

Koinonia

A Phenomenology of Being-With

Alessio Montaruli

KITALENT RESEARCH

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ALESSIO MONTARULI

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Koinonia: A Phenomenology of Being-With

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PART I. METHOD AND LAW

Chapter 1. Method

This book is about being-with, the being-among-others that is the most familiar thing there is and the least examined. Before anyone speaks, before any exchange, one is already with others in a world held in common; the with is there first, the ground one stands on in every meeting. It is so close and so constant that it withdraws from view by being everywhere, and bringing it into view is the work of the whole book. The shared disclosed world, and the meeting in which it comes to be between persons, are the with seen from two sides, and they are the matter the chapters are built to disclose.

Everything depends on how the with is reached, so the first thing to fix is not the with but the access to it. The requirement that governs this inquiry, before any result, is that the access be the reader's own: that whatever is claimed be reachable by the reader's own seeing and answerable to it, owing its standing to no one's authority. This is not a claim that the seeing starts from nothing. No one comes to a figure empty, without a language, a formation, a life that has already shaped what looks evident, and to ask for that would be to ask for an impossible blankness, which the book does not ask. What it asks is narrower and can actually be met: that no result rest on having taken another's word for it. A phenomenon affirmed on the strength of another's having affirmed it is inherited, not founded, and an inherited ground falls the moment its authority is questioned. So free access does not mean a mind without history. It means a result any reader can carry back to the phenomenon and test, holding or rejecting it by what he there sees, rather than one he must accept because a name stands behind it. The test of every step is whether the access stays the reader's own in that sense, and the discipline of this chapter is the discipline of keeping it so.

What woke the inquiry must be named exactly, because it is a motive and not a premise. Heidegger named being-with as equiprimordial, stood on it, acknowledged it as a ground, and made the shared openness the terrain his later thinking moved on. But to meet a ground and name it is not to found it, and he did not found it, because his question was the question of being and not of being-with. He passed through the with, named it accurately, built on it, and left its working-out for another inquiry; that the derivation is missing is no failing of his, since it belonged to a different question, the one this book takes up. His pointing serves here as what his own account of seeking calls a guiding fore-sight, the prior sense that lets a search begin and aims it, and nothing more. To begin instead from his affirmation as a premise would be to inherit the very ground the access requirement forbids. So the with is the destination, won freely and guided toward by his pointing, never the premise borrowed at the door. How the free arrival stands to the thinking that met the ground without founding it is the matter of the closing translation, not of this beginning.

What follows is not a method laid down in advance and then imposed on the matter, since to dictate to what one is trying to see would be the first violation of the thing the method most needs to honor. It is the discipline the work turned out to require, set down here because a reader is owed it before the seeing begins, but discovered in the doing and answerable to what the doing showed.

Begin with why the common cannot be looked at directly. A thing in the world can be set in front of you and examined. The shared world is not a thing in the world; it is that within which things are set in front of you at all, the medium in which anything shows up as the thing it is. You cannot set the medium in front of you, because the setting-in-front happens within it. Ask what the shared world is and you find you are already standing in it, using it, seeing everything else by means of it, and what does the disclosing will not itself come round to the front and be disclosed like one more disclosed thing. A ground withdraws by grounding. It holds everything up precisely by staying under, and the staying-under is not a failure to appear but the way a ground is what it is.

So the first principle of the method is best held by an image. The unseeable is seen in the sky by what it does to what is near it. A black hole emits nothing to look at, but it bends the light around it, pulls nearby orbits into curves, draws a bright disk of matter into a ring. You never see the center; you read it, exactly and rigorously, from the deformations at its edge. That is the method of this book. We never look at the shared world directly, because it cannot be looked at. We read it from its perimeter, from the places where it bends what passes near it, where it shows itself by the shape it gives to other things. Every result here is an inference from a deformation at the edge, never a frontal sighting of the center.

This indirectness is not a weakness, and everything turns on seeing why. A clear, frontal view of the shared world would be the sign that we had turned it into a thing, an object among objects set in front of us like the rest, and to turn the medium into a thing is to misdescribe it utterly, since its whole manner of being is to be that within which things are met, not a thing met. So the indirectness is not the method falling short of the phenomenon. It is the method telling the truth about it. A way of seeing the common that left it clear and frontal would have falsified it in the act of clarifying it.

