—Perlman's primitivism and his politico-spiritual 'vision' reclaims this rigid 'moral fanaticism,' a position that remains in its own way unreceptive and closed off from the creative possibilities contained within the 'unexpected disruptions' of an ambivalent trickster.

A creative spiritual resource that presages a movement beyond the righteous, moralising certitudes Perlman decries in relation to 'Western civilisation' has instead only served to reconfirm Perlman's identity with such 'moral fanaticism.' In specific terms of a 'problem of resistance,' Perlman's oppositional standpoint is subject to that process of inversion and betrayal he inveighs against because of this incapacity to think beyond such a spiritually antagonistic and politically militant framework. Returning to Toynbee's understanding of the problems of a 'sterile conventional militancy'—its 'stimulus' of righteous hatred, enslavement to the object of this hate, and its moral absolutism—I would again acknowledge how the antagonistic moral and spiritual universe of *Against His-story, Against Leviathan* perpetuates and gives license to this militant opposition. In these terms, I do not believe Perlman's politicospiritual 'vision' provides a successful 'response' to the 'challenge' of Leviathan. Perlman does not here offer anything

[230] Radin. *The Trickster*, p. xxi.

creative or innovative in his adoption of such spiritual resources as Blake, Lao Tzu, or the trickster. He more simply encloses these sources within his own background in a revolutionary militant politics, a politics that Perlman criticises—on the level of content—while adhering rather tenaciously to its antagonistic form.

As much as I find this militant framework so often over-determines Perlman's text and his conception of resistance, I would still acknowledge the existence, however subdued, of an alternative understanding of resistance in Perlman's work. Certainly, this discussion of Blake, Lao Tzu, and the trickster has tried to indicate the existence of alternative understandings of resistance, change and transformation from within Perlman's text. What I am here referring to is the appearance of 'spirited' resisters and radicals who do not easily conform to a programme of militant resistance or this Zoroastrian 'war of extermination.' Very much distinct from Perlman's rendering of either the Taborites or the Adamites, these are 'spirited' resisters whose resistance stands in closer accord with that 'gentle way' Toynbee considers a creative response to the 'disintegrating society' and the 'Time of Troubles.' These are resisters who profess a message not of politico-spiritual warfare and hatred towards 'evil ones who remain outside the mountains,' but rather a message of reconciliation—even towards those who perform hateful and hurtful practices. In the following and final section, I would like to explore these examples of a more 'gentle' form of resistance, drawing directly from *Against His-story, Against Leviathan*, but also taking consideration of Perlman's own radical background and intellectual history. As I will consider, Perlman's life and work is by no means devoid of a message of 'gentleness,' a message that stands in rather stark contrast with the militancy of Perlman's primitivism and its bellicose message of politico-spiritual warfare.

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Section Four: Gentleness

Indications of a more 'gentle' form of resistance in Perlman's essay emerge out of his references to those radicals noted for their '*withdrawal* from the entrails of Leviathan.' Those who withdraw are consistently identified with their refusal of 'The Organisation' that subjects its members to a heteronomous discipline and 'coherent' allegiance to its theoretico-conceptual apparatus. Again, Perlman turns to Christian traditions of dissent and heresy, such as the Quakers, the Waldensians, and the aforementioned Adamites, because they all distinguish themselves from what Perlman considers the archetypal organisation: the Church. In place of 'The Organisation,' Perlman emphasises how those who withdraw do so through bonds of friendship and shared participation in a radical project.[231] They belong together through an 'informal network consisting of friendships.'[232] Through mutual friendship, those who withdraw remove themselves from the institutionalised, inviolate, 'immortal' and 'impersonal' ties of membership in 'The Organisation.'[233]

What I find of most significance in this emphasis upon friendship and networks of friendships is the prominence granted to interpersonal social relationships. There are, of course, other reasons why Perlman honours the 'informal network consisting of friendships,' such as its small-scale, decentralised structure; but, an inherent aspect of social transformation amidst those who withdraw consists in changing these intimate and personal relationships. This idea is moreover not restricted to *Against His-story, Against Leviathan* and the spiritual fellowship; the importance of the social relationship is a feature of some of Perlman's earliest theoretical writings, as evidenced in his *The Revolution of Everyday Life*, which was discussed in Part One of this thesis.[234] Another

[231] Perlman. *Against His-story, Against Leviathan*, pp. 280–281.
[232] *Ibid*, p. 203.
[233] *Ibid*, p. 33.
[234] See in this thesis, p. 66.

telling example can be found in Perlman's *Letters of Insurgents*. Detailing—from a quite personal perspective—the propensity of radicals to abandon friendships over questions of theoretical and practical 'incoherence,' Perlman returns to the realm of Marxist theory to discuss the place of friendship and community amongst radicals. He adopts the Marxist term *gemeinwesen* or 'species-being,' but no longer refers this to the 'abstract "community"'—the human community of creative labour in Marx's usage.[235] Rather, this 'abstract "community"' becomes for Perlman 'something very concrete' and also 'something still to be created' through the intimate relationships shared between embodied individuals and their 'willingness to touch, feel, look at and listen to each other.'[236] In these terms, Perlman's reference to friendship in *Against His-story, Against Leviathan* attests to an ongoing concern with an embodied form of social transformation emerging from changes in interpersonal, face-to-face relations, changes identified with a greater sense of understanding and respect towards others.

In relation to a message of 'gentleness' and respectful engagement with others, there remains however a significant problem with Perlman's reference to bonds of friendship amidst those committed to 'withdrawal from Leviathan's entrails.' The problem derives from comparisons with Toynbee's own conception of 'withdrawal' discussed earlier. In Toynbee's definition, 'withdrawal' is dialectical in nature and consists of two movements—withdrawal *and* return—whereas Perlman's definition of the withdrawn radical community is still built upon a fundamental antagonistic dualism—the escape of 'outside agitators' from the monolithic totality that is Leviathan into the 'state of nature.' Where Toynbee's 'withdrawal' possesses an esoteric dimension, Perlman's understanding of 'withdrawal' cleaves to the biblical image of Exodus—a tactile, physical removal, a setting apart and literal departure from the 'entrails

[235] Perlman. *Letters of Insurgents*, p. 804.
[236] *Ibid*, p. 804.

Metcalfe, Andrew and Game, Ann. ''In the Beginning is Relation': Martin Buber's alternative to binary oppositions.' *Sophia*. Vol. 51 No. 3, 2012, pp. 351–363.
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of Leviathan.'[237] In more contemporary language, Perlman's 'withdrawal' is equated with the practical act of 'dropping out' of society.[238]

There is effectively no route 'back into the world' in Perlman's definition of 'withdrawal;' there is no evident movement of 'return.' This withdrawal is constituted through an antagonistic dualism: 'outside agitators' against the 'armored,' 'drop outs' against *zeks*, 'barbarians' and 'Renegades' against the civilised, 'heretics' against the orthodox. Perlman's circle of friends who dance together around the maypole—an image that concludes his essay and also serves as the logo for *Black & Red* publishing—is a closed circle, a circle of outsiders that has closed ranks against those inside Leviathan.[239] Perlman's conception of friendship amidst those who withdraw is severely restricted. Love and respect towards others is insularised within the community of outsiders and resisters. In relation to Toynbee's dialectic of 'withdrawal-and-return,' this love and friendship within the outré community does not indicate a transfigured or transformed love; these loving relations still conform to an antagonistic hostility of friend against enemy, Us versus Them: the bonds of love between those within the group are constituted through bonds of exclusion and disdain towards those beyond the community, an issue that was earlier broached in rela-

[237] Perlman. *Against His-story, Against Leviathan*, p. 47.