Where, then, does the medium become visible, if never at the center? Mostly in breakdown, and once in birth.¹ A medium that works perfectly is invisible by working; you see through it and never it. It shows itself where it catches, fails, tears, or is counterfeited, and once, late in the book, where it first comes to be between two who had it not. So the method attends to disturbances: the greeting withheld, which reveals the field it was held back from; the greeting spoken that fails to land, which reveals the border it failed against; the floor torn open by a being that cannot stand on it; the surface of speech counterfeited by something that produces it without meaning it. Each is a place where the common, ordinarily invisible by working, becomes briefly legible by breaking. The book is a sequence of such breakdowns, each read for what it forces.

From this follows the rule that governs the reading, a single discipline with two faces. Read the perimeter, never the center: do not reach past the deformation to a frontal view of the thing deforming, because there is no such view, and reaching for it reifies the ground. And follow what the perimeter shows, imposing nothing: take what the deformation actually discloses, even when a tidier result was available. These two are one rule, because to impose a tidy shape on the perimeter is the same error as reaching for the center; both substitute what we wanted to see for what showed. The book will meet, more than once, a place where a clean line turned out to be a graded zone, where a wall turned out to be a slope. The discipline is to keep the slope, because the slope is what showed, and to keep the wall because it was cleaner would be to dictate to the phenomenon the one thing the method forbids. We do not tell the common what shape to have.

Two standing constraints fix the place where this reading happens. The first: there is no scene without an other. Every figure has at least two in it, because the common shows itself only between, and a scene with one person alone would disclose nothing of the common and would let the solitary self-sufficient knower return through a side door and take back the ground. That the field needs the encounter in order to appear is not a limitation of the method but one of its first disclosures, since a common that could show itself to a single mind would be a possession of that mind, and the whole inquiry is the displacement of that picture. The second concerns order. As the figures accumulate they fall into an order, some resting on others, and it would be natural to call that order a hierarchy and to rank the results by importance or elegance. The method forbids this. The only ordering it permits is presupposition: that one thing, to be what it is, requires another already in hand. We never declare a ranking; if an order exists, the figures produce it, by showing that this could not be seen until that was seen. Presupposition the phenomena can show; importance we would be imposing.

There is a reason this can be a discipline at all, rather than a private confession, and it lies in the difference between the center and the perimeter. The center is uncheckable: no one can verify another's inner intuition of the common, and a book resting on such intuitions would rest on nothing shareable. But the perimeter is public. Two people can both watch a greeting fail to land, both see that the stranger's word did not reach, that the border is there, that the floor held or gave way. The deformations are answerable even though the ground is not, and grounding every claim in a deformation that two can witness is what makes the obfuscated central seeing a discipline instead of a report of private experience. The ground withdraws and cannot be checked; the edge is public and can be. The book stakes everything on the edge.

This way of seeing is old. The suspension at the root of it, the setting-aside of the inherited and already-said so that the matter itself can show, is the gesture modern philosophy named the *epoché*, and it is far older than the name. It is what Socrates did when he set aside *doxa*, the received opinion a man carries about justice or courage without having seen the thing itself. What the modern suspension sets aside, the natural attitude, the inherited positing of the world as simply and obviously there, is the same gesture under another name. And there is a name for what the suspension opens once the obvious is set aside. Aristotle says philosophy begins in wonder; read here, wonder is not a mood that precedes thinking but the seeing the suspension makes possible, the matter met as if for the first time, strange again because the already-given that made it obvious has been lifted. The book, in setting aside the obviousness of the common, is trying to wonder at it, to find the nearest and most constant thing of all unfamiliar.

It is worth saying what the suspension suspends, because the deepest layer of the method is here. The temptation is to think it clears away a human addition to reach a bare thing underneath. That cannot be done.² The mountain is given only as it appears, and the appearing is not a film over the real that could be peeled away to leave the real bare; the appearing is how the mountain is there for us at all. So the suspension does not delete the appearing and reach behind it. It suspends the question whether what appears is the real thing or our projection, and goes to work inside the appearing, sorting it. The sorting is done by variation: hold a phenomenon steady and vary its setting, its neighbors, the conditions it stands in, and watch what survives. What falls away with the change of setting was never the thing itself; what stands through every variation is its structure.

Among the phenomena there is a particular and dangerous kind, and the book builds much on it, so it should be introduced as what it is, a reading the book proposes and will have to earn through its later figures, and not a thing self-evident at the door. Some appearances, in appearing as themselves, conceal something else; they present as one thing while covering another. Such an appearance is still genuinely given, it really appears, but by appearing as itself while suppressing what is under it, it folds the field over, laying its own appearing across the thing it hides so that the hidden thing cannot show. Call this the fold. The book reads the fold as the place where domination enters at the level of appearing itself, because to fold the field is to extend the reach of one phenomenon over another, to let one appearance occupy and rule the place of what it hides. This reading of the fold as a holding of power is the book's own proposal. It is owed to Nietzsche's image and to Reiner Schürmann's reading of it, named here at the point of use and not only in the margin, and it stands or falls with the work the later figures make it do, not with any self-evidence. Read this way, the suspension is the suspension of the search for a position of power: it refuses to take the ruling appearance as the settled order and varies the context until the fold is forced open and what was folded under it can show. The variation unfolds the fold.

So the exercise has a name it did not obviously have. Phenomenology, practiced as the suspension and the variation, can be read as the freeing of a field of phenomenality from its own tendency to fold into positions of power. Fields left to themselves fold; one appearance overtakes another, installs itself as the ruling term, orders the rest from where it sits. The suspension and the variation are the discipline that unfolds them, that lets the structural order show by the contending of the phenomena rather than by the victory of one of them. This is why the same gesture is at once a way of seeing and a refusal of domination, and it is the sense in which Socrates was not a metaphysical thinker, since metaphysics is the fold raised to its highest power, one being installed as the first from which all the rest is ordered, while Socrates suspended every claimant's installation and let the contending opinions fight under his questioning. His not-knowing was the holding-open that keeps the fold from closing. The reader will find, much later, that the book's refusals all take this one shape, among them the refusal to let the shared world fold into an agent over persons, the refusal to let the course of history fold into a destiny, and the refusal to let the other fold into a first principle beyond being. Whether the single shape really runs through all of them is not asserted here; it is shown, case by case, and the reader is the one who checks.

This is why the seeing cannot be produced by learning or replaced by it. Recall how Socrates draws the proof out of the slave boy in the *Meno*: he does not teach the boy the theorem but draws figures in the sand and asks, and the boy, taught no geometry, reaches the proof from his own sight of the figure, compelled by what he sees and by no authority outside it. The figures of this book are drawn in that spirit. The reader is not told what the common is and asked to believe it on the author's authority; he is walked to the perimeter, shown the deformation, and the standing of the result is his own seeing. The claim is not that the reader brings nothing, for the boy brought a language and a life and the capacity to be led; it is that what he is led to, he sees for himself and need take from no one. A thing shown needs no permission from the tradition to be true. This is the access requirement again, now in the form the figures will keep: the result is the reader's because he can be brought to see it, not because a name stands behind it.

It follows that erudition and philosophy are different in kind and not at two ends of one scale. Erudition is knowing about; philosophy is seeing the matter; no amount of the first becomes the second, the way no mastery of all that is written about a great general makes one able to command in the field. Both the historian and the general must know the campaigns; only one of them can win a battle. So a reader who has read everything has not, by that reading alone, seen anything at all, and the failure of taking the one for the other is a fluency in the words of philosophy with no vision behind it. This fixes a line the book holds throughout. What can be reached from the figures, by the reader's own seeing, is the body, and it is the philosophy. What needs a name from the tradition in order to stand, a citation, a predecessor, a text, belongs to the margin, to the closing reckoning with those who came before. The margin is not a dustbin for learning the book is embarrassed by; it is where the erudite work is done openly, as erudition, which is necessary and is a different kind of thing from the seeing. The figures owe their standing to the seeing, not to the names, and the names are paid their due in their own place, never as the ground of the result. One exception is marked plainly when it comes: a single later figure leans on the book's own earlier work rather than on a scene a stranger could be walked through, and where it does, the book says so and counts its weight as the lesser, confirming weight that such a debt allows. The appendices are no exception to this, since they are corollaries and not part of the body; standing outside the argument, they may lean on prior work freely, because they are not figures and prove nothing the phenomenology needs.