[238] 'Physical removal, namely fleeing, or as we will say, *dropping out*, effectively removes one from the monster's reach;' 'the Way…inspires people to *drop out* of all the highly organized activities offered by the State.' Perlman. *Against His-story, Against Leviathan*, p. 31, 100. On contemporary reassessments of 'dropping out,' see Peter Lamborn Wilson. *Pirate Utopias: Moorish corsairs & European Renegadoes*. Brooklyn: Autonomedia, 1995; Hakim Bey. *T.A.Z.: The temporary autonomous zone, ontological anarchy, poetic terrorism*. Brooklyn: Autonomedia, 2003; James Koehnline (ed.). *Gone to Croatan: Origins of North American dropout culture*. New York: Autonomedia, 1993.

[239] Perlman concludes his work with a section from Blake's 1820 watercolour painting, 'A Sunshine Holiday,' where a circle of people dance together around a maypole. *Ibid*, p. 302.

tion to Perlman's reading of the Adamites, their 'love feasts,' and their elitist relations with those 'evil ones who remain outside the mountains.'

While the loving, intimate relations of the outsider community may prove distinct from what Perlman deigns 'The Organisation' with its demands for 'Coherence'—at the expense of friendship—the pronounced role of 'withdrawal' in these decentralised, small-scale communities raises other significant problems: the propensity towards divisive sectarianism; the devolution of the face-to-face encounter into informal hierarchies predicated upon bonds of charismatic authority; and, the implicit message of elitism in relation to those who have not withdrawn from the 'entrails of Leviathan.' As Perlman writes, for example, of the liberated and visionary 'outsider,' they respond in either one of two ways to the unenlightened: 'she might become impatient with the others and leave them to their blindness, or she might decide to return to the others to help them see.'[240] While this reference does suggest an element of return, I would note how this first message of impatience and condescension towards others—'leave them to their blindness'—stands in far greater accord with Perlman's repeated closure of dialogue with those 'inside' Leviathan.

From this perspective, 'withdrawal' and the importance of friendship does not necessarily appear as a site conducive to the discovery of an alternative, 'gentle' understanding of social transformation and resistance in Perlman's essay. It more simply conforms to Perlman's inverted primitivist 'frontier' politics. Despite these issues, I have emphasised this aspect of Perlman's work because some of those Christian spiritual fellowships and heresies Perlman mentions under the rubric of 'withdrawal' profess a message of love and friendship that is not insularised, but extends and spirals outwards to encompass others beyond their community. Theirs is a movement of withdrawal *and* return,

[240] Perlman. *Against His-story, Against Leviathan*, p. 187.

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Pan Books. 1985.
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much as their message of love is transfigured through a widening of their circle of compassionate concern.

There are, in fact, many examples of such heresies and spiritual fellowships notable for this widening of compassionate concern in Perlman's essay. These include the aforementioned Quakers and Waldensians.[241] Other Christian fellowships notable for this compassionate element include the early years of the Franciscans and the person of Saint Francis of Assisi; certain elements within and descendents from the Anabaptists; the *Unitas Fratrum*, or United Brethren—also known as the Moravian Church—that emerged out of the tumult of the Czech Reform period; and, certain figures amidst the 'Ranters' during the time of the English Civil War.[242] Distinct from the Adamites with their message of spiritual election and righteous hatred against 'evil ones,' these Christian heresies are notable for their spiritual message of social peace as opposed to social war, a message of peace that extended even to those who persecuted them. Their 'religious vision' 'inspired them to oppose policies and powers they regarded as evil, often risking their well-

[241] On Quaker traditions of peace and non-violence, see Gerard Guiton. *The Growth and Development of Quaker Testimony, 1652–1661 and 1960–1994: Conflict, non-violence, and conciliation*. Lewiston: Mellen Press, 2005; Peter Brock. *The Quaker Peace Testimony 1660 to 1914*. York: Syracuse University Press, 1990.

For a critical examination of the pacific elements among the Waldensians—as well as their disavowal—see Susanna K. Treesh. 'The Waldensian Recourse to Violence.' *Church History: Studies in Christianity and Culture*. Vol. 55 No. 3, 1986, pp. 294–306.

[242] *Ibid*, pp. 237, 281–282.

On the peaceful element in the life of Saint Francis, see Sean Edward Kinsella. '"The Lord Give You Peace:" The preaching of peace in the writings and early lives of St. Francis of Assisi.' *Mediaevistik*. Vol. 16, 2003, pp. 51–99.

For an overview of the peace traditions of the Anabaptists and *Unitas Fratrum*, see Daniel L. Smith-Christopher. 'Political Atheism and Radical Faith: The challenge of Christian nonviolence in the Third Millennium,' in Daniel L. Smith-Christopher (ed.). *Subverting Hatred: The challenge of nonviolence in religious traditions*. New York: Orbis Books, 2007, pp. 187–188.

On the 'Ranters' and non-violence. See Marshall. *Demanding the Impossible*, p. 105.

being and their lives, while praying for the reconciliation—not the damnation—of those who opposed them.'[243] Theirs is an expressly 'gentle' message of social change. Instead of reacting to hateful practices and the persons that practice them with an equally hateful message of Biblically-inspired righteous damnation and an apocalyptic war against these 'evil ones,' they respond with the promise of reconciliation. This is the radically 'gentle' promise within the Christian tradition with its exhortation to not simply 'love them which love you' or to 'salute your brethren only,' but to 'Love your enemies, bless them that curse you, do good to them that hate you, and pray for them that despitefully use you, and persecute you.'[244]

Of course, this 'gentle' opposition could encompass a message of *spiritual warfare* and moral conviction. The Quaker William Penn could, for example, write that Jesus Christ's message is 'to give and plant Peace among Men,' but this peaceableness does not preclude a 'Holy War' set 'against the Devil.'[245] George Fox in his 'Quaker peace testimony' could also allude to the 'Lamb's war,' an image of spiritual warfare drawn from Revelation.[246] Here too there is a message of turning 'against all the workes

[243] Elaine Pagels. *The Origin of Satan*. London: Allen Lane, 1995, p. 184.