One demand runs under all of this and guarantees the rest: the suspension must be sincere. When Socrates sets aside what he thinks he knows, he is not hiding a known answer behind a show of ignorance and steering the boy to it; the not-knowing is real, and that is why the inquiry can arrive at something not fixed in advance. The bracket must be genuinely open, or what comes out is only what was put in, reinjected and called a discovery. The figure compels only if nothing has been hidden in the drawing of it. This is the safeguard the later chapters restate in their own terms: do not smuggle the answer in, at any scale, from the small categories slipped into a single figure to the largest, an orientation of all history asserted because it would complete the picture. The whole honesty of the book is the honesty of the suspension. If the bracket is kept open, the seeing is the reader's and is real; if it is not, the book is a conjuror's trick, and no result in it is worth anything.

A word, finally, on the form these pages take, since it follows from everything just said. A figure is shown, not asserted, and the showing is best done as a conversation. One who has walked these roads draws the figure and asks; another, who has not yet seen, meets it with the resistance a real reader brings, refuses to be hurried, and is brought to the seeing only by the figure and never by being told. So the book proceeds, for the most part, as a dialogue between two. Guglielmo has been this way before and will not hand over a conclusion, because a conclusion handed over is not seen. Fridrik comes to each figure new, carrying what a reader actually believes, and gives it up only when the figure breaks it in his hands. They are given enough temper to be two people and no more, because their personability must never compete with the seeing. Where the work is not the showing of a figure but the gathering of what the figures have shown, or the reckoning with those who came before, the voices step back and the book speaks plainly in its own. But the heart of it is the conversation, because the conversation is the showing, and the showing is the whole of the method.

¹ The principle is Heidegger's, in *Being and Time*, section sixteen, on how the worldly character of the environment announces itself in entities within the world. In unimpaired dealings the tool withdraws from notice and one sees through it to the work; it is when the tool breaks, goes missing, or obstructs, becoming conspicuous, obtrusive, and obstinate, that the referential whole it belonged to, the significance of the world, lights up and is seen. The significance of the world appears not in the smooth traffic with the particular tool but in the disturbance of that traffic. This book generalizes the principle from the tool to the common: the medium shows itself where the dealing it supports breaks down. The figure of birth is the one place the same medium is reached otherwise, not by a breakdown but by a coming-to-be.

² The image is Nietzsche's, and the reading of it is Reiner Schürmann's. Nietzsche points to a mountain and a cloud and challenges the sober ones to strip away every human addition and reach what is "real" in them, adding: "If only you could!" Schürmann takes the taunt literally: the addition cannot be eliminated, for the real would slip away along with it, which leaves not the task of deleting the addition but the question of what is at stake in it. The present method answers in its own terms: the addition is the appearing, and what is at stake is whether the appearing folds into a position of power or is let to show its order unfolded.

Chapter 2. Constitution Without Absolution

The method is now in hand: read the common at its perimeter, never at its center, and impose nothing on what shows. Before the figures begin, there is one finding to state, because it is not one result among the others but the law that governs how every other result may be put into words. It is also the first thing the free access wins, for being-with, once reached by our own seeing and not taken on anyone's word, shows a structure at once, and that structure is this law. It is set down here in advance because a reader needs it as a guard, the way a grammar is needed before the sentences, though like everything in this book it is read off the figures and not laid down over them. The reader will watch it forced, again and again, in scene after scene; it is stated now so that its repeated forcing is recognized when it comes.

The law has two halves, and the whole of it lives in holding them together. The first half: the shared world is prior. It comes before the persons who share it, in the sense that it makes them possible. One is formed into a world one did not make, brought up into a tongue and a way of having things in common that were there before one arrived and will outlast one's leaving. No person assembles the common out of private parts; the person is already within it, constituted as the person he is by a world that preceded him. In the order of what makes what possible, the field is first and the persons second, formed within it.

The second half: only persons answer. The field makes persons possible, but it does not act, does not decide, does not promise, does not answer for anything. When an account is to be rendered, when something is to be answered for, it is always a person who answers and never the field. The field is the condition under which answering can happen at all, the standing-room in which a word can be given and called back; it is not itself one who gives or is called. So in the order of answerability the persons are first and the field is nowhere, because the field is not the kind of thing that can be in that order at all.

Put the two halves in one sentence and the law stands: the field is prior in the order of constitution, and persons remain primary in the order of answerability. The field constitutes; only persons answer. The name for this is constitution without absolution. The field's priority in making persons possible does not absolve the persons of anything, does not lift the answering off them and onto itself, because making possible is not the same as doing, and being the condition of an act is not the same as performing it or answering for it. The ground that holds everything up answers for nothing, and the persons it holds up answer for everything they do. That the field came first does not make it the author of what persons do within it, and does not make it a party that could be blamed or praised or called to account in their place.