[244] Matthew 5:43–48 quoted in New Testament. 'The Bible,' in Arthur Weinberg and Lila Weinberg (eds.). *Instead of Violence: Writings by the great advocates of peace and non-violence through history*. Boston: Beacon Press, 1963, pp. 462–463. For a historical overview of the Christian nonviolent tradition, see Michael G. Long. *Christian peace and non-violence: a documentary history*. New York: Orbis Books, 2009. For a general overview of Christian non-violence, see John Howard Yoder. *Christian Attitudes to War, Peace, and Revolution*. Grand Rapids: Brazos Press, 2009.

[245] William Penn. 'Essay Towards the Present and Future Peace of Europe,' in Arthur Weinberg and Lila Weinberg (eds.). *Instead of Violence: Writings by the great advocates of peace and non-violence through history*. Boston: Beacon Press, 1963, p. 426.

[246] Smith-Christopher. 'Political Atheism and Radical Faith,' p. 159.

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of darkenesse.'[247] Even the libertine 'Ranter' Abiezer Coppe will speak of a divine vengeance against lordly 'great ones' so that 'the neck of horrid pride, murder, malice, and tyranny, etc may be chopped off at one blow.'[248]

However, distinct from the Adamites and the Taborites, this spiritual warfare or 'Lamb's war' does not equal *politico-spiritual warfare*. There is no conflation of political or 'Corporeal War' with this spiritual war. In the words of Fox, 'my weapons are not carnall but spirituall.'[249] As Coppe also writes, 'I come not forth (in him) either with materiall sword, or Mattock, but now (in this my day—) I make him my sword-bearer, to brandish the Sword of the Spirit.'[250] There may prove to be social, political, and economic consequences of the 'Lamb's war,' but there is, contra Perlman's own vision, no 'war against Ahriman in the world *and* in the individual.' This 'Lamb's war' holds only a spiritual dimension both in the sense that the locus of resistance shifts explicitly to the individual's conscience and also in personal attendance to an internal discord.[251] If there is a 'levelling' of the mighty, there is only, in the words of Coppe, 'a spirituall, inward levelling.'[252] This war or 'levelling,' like Blake's own 'Mental Fight,' is not in any way to be imputed to the 'Persons of Men.'[253]

There is no war against the corporeal body—literally chopping at the necks of lordly 'great ones'—because human beings, including one's enemies, all possess an 'inner light,' and cannot there-

[247] George Fox. 'Quaker Peace Testimony,' in Arthur Weinberg and Lila Weinberg (eds.). *Instead of Violence: Writings by the great advocates of peace and nonviolence through history*. Boston: Beacon Press, 1963, p. 430.
[248] Abiezer Coppe. *A Fiery Flying Role*. Exeter: The Rota, 1973, p. 4.
[249] Fox. 'Quaker Peace Testimony,' p. 430.
[250] Coppe. *A Fiery Flying Role*, p. 2.
[251] Thomas Heilke. 'On Being Ethical without Moral Sadism: Two readings of Augustine and the Beginnings of the Anabaptist revolution.' *Political Theory*. Vol. 24 No. 3, 1996, pp. 509–513.
[252] Coppe. *A Fiery Flying Role*, p. 2.
[253] Penn. 'Essay Towards the Present and Future Peace of Europe,' p. 426.

fore be reduced to 'incarnate devils,' to demonic beings in human form, to 'evil ones who lie outside the mountains,' 'evil ones' to be subjected to 'every present atrocity' in the name of reclaiming an Adamic Eden. The 'Lamb's war' is fought through an appeal to the conscience of those who commit 'evil' acts. It remains as such an implicit critique of the amorality of all forms of *Realpolitik*, whether Statist or revolutionary, and the practical ideology of 'Holy War' with its merciless war against 'evil ones.' The 'Lamb's war' actively precludes corporeal violence—through this appeal to an 'inner light' or, more simply, to one's conscience. This 'Lamb's war' is dissociable from a 'rigid militancy' not because of 'withdrawal' from 'Leviathan's entrails;' it is so distinct because of this conscientious 'withdrawal' or objection to this mentality of friend and enemy that makes acceptable the resolution of conflict through the physical extirpation of 'evil ones.'

Perlman will himself tentatively acknowledge this element of non-violence, specifically in relation to the Quakers and the Waldensians. As he writes of those Quakers who travelled to America in the aftermath of the English Civil War, 'they renounce armed resistance, recognizing that the victory of the radical army led to a tyranny by its generals.'[254] Returning again to the Czech Reform period, Perlman defines Waldensians among the Taborites as 'principled pacifists who consider war the main Leviathanic institution to be overcome by the newly-risen communities of sisters and brothers.'[255] Though, in both instances, Perlman's account of non-violence is blind to the spiritual message of reconciliation underlying this critique of war and 'rigid militancy.' He again focuses only upon questions of political tactics, strategies, and methods. He can state that they are against war and the institutional trappings of 'rigid militancy,' but fails to consider the spiritual dimension to this removal from violent and militant

[254] Perlman. *Against His-story, Against Leviathan*, p. 281.
[255] *Ibid*, p. 220.

Hobbes, Thomas. *Leviathan*. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1996.
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Hewitt, Marsha Aileen. *Freud on Religion*. Durham: Acumen Publishing, 2014.
Himmelfarb, Martha. *Apocalypse: A brief history*. Chichester: Wiley-Blackwell, 2010.

political methods. Perlman fails to recognise that what differentiates the Waldensians from the Adamites and the Taborites is their dissociation from this militant ‘vision’ of politico-spiritual warfare and a ‘holy war’ ideology that believes it acceptable to physically exterminate ‘evil ones.’

Indeed, in relation to the Waldensians and other pacifists of the Czech Reform period, Perlman believes it ‘likely’ that such ‘principled pacifists’ in the end gave their support to the militant Taborites.[256] As Perlman proclaims, ‘pacifist Waldensians may foresee the consequences of organizing a military self-defence, but they are not likely to stop people from defending not only their human gains but their very lives.’[257] Later, in more emphatic terms, Perlman declares how ‘pacifists hail the battle that put an end to centuries of Teutonic violence.’[258] While I have tried to remain focused upon the ways in which Perlman reads the historical past through his politico-spiritual ‘vision,’ I would here note the historical inaccuracy of both these claims. In fact, Perlman’s reading of pacifism in the context of the Czech Reform period is so astonishing because he has ignored and overwritten the quite prominent existence of ‘principled pacifists’ who did not give their support to this violent resistance. For all the inordinate attention he devotes to this period in history, there is one person conspicuous for his absence from Perlman’s narrative: Peter Chelcicky.[259]A prominent exponent of Christian non-violence during this period, and acknowledged for his proto-anarchist critique of the State, Chelcicky was not only vocal in his pacific interpretation of the Bible, but also refused to praise the battles fought by the Taborites—whether conceived in

[256] *Ibid*, p. 221.
[257] *Ibid*, p. 221.
[258] *Ibid*, p. 221.
[259] For a recent overview of Chelcicky’s life and thought in historical context, see Craig D. Atwood. *The Theology of the Czech Brethren from Hus to Comenius*. University Park: The Pennsylvania State University Press, 2009, pp. 133–151.

self-defence or not.[260] For Chelcicky, the Taborites were incited by a 'theology of glory,' an 'ideology of crusade,' and the chiliastic notion that 'the faithful should purify the world of evil by violence in anticipation of Christ's return in glory.'[261] When these crusades against 'evil ones' were subsequently carried out, Chelcicky responded in the same manner he responded to capital punishment: 'The executioner who kills is as much a wrong-doer as the criminal who is killed.'[262]

In silencing this voice of protest against militant violence, Perlman demonstrates a need to excuse this violence, despite his vociferous disdain for the violence of the State and the fact that the Taborite's militancy, in his own terms, eventually transforms them into a 'mirror image' of what they oppose. Contrary to his earlier mentioned remark, Perlman does actually feel it necessary to explain and justify violent resistance because he ignores the important questions raised by these expressions of non-violence in response to a 'problem of resistance' he elsewhere discerns within militancy and the militant 'Organisation.'[263] Indeed, in a later discussion of those remnants of the Taborites that will form the Moravian Church—and who abandon their former militancy—there is the suggestion that the 'principled pacifist' can be so ignored because they do not, unlike the original Taborites, 'come to set fire to the Leviathanic world.'[264] They do not practice politico-spiritual warfare. They do not possess 'the fire of the revolutionary.'[265] Their

[260] On Chelcicky's anarchism, see Wojciech Iwańczak. 'Between Pacifism and Anarchy: Peter Chelcicky's teaching about society.' *Journal of Medieval History*. Vol. 23 No. 3, 1997, pp. 271–283.

[261] Atwood. *The Theology of the Czech Brethren from Hus to Comenius*, pp. 137–138.

[262] Peter Brock. *The Political and Social Doctrines of the Unity of Czech Brethren in the Fifteenth and Early Sixteenth Centuries*.' Gravenhage: Mouton, 1957, p. 55.

[263] Perlman. *Against His-story, Against Leviathan*, p. 221.

[264] *Ibid*, p. 281.

[265] *Ibid*, p. 282.

Georgescu, Matei. 'The Duality Between Life and Death Instincts in Freud.' *Contemporary Readings in Law and Social Justice*. Vol. 3 No. 1. 2011, pp. 134–139.

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'inner light' is for Perlman only 'dimly lit.'[266] Strikingly, the symbolism of the 'inner light' would now appear to possess two different tiers, two different levels of incandescence; and, between the Taborites and the 'principled pacifist,' the light of these pacifists is, quite simply, not bright enough. Perlman can thus ignore the questions that 'principled pacifists' raise because his text is still bound to a revolutionary militant tradition resolutely committed 'to set fire to the Leviathanic world.' Perlman may choose in his later works to speak of the insurgent, the guerrilla, and the terrorist, but these new titles are but different variations upon this commitment to violent resistance in the context of a more thoroughgoing revolutionary social transformation.

As I would maintain, there is a reticence on Perlman's part to admit a 'gentle' message of spiritual reconciliation into his work because it is so discordant with his revolutionary militant background and his message of politico-spiritual warfare, a message that does give justification to political violence in the name of resistance and opposition. As discussed throughout this thesis, such justifications encompass Perlman's call for victims of colonial violence to 'sacrifice the sacrificers;' his militant pantheism that sanctifies violence against those who disrupt the Biosphere; and, the righteous vengefulness and 'holy war' of the Adamites. There too is the broader context of primitivism itself, a radical political ideology that possesses some particularly scathing critiques of nonviolent resistance coupled with defences of violent resistance.[267] Perlman may therefore refer to those heresies and spiritual fellow-

[266] *Ibid*, p. 282.

[267] For an overview of violent rhetoric in the broader context of Radical Environmentalism, see Bron Taylor. 'Religion, Violence and Radical Environmentalism: From Earth First! to the Unabomber to the earth liberation front.' *Terrorism and Political Violence*. Vol. 10 No. 4, 1998, pp. 1–42.

For Zerzan's critique of nonviolence, see Zerzan. *Elements of Refusal*, pp. 270–271, 313. Zerzan believes 'civil disobedience is just the agreement that you respect the law. It's a very explicit consecration of the system.' Zerzan quoted in Evan Wright. *Hella Nation: In search of the lost tribes of America*. London:

ships which profess a form of 'gentle' resistance, but their message of 'gentleness,' both spiritual and practical, is in his text subordinated to a militant politico-spiritual warfare that reiterates the political certainties of a world divided starkly along the hostile frontiers of the barbarian against the civilised, the political friend against the political enemy.

This reticence on Perlman's part to give due consideration to this message of 'gentleness' is all the more noteworthy insofar as Perlman's past radical commitments actually include connections to this imbrication of 'gentleness' with practical nonviolent resistance. As with Perlman's response to the militancy of the Guti warrior alongside contemporary expressions of militancy, his response to non-violence holds both a historical and contemporary, personal dimension. Perlman may therefore refer to Quaker non-violence in the context of the Seventeenth Century, but he too personally encountered Quakers during his time with the American peace movement—a rather significant association in itself—during the late 1950s and early 1960s, a relationship that extended to his friendship with the Quaker activist John Rick-

Transworld Publishers, 2009, p. 210. See also Zerzan's relationship to the 'Unabomber,' Theodore Kaczynski in Zerzan. *Running on Emptiness*, pp. 151–155.

Derrick Jensen is another prominent anti-civilisation theorist who defends violent resistance in opposition to non-violent resistance. See his introductory essay in Ward Churchill. *Pacifism as Pathology: Reflections on the role of armed struggle in North America*. Oakland: AK Press, 2007, pp. 3–30. See also 'Love does not imply pacifism' in Derrick Jensen. *Endgame: The problem of civilization, Volume 1*. New York: Seven Stories Press, 2006, pp. 293–302.

Another distinctive aspect of primitivism is its positive conception of indigenous warfare, a position indebted to anthropologist Pierre Clastres, and his thesis that war in indigenous societies evades the rise of centralised authority. See Pierre Clastres. *Archaeology of Violence*. Los Angeles: Semiotext(e), 2010. For this theme in Perlman's work, see Perlman. *Against His-story, Against Leviathan*, p. 294. For a discussion of Clastres' thesis and its contemporary import, see Peter Lamborn Wilson. *Escape from the Nineteenth Century and Other Essays*. New York: Autonomedia, 1998, pp. 72–79.