One thing about the first half must be guarded, because a later figure will look closer and could seem to reverse it. The priority named here is of one definite kind: the priority of an already-there field over the person it forms. It is a claim about the person and the field that made him, and it claims nothing about a different question the figures will reach, how a shared world first comes to be between two who did not have one. That coming-to-be is not the forming of a person by an inherited field, and what the figures disclose about it is a deepening of how the common we are formed by is itself born, not a retraction of its priority in forming us. Here it is enough to mark the boundary and leave the birth of a shared world to be shown where it can be seen.

There is a discipline of words that this law imposes, and it is worth stating exactly, because the law is broken most often not by a false claim but by a careless verb. The field is best spoken of as a condition and not as an agent, and the difference shows in whether one reaches for a noun or a verb. To say the field constitutes, with the field as the subject of an active verb, already half-suggests that the field does something, performs an act of constituting, and the suggestion is false and will spread. The field does not perform an act; it is the prior condition of intelligibility, the standing possibility within which persons are formed and act. So the safer speech keeps the field in the noun, the condition, the openness, the having-of-room, and keeps the active verbs for the persons, who alone perform, welcome, answer, keep faith, and break it. Every time the field is made the subject of a verb of action, the law has sprung a small leak, and the leaks are how the whole error returns.

And the error does return, in a new dress at every level, which is why a single statement is not enough and the guard has to be kept through the whole book. The error is always the same: a condition is quietly turned into an agent, something that makes acts possible is quietly made to act. It comes dressed as a people imagined as a great person who thinks and wills, when a people is a field within which persons think and will and is no thinker itself. It comes dressed as a leader imagined as the author of the common he speaks for, when he condenses a field he did not make and remains a person answerable for what he does. It comes dressed as hosting, the field imagined as extending a welcome, when hosting is a condition, the having-of-room, and only a speaker performs the welcome. It comes, at the largest, dressed as history, the disclosed world imagined as sent by something beneath it that bears the history over the heads of those who live it, when the history is borne by the persons in their meetings and is not sent. In every dress it is one error, the condition made an agent, and the law is one refusal, made again each time: do not let the field, the openness, the common, become the thing that acts. The method has a name for the wider shape of this error, the fold, the appearance that installs itself in a position of power over what it covers; the error met here is that shape at the scale of the common, and the reader will find the same shape refused again at the largest scales, in a history made into a destiny and in an other lifted into a first principle, all met by the one discipline.

This gives the book a test it can apply to its own every sentence. Read any sentence and ask whether the field, or the openness, or being itself, has crept back in as an agent while wearing one of the book's own words, whether the common has been made to do something only a person can do. If it has, the sentence has broken the first law, however true it may sound, and must be rewritten until the agency is back where it belongs, with the persons. The whole book is written under this test, and the reader is invited to apply it, because catching the law's violation is itself a way of seeing the law.

It should be said plainly how this law stands to Heidegger, who met being-with before this book and acknowledged it as a ground. He named being-with as equiprimordial and stood on it, and the structure he worked out at length was its deficient mode, the anonymous public into which one falls, the leveled everyday of the one who does what one does. The positive structure of the with, what it is to be a member of a shared field at all, he affirmed and did not derive, since his question was being and not being-with. This law is the book's statement of that positive structure, reached by the free access and owed to him as the one who met the phenomenon and named it a ground: that the with is prior in constituting the persons and never an agent over them, that it makes them possible and answers for nothing.

How much the law can carry may be felt in one place, offered not as a proof the law performs but as a foretaste of its reach, to be redeemed only by the seeing that follows. Heidegger named, in a single phrase, two ways of seeing that guide our being-with others, and let them stand without explanation. The first is *Rücksicht*, regardful sight, the looking that takes the other into account as already shaped by a world and regards that shaping. The second is *Nachsicht*, forbearing sight, the looking that bears with him and holds back, that leaves his own response open rather than fixing it. He named the pair and did not say why there are two. Read by this law, the answer is near. The other is two things at once: constituted by the field, formed by a world that preceded us both, which is why true sight takes his prior formation into account, and this is *Rücksicht*, answering to the first half of the law; and a person who answers, never closed into what the world made of him, his own answering still open, which is why true sight also holds back and leaves that answering open, and this is *Nachsicht*, answering to the second half. That the law can articulate a pair Heidegger named and left unexplained is suggestive, and it is offered as that. It is not yet evidence that the law was found rather than imposed, for an imposed law can also be made to articulate a borrowed distinction. Only the figures can show the law is read off the matter and not laid over it, and that showing is their work and not this paragraph's.