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lefs.[268] While Perlman in his later semi-autobiographical *Letters of Insurgents* speaks rather derisively of the 'peace movement,' the influence of the Quakers still lingers in *Against His-story, Against Leviathan* through this appeal to an 'inner light,' even if Perlman ultimately deprives this light of its 'gentleness.'[269]

Another important contemporary encounter with this imbrication of spirituality and non-violent resistance emerges from Perlman's involvement in the early 1960s with New York's Living Theatre and its founding members, Judith Malina and Julian Beck.[270] Avant-garde playwrights and actors, Malina and Beck were also Anarcho-pacifists, and supported what they described as 'The Beautiful Non-Violent Anarchist Revolution.'[271] Referring always to the 'futility of violence,' but still critical of the sacrificial dimension of non-violence, they emphasised 'the joyous quality of non-violent revolutionary action,' an ebullience that found inspiration in the ideas of a thinker Perlman also celebrated: Wilhelm Reich.[272] This 'joyous quality' also however possessed a spiritual dimension. As David Callaghan maintains, the Living Theatre 'sought to merge art and life and create a performance space that could allow for spiritual transcendence.'[273] Through 'extensive audience participation' the performances of the Living Theatre were to invoke a 'contemporary act of secular ritual that could provide spiritual sustenance to a decaying culture,' a culture that 'needed new myths and rites of worship.'[274]

[268] Perlman. *Having Little, Being Much*, p. 24.
[269] Perlman. *Letters of Insurgents*, p. 481.
[270] Perlman. *Having Little, Being Much*, p. 23.
[271] Judith Malina and Julian Beck. *Paradise Now: Collective creation of the Living Theatre*. New York: Random House, 1971, p. 5.
[272] *Ibid*, p. 6. On Reich's influence, see Julian Beck. *The Life of the Theatre: The relation of the artist to the struggle of the people*. New York: Limelight Editions, 1986.
[273] David Callaghan. 'Ritual Performance and Spirituality in the Work of the Living Theatre, Past and Present.' *Theatre Symposium*. Vol. 21, 2013, p. 36.
[274] *Ibid*, p. 36.

If 'spiritual transcendence' was integral to the Living Theatre, it was also integral to the politics of anarcho-pacifism. As they state in their play *Paradise Now,* a non-violent community shall not emerge 'with the help of theory or technical knowledge, or with that of ideas and ideals. We can pay for it only with the coin of our own heart.'[275] The possibility of a different world requires a 'parallel change in human character' through 'individual interior spiritual change.'[276] Such 'spiritual change' entailed working for 'the changes that diminish violence both in the individual and in the exterior forms of society.'[277] As they maintained, in the absence of these changes, revolutionaries lose to the forces they are arrayed against because 'thus we ourselves get entangled in hatred and passion.'[278]

In referring to Malina and Beck's 'Beautiful Non-violent Anarchist Revolution,' and to the spiritual dimensions of the Living Theatre, I am not suggesting that this marriage of spiritual concerns with non-violent resistance serves in some way as a direct, if stifled and suppressed, influence in Perlman's work. I am certainly interested in the spiritual dimensions of Malina and Beck's non-violent conception of resistance, particularly the importance they grant to the dialogical spirituality of Martin Buber and the I-Thou relationship.[279] I too find significant the dialogical aspirations of the Living Theatre through their emphasis upon audience engagement and 'collective creation,' insofar as this openness leads to a critique of political sectarianism—associating 'exclusively with

[275] Malina and Beck. *Paradise Now*, p. 149.

[276] *Ibid*, pp. 2–3, 7. See also Erika Munk. 'Only Connect: The Living Theatre and its audiences,' in James M. Harding and Cindy Rosenthal (eds.). *Restaging the Sixties: Radical theaters and their legacies.* Ann Arbor: University of Michigan Press, 2009, pp. 49–53.

[277] Malina and Beck. *Paradise Now*, p. 6.

[278] *Ibid*, p. 49.

[279] *Ibid*, pp. 2–3. On Buber's relationship to non-violent resistance, see John W. Morgan. *Buber and Education: Dialogue as conflict resolution.* Hoboken: Taylor and Francis, 2013.

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people who share our views'—and problems of becoming 'isolated through opposition.'[280] In saying this, I would also note that in 1962, during his time at the Living Theatre, Perlman himself composed the play *Plunder*, a work notable for its own themes of non-violent resistance interspersed with spiritual concerns.[281] Its central character of Krishna Moksha is, for example, a scarcely veiled reference to Gandhi and his politics of *satyagraha*. Moksha even shares some of Gandhi's political biography, as in his radical involvements in South Africa.[282] Moksha implores his sons to turn away from the violence and bigotry of those European colonialists who 'plunder' the world. By the conclusion of the play, Moksha's two sons—Vaisya and Indio—have joined a resistance movement in the Congo. They are however quite divided on the question of how to resist colonialism. Where Indio chides his father for his cowardice and embraces violent, armed resistance, Vaisya returns to his father's words and maintains 'I want to build a new life for ourselves, not kill.'[283] Indio, in turn, calls his brother a coward, whereupon Vaisya responds with these words: 'To fight and remain true to yourself isn't cowardice. To oppose without changing places with your opponent—that isn't cowardice.'[284]

'To oppose without changing places with your opponent'—here is a 'problem of resistance' that demonstrates a sense of continuity with *Against His-story, Against Leviathan* and its themes of inversion and the betrayal of resistance. Though, in Perlman's later work, the spiritual, non-violent counsel of Krishna Moksha and his doubting son Vaisya has been abandoned in a return to the militancy of Indio, despite Perlman's own express misgivings towards it. In fact, the problematic of *Plunder* has been abandoned, since the 'problem of resistance' in Perlman's later text is now a dualis-

[280] Malina and Beck. *Paradise Now*, pp. 82, 98.
[281] Fredy Perlman. *Plunder*. New York City: Black & Red, 1973.
[282] *Ibid*, p. 26.
[283] *Ibid*, p. 74.
[284] *Ibid*, p. 75.

tic battle of Life against Death, 'state of nature' against Leviathan; and, in this dualistic battle, this all or nothing confrontation of irreconcilable forces and stark frontiers, Indio's belligerent call for plundering the plunderers is no longer a significant problem. As Perlman now claims, resistance does not have to be explained or justified.

Yet, as I have considered here, Perlman's later text does give license and justification to violent resistance, much as his politico-spiritual 'vision' serves to validate a revolutionary militant 'holy war' while dismissing and subordinating a spiritual and practical message of 'gentleness.' Perlman has in this sense attempted to circumvent this 'gentle' problematisation of resistance, much like his attempts at circumventing a dialectical understanding of the 'problem of resistance,' both of which are—from the perspective of Toynbee—entwined. Though, again, I do not believe Perlman's text has successfully circumvented any of these problems, particularly insofar as he has recuperated, on an inverted level, the political-spiritual warfare he so vehemently decries. If anything, Perlman's politico-spiritual 'vision' together with his primitivist politics of the 'frontier' reconfirms the need to emphasise a 'problem of resistance.' I would however suggest that the 'problem of resistance' in Perlman's text is not his own stated problem of a war of 'state of nature' against Leviathan, but an issue to which these 'gentle' forms of resistance granted considerable attention and significance: the interaction of the 'conflicting psychic forces' of love and hate in the lives of those who stand 'against.'

Conclusion

This discussion has attended to the 'problem of resistance,' opposition, change and transformation in Perlman's *Against His-story, Against Leviathan*. I have drawn particular attention to the struggle in Perlman's essay between dualistic and dialectical figurations

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of this 'problem of resistance,' and how this tension relates to his politicospiritual 'vision.' Following a discussion of Perlman's indebtedness to Debord's dialectic of resistance—and Perlman's removal from this problematic—I turned to one of the few extant references in Perlman's essay to a more dialectical understanding of resistance: Toynbee's *A Study of History*. As I discussed, Toynbee's dialectic of 'challenge-and-response' introduces a spiritual and affective dimension—an 'unknown quantity'—into questions of resistance. Focusing, in particular, upon Toynbee's critique of the emotional and spiritual sterility of militancy, I argued that Perlman's politico-spiritual 'vision' repeats so many of the problems with this militancy—from its message of reactive hatred to a 'frontier' politics of the barbarian against the civilised, the friend against the enemy.

To explore these problems further, I turned to several of the major spiritual influences in Perlman's work: William Blake, Lao Tzu's *Tao Te Ching*, and the figure of the trickster in world mythology. In all, I maintained that Perlman evades the dialectical figurations of resistance in Blake and the *Tao Te Ching*, and also fails to acknowledge the inherent moral ambivalence of the trickster. Perlman's 'vision,' I agued, remains caught within a simplistic moral universe of good versus evil that reinvokes stark, unequivocal affirmations of opposition 'against' Leviathan. To conclude, I attempted to discern an alternative conception of resistance in Perlman's text. I did so through reference to those 'gentle' and non-violent forms of resistance in Perlman's work derived from the Judaeo-Christian tradition, such as the Quakers. Although suggesting that Perlman's politico-spiritual 'vision' does not itself support this message of 'gentleness,' I too noted that this 'gentle' understanding of resistance holds a greater significance in understanding the 'problem of resistance' in Perlman's own text than does his own antagonistic war of 'state of nature' against Leviathan.

Conclusion

This thesis has provided a critical textual analysis of the imbrication of politics and spirituality in Fredy Perlman's *Against History, Against Leviathan*. A structuring component of this close textual reading has been a consideration of Perlman's text as 'vision.' By drawing inspiration from the esoteric symbolism of poetry and mythology, the image of utopia in Western thought, and the inner world of the seer, Perlman's text and his primitivism open onto the terrain of the visionary and the mythopoetic. Perlman's text, I have argued, is an attempt at circumventing the 'reasoned' conventions of an evidentiary-based study of so-called primitive societies, the history of 'Western civilisation,' and modern technocracies. In Perlman's text, the origins of primitivism emerge not out of explicit appeals to 'Positive Evidence,' but rather through the evocation of 'vision,' myth, dream, symbol, and direct appeals to the human 'spirit.'

Certainly, other thinkers have also acknowledged the visionary and spiritual implications of Perlman's text and primitivism more generally. Though, I too have noticed how these esoteric readings, particularly in regards to Perlman's work, are inclined to exempt this 'vision' from critical textual analysis. This visionary understanding of *Against His-story, Against Leviathan* removes Perlman's essay from critique because these fictive, poetic, and esoteric concerns do not apparently adhere to the 'reasoned' standards of evidence and 'counter-evidence.' While I would question whether Perlman's essay is, in fact, so unambiguously opposed to the realm of 'Positive Evidence,' there is one major reason why I have engaged in a critique of Perlman's visionary

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narrative: his 'vision' remains still a vision of something quite tangible and concrete. This tangible element in Perlman's 'vision' is his radical political background. Perlman's 'vision' is imbued with radical political implications; and, vice-versa, Perlman's radical stance is imbued with these visionary and transcendental qualities. Similarly, the human 'spirit' is placed into a narrative of resistance and opposition against Leviathan and its esoteric twin, the 'Western spirit.' In this sense, I have referred not simply to a 'vision' but to a politico-spiritual 'vision' in the context of Perlman's essay.

Perlman draws together 'vision' and 'spirit' with these radical political concerns because they provide a means of seeing through and beyond Leviathan's 'iron curtain of inversion and falsification.' They provide suggestions of an 'outside' and a 'beyond'—the 'other shore' and the 'state of nature.' Together, they entail the discovery of a 'way out' from Leviathan, 'Western civilisation,' and the spiritual malaise of the 'Western spirit.' However, the major problematic for this thesis has emerged precisely out of Perlman's reference to a political, visionary and spiritual 'way out.' I have found this so problematic—and an important basis for textual critique—because Perlman does not clearly provide a 'way out' from that which he decries and stands against. Perlman's politico-spiritual 'vision' and his primitivism demonstrate a longing for the 'state of nature' and the 'other shore,' but this longing appears more a symptom—of the 'inside'—than a solution—from the 'outside'—to the antagonisms and conflicts of Leviathan and 'Western civilisation.' Perlman's primitivism I would aver reveals far more about the primitivist—and the primitivist's own context—than the so-called primitive.

These problems have been considered no where more apparent than in Perlman's structuring inversion of Thomas Hobbes' political conflict between the 'state of nature' and Leviathan. Although Perlman, from his primitivist and Rousseauian standpoint, defends the 'state of nature' and stands against Leviathan with its atten-

dant 'war of extermination,' his own inverted position still remains caught 'inside' the binary and dualistic framework of the Western political tradition. By founding his work upon these foundational binary oppositions of the political, Perlman's politico-spiritual 'vision' reinscribes this antagonistic framework into his own conception of 'spirit,' best represented in his appropriation of the dualistic symbolism of the Western Judaeo-Christian tradition—of Good against Evil, Light against Dark, Life against Death, purity against impurity. Perlman presents his work in total refutation of the warring oppositions of Leviathan and 'Western civilisation,' even while tensely and contradictorily maintaining some of the more maligned and dualistic facets of Western political and religious thought.

I have found this all doubly problematic because there are subtle indications of another conception of 'spirit' in Perlman's work. Such an alternative has not emerged from those instances where Perlman speaks of the super-cession of all dualities and divisions, since even these references to the restoration of an 'original unity' are more often predicated upon the fundamental duality of 'state of nature' against Leviathan. Rather, I have tried to discern this alternative through comparison with other of Perlman's spiritual influences that emerge primarily within the Western JudaeoChristian tradition, but whose spiritual message remains that of reconciliation and relationship, dialectic and dialogue. There is here neither a 'spirited' war between opposed forces nor a state of spiritual oneness and unity, but what I have referred to as a spirituality of the 'between,' a dialogical form of spirituality that attempts to transfigure human understandings of division and duality. By way of such comparisons, I have not only sought to further demonstrate the tensions in Perlman's politico-spiritual 'vision'—between duality and dialectic, war and reconciliation—but also, in a more constructive manner, to read between the extremes of Perlman's vision. I have in this sense sought to provide intimations of an alternative, reconciliatory and dialogical conception of 'spirit' that might not

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particular present moment, is not solely identifiable with and reducible to Leviathan. Rather, I would place far more emphasis on the importance of finding a way back into an encounter and dialogue with this 'mundane' world and its modern exigencies, lest this repudiation of dialogue and communication devolve into a righteous, apocalyptic 'war of extermination' by closed circles of 'spirited revolutionaries,' 'Renegades,' and 'outside agitators,' a war that for all its rhetoric augurs little in the way of positive and creative change. If 'spirit' subsequently holds significance for this task of considered reengagement, such significance would emerge not from the clamorous pursuit of the End Times, rediscovering the 'golden age' within or escaping to the 'other shore,' but rather in cultivating and keeping open this space 'between.' 'Spirit' holds significance through the eminently human task of altering the way we relate to each other and encounter the world around us. This is to provide for an actual alternative to the 'war of extermination'—inverted or otherwise—in the form of a relationship between others capable of far greater compassion, magnanimity, and, most assuredly, generosity of spirit. Redefined through reference to a dialogical understanding of 'spirit,' Perlman's 'other shore' may have in this sense actually been much closer than his primitivism could ever conceivably admit—in the form of our relations with the other on these modern shores.

necessarily offer a 'way out,' but is at least capable of understanding spiritual change and social transformation in a manner distinct from this inverted 'war of extermination.'

I have explored these issues across three major parts. In each part, I have concentrated upon one major area where the tensions in Perlman's politico-spiritual 'vision' are most pronounced. In Part One, I took consideration of the contradictions in Perlman's conception of spiritual renewal. I attended in particular to the spiritual symbolism of 'the strait' and its demarcation of two disparate shores: 'the other shore' and these modern shores, or what is also referred to as 'the Waste Land.' While I acknowledged the esoteric and utopian dimensions of 'the strait,' the 'other shore,' and the 'Waste Land, I too indicated their explicitly temporal and historical element in the broader context of Perlman's primitivism and his radical political critique of modernity. As I argued, Perlman here institutes a historical and temporal scission on the basis of this spiritual symbolism, a 'widening' of 'the strait' that actively exacerbates a message of historical and spiritual estrangement from the 'state of nature' or 'golden age.' This position was not only considered to deprive the present of all spiritual meaningfulness—and any basis for spiritual renewal—but also to close off other utopian and transformative possibilities in the present, particularly by way of Perlman's appeal to a 'worse-the-better' understanding of revolutionary change.

Turning from this spiritual symbolism, I attended to Perlman's estranged relationship to historical time. Drawing from some of the major spiritual influences in Perlman's essay, particularly Mircea Eliade and Frederick W. Turner, I discussed how Perlman's radical opposition of the 'state of nature' against Leviathan, the 'other shore' against this modern 'Waste Land' is also predicated upon a distinction between two differing conceptions of time: the meaningfulness of cyclical, mythological time and 'mundane,' linear or historical time. While recognising this distinction, I too detailed Perlman's problematic attempts to collapse myth and history into

each other through the ideal of a primitivist 'golden age' existing 'before' Western civilisation. By way of a comparative analysis of Turner's *Beyond Geography*, I argued that Perlman's primitivist yearning for this 'lost belief or paradise' not only replicates the historical estrangement he attributes to the 'Western spirit,' but also recaptures its malignant conception of spiritual renewal in the destructive 'worse-the-better' violence of an apocalyptic catastrophism: 'the hope of recovering in an apocalyptic future what it had once had in the past.' In problematising the 'radical alienation' that sustains Perlman's politico-spiritual 'vision' and his utopian ideal of the 'golden age,' I considered an alternative conception of spiritual renewal through reference to a transfigured definition of human involvement within historical time, and a respect for 'the *topos*,' this place, this particular present moment.

In Part Two, I considered the tensions in Perlman's definition of the 'individual's living spirit' in relation to questions of 'self-liberation.' While first attending to Perlman's debt to Wilhelm Reich's concept of 'character armor'—and his efforts to integrate Reich's work into his politico-spiritual 'vision'—I found of greater comparative import the work of a thinker who explicitly enjoins together Freudian psychoanalysis with spiritual aspirations: Norman O. Brown's *Life against Death*. In accord with Brown's dialectical and Hegelian efforts to reconcile this opposition of the Freudian 'instincts'—*Eros* and *Thanatos*—I noted that Perlman's work is actually structured around the antagonistic duality of Life against Death, even though Perlman's reliance upon a theory of 'armor'—or internalised social constraints—actively precludes this Freudian idea of inner conflict and instinctual ambivalence. I went on to emphasise how these structuring oppositions abandon the possibility of a more reconciliatory understanding of 'self-liberation' through reference to the Christian imagery of the 'resurrection.' As I argued, Perlman falls to the troubling utopian ideal of 'fusion' that is repeated in Brown's work—the restoration of a prior plenitude or wholeness of being without division and separation. In-

thesis, there are several indications in Perlman's text of the ultimate futility of dialogue: of 'untranslatable' and 'unintelligible' vocabularies; suggestions that 'people waste their lives when they plead with Ahriman;' and, the portrayal of 'impatient' visionaries who leave ignorant *zeks* 'to their blindness.' Perlman's 'vision' is problematic, but so too is this visionary form and structure with its attempts to 'withdraw' from ordinary or 'mundane' discourse.

These problems with Perlman's 'vision' of escape and 'withdrawal' from the ordinary and the mundane is also why I have placed emphasis upon a dialogical spirituality or spirituality of the 'between,' and have sought out those subtle, if buried, intimations of this dialogical spirituality in Perlman's own work. Neither committed to an inverted 'war of extermination' nor professing to 'overcome' duality—through non-dual unity and Dionysian 'fusion'—this dialogical conception of 'spirit' and spirituality holds such import because of the centrality of dialogue, encounter, relation and communication—between others and opposites. In a rather paradoxical fashion, this spirituality of the 'between' remains open and responsive to this 'mundane' world because of its acceptance of 'limits' and limitations—through a fundamental respect for and encounter with difference—whereas Perlman's own visionary and primitivist 'impatience with limits'—through the forcible restoration of an 'original unity'—concludes too often in a severing of relations and the sundering of communication. Where Perlman's 'vision' is removed from the middling, the 'mundane,' and the mediocre, a dialogical spirituality offers a certain defence of and admiration for this 'mundane' world and its middling civility, a civility that may share connotations with 'civilisation,' but which has its own valuable implications: a civil respect and regard for others.

In reference to a dialogical spirituality, and by way of conclusion to this thesis, I would not therefore emphasise Perlman's own politico-spiritual message of discovering a 'way out' from this world, particularly insofar as this world, this place, this

stead of overcoming the interminable conflict of Life and Death, I recognised how this ideal of 'fusion' perpetuates other dualistic extremes through the privileging of Being over Becoming; emphasis upon a state of pantheistic unity; and, a politics of Dionysian 'self-abandon' that discards with patient, introspective, or 'Apollonian' forms of selftransformation.

As an alternative, I turned to another major spiritual influence in Perlman's essay: Marguerite Porete's *The Mirror of Simple Souls*. Noting Perlman's own attempts to impose his structuring antagonism of Life against Death onto Porete's work, I suggested that Perlman's dualistic reading ignores its 'negative,' selfannihilatory and self-transcendent dimensions—a dying to self. While questioning whether this process of mystical 'self-annihilation' can be equated with Brown's Freudian reading of the 'resurrection,' I suggested an alternative to 'self-annihilation,' 'self-abandon,' and the condition of being 'armoured' in the reconciliatory terms of a psychoanalytic reading of the 'resurrection:' coming to terms with a self that is not whole or unified but fractured and haunted by loss.

In Part Three, I explored one of the major issues in Perlman's politico-spiritual 'vision:' the 'problem of resistance,' opposition, change and transformation. I attended, in particular, to the overarching conflict in Perlman's essay between dualistic and dialectical figurations of resistance. Looking initially at Perlman's indebtedness to Guy Debord's dialectical theory of revolutionary 'coherence,' I noticed how Perlman's essay abandons much of this dialectical problematisation of resistance for a dualistic account of 'daring radicals' being overwhelmed and corrupted by the malignant forces they are arrayed against. Questioning the efficacy of this dualistic account of resistance, I turned to one of the lingering references in Perlman's essay to a more dialectical understanding of resistance: Arnold J. Toynbee's *A Study of History*. Looking at Toynbee's dialectic of 'challenge-andresponse,' and attentive to its spiritual and affective dimensions, I focused upon Toynbee's critique of the sterility of political militancy—its fall to a re-

side.' As I would note, this longing for release and this celebratory envisioning of other worlds, other places, utopias and golden ages all too easily devolves into the denigration of this world and bespeaks of a 'radical alienation' from the present—a message of estrangement that is not conducive to radical social transformation. Perlman's defence of utopia and his longing for the 'other shore' is founded upon a hatred of the *topos*. This utopian striving does not provide hope for a better world. It offers only despair at this present-day 'wretched reality;' misanthropic and elitist contempt for 'domesticated,' mediocre *zeks* that have been voided of all spiritual 'meaning;' and, a vengeful, apocalyptic desire to either see this world 'collapse' or contribute to this destruction by setting 'fire to the Leviathanic world.' Perlman's efforts in transcending this world give way to a 'malignant transcendence,' a malignancy that is derived, in a contradictory and estranged manner, from that 'Leviathanic world' Perlman seeks to transcend.

These problems with an imagery of escape extend further still into Perlman's visionary narrative. While Perlman professes a message of escape and release, I too would note how the 'visionary' medium through which he expresses this message is itself a flight from conversation and dialogue with this world. Perlman's politicospiritual 'vision' is not only a circumvention of 'reasoned' analysis, but it is also the circumvention of 'reasoned' discussion, debate, and dialogue. Following Mathieu O'Neil's observations on primitivism, Perlman's 'vision' serves as an act of 'boundary building'—the visionary foundation for a primitivist radical sub-cultural milieu closed off from the mediocre world of 'domesticated' *zeks*. With its spiritually unassailable truths, its assertive conviction, its reliance upon mythic abstractions, and its removal from 'mundane' concerns over 'Positive Evidence,' Perlman's 'vision' adopts the qualities of a sermon that provides simple answers for complex problems and a complex reality. His 'vision' is not the foundation for a dialogue, but a selfrighteously arrogant monologue. Certainly, as I have noted throughout this

active 'stimulus' of hatred and its emotional enslavement to a demonised Enemy. Through comparison with Toynbee, I argued that Perlman's politico-spiritual 'vision' actually recaptures the problems with such militancy.

To explore these issues, I turned to several of the major spiritual influences in Perlman's work: William Blake, Lao Tzu's *Tao Te Ching*, and the figure of the trickster in world mythology. By way of a comparative reading, I argued that Perlman consistently evades the dialectical or 'contrarian' figurations of resistance in Blake and the *Tao Te Ching*, and also fails to acknowledge the moral ambivalence of the trickster. I maintained on this basis that Perlman's politico-spiritual 'vision' remains caught within a simplistic moral universe and a politically militant worldview that is quite uncreative in its response to the antagonistic 'frontiers' of Leviathan and the 'Western spirit.' While acknowledging these problems, I too detailed those subtle, if still muted references in Perlman's life and work to 'gentle,' non-violent and reconciliatory forms of resistance, particularly in the broader context of the JudaeoChristian tradition.

In all, I have considered the problems with Perlman's enclosure of 'spirit' within a visionary narrative of radical political opposition, and his subsequent recuperation of the antagonistic terrain of the Western political and religious traditions, alongside this stifling of a more reconciliatory conception of spiritual change and social transformation. Through a close textual engagement with Perlman's *Against His-story, Against Leviathan*, I have, in turn, sought to draw critical attention to this work's mythopoetic, visionary, and utopian implications, while also attending to the radical political concerns that are woven into this foundational and influential anarcho-primitivist text.

Drawing upon this thesis as a whole, I would maintain that Perlman's politicospiritual 'vision' is fundamentally a vision of escape and release or, as already noted, the discovery in both esoteric and literal terms of a 'way out,' an 'outside,' a 'beyond.' There

are, of course, a rather extensive amount of shackling impediments and burdensome horrors from which Perlman's work seeks release: Leviathanic technocracies, the mundane banality of consumer capitalism, the environmental catastrophes of the 'Waste Land,' the 'armored' repression of civilisation and the 'Western spirit,' the 'terror of history,' the political quagmire of post-1960s radicalism, and the moribund nature of traditional anarchism and Marxism with their allegiance to 'progress' and the heteronomous discipline of 'The Organisation.'

With this constantly repeated imagery of incarceration and imprisonment, domestication and confinement, Perlman's primitivist 'vision' is possessed of a fundamental longing for release, escape, and 'withdrawal.' Perlman will search for this 'way out' in the rediscovery of the 'state of nature'—the 'other shore' that lies beyond 'the strait' in the form of lost meaningful contexts, 'other modes of being' and 'other places and other times,' principally in relation to indigenous and archaic lifeworlds. Perlman upholds the rebellious legacy of the 'drop out' and the 'outside agitator'—those who managed to flee Leviathan's embrace for the untamed wilderness. In more esoteric terms, Perlman reclaims the utopian heritage of the Judaeo-Christian tradition with its strivings for Eden and Paradise, lost 'golden ages,' and the mythic time of the '"beginnings."' Together, these realms of escape present a 'fulfilled image of wholeness;' they indicate a 'way out' from this 'wretched reality.' Of course, a major problem for my thesis has been precisely Perlman's inability to escape from that which his politico-spiritual 'vision' is attempting to flee. His 'vision' not only recuperates the dualistic antagonisms of the Judaeo-Christian tradition, but also maintains a quite tenacious identity with the belligerent militancy of Perlman's revolutionary political heritage and the divisive 'frontiers' of the Western political tradition. There is however another problem I have discerned throughout this thesis in relation to Perlman's imagery of escape and release. The problem in question is exactly this emphasis upon escape and 'withdrawal' to the 'out-