One half of this law was reached before this book and in the open, and honesty requires saying so here, at the front, and not only in the later reckoning. The half that says the shared world grants the space in which things appear but does not itself act or will, and that only the situated person renders an account while the field does not, was established by Klaus Held, who retrieved the old idea of the rendering of an account and showed, against the picture of a community as a great willing subject, that the openness gives the room for appearing and does not appear as an agent in it. The non-agentive field and the answering that falls only to persons are, in their substance, his, worked out in the register of political life, and this book does not present that half as new.

What the book adds is a descent, and it must be described exactly, in the language of condition and not of rank. Held locates the rendering of an account in the city, among citizens of equal standing answering to their peers in a public world, which is a built and a high place, a community of equals already formed. The figures of this book reach beneath it. The withheld greeting and the failed greeting disclose an answerability that is in place before any city, before any public of peers, the bare being able to be addressed and to answer that two strangers share when they share no city and no world at all, and that remains when the city is taken away and even when the shared world is taken away. So what the book adds is not a deeper or truer answerability than Held's, and the temptation to call it more fundamental must be refused, because the claim would assert a rank the work neither needs nor earns. What it adds is the condition of possibility of his account: the floor of answerable disclosedness that the city presupposes and cannot itself install. The right words are exactly those, the condition of possibility of his rendering of an account, and never that this book has gone deeper than he did.

With the method in hand and this law set as the guard over every sentence, the figures can begin. They will disclose much, but nothing that overturns this law, because this law is the form of the disclosing itself: a common that is prior in making persons possible, and persons who alone answer, and a constant vigilance against the moment the prior common is quietly asked to answer in their place. Constitution without absolution. Watch for it to be forced, and watch for it to be threatened, in every scene that follows.

PART II. THE PURE EIDETIC FIGURES

Chapter 3. The Withheld Greeting

There is a path, narrow, the kind where two people cannot pass without acknowledging each other. Someone is coming the other way. You know, before anything is said, that you could greet them. Suppose you do not. You let them pass in silence. Hold the not-greeting still for a moment and look at it. What is there?

FRIDRIK. Nothing is there. That is the point of it. I could have spoken and I did not. An absence of speech, and I am not sure an absence is something to look at.

GUGLIELMO. That is the honest answer, and I would rather take it seriously than talk you out of it. Say more about why you call it an absence. What is missing, exactly?

FRIDRIK. The greeting. The words that did not come. Had I said good morning there would have been an event, a small one, two people exchanging a sign. Without the words there is no event. A road, two strangers, no exchange. To call that something is to make weather out of a still day.

GUGLIELMO. Then let me ask about the still day. You were silent toward the person on the path. Were you silent in the same way toward the stone at the side of the path?

FRIDRIK. No. Of course not. I did not greet the stone either, but that is not silence toward the stone. One is not silent toward a stone at all.

GUGLIELMO. Why not? The words did not come in either case. If the not-greeting is only the absence of words, the two absences are equal. No good morning to the walker, no good morning to the stone. Equal absences. Yet you say they are not the same. Where is the difference, if it is only absence?

FRIDRIK. The difference is that I could have greeted the walker, and I could not have greeted the stone. I could have aimed the sounds at the stone, but that would not be greeting. The walker was someone a greeting could reach.

GUGLIELMO. Stay exactly there, because you have just said something you did not say a moment ago. A moment ago the not-greeting was the absence of words. Now you put the difference not in the words but somewhere else. The walker, you said, was someone a greeting could reach. Is that an absence?

FRIDRIK. Let me be careful, because I think you will hold me to this. I want to say it is still an absence, only a more exact one. The absence of a possible greeting, rather than the absence of any old sound. The stone had no possible greeting to be missing. The walker did.

GUGLIELMO. Then the silence toward the walker contains something the silence toward the stone does not. Call it, with no more weight than this, the possible greeting, the one that could have reached and did not come. Is that possible greeting nothing?

FRIDRIK. It is not nothing. But it is not something either, not the way the spoken good morning would be something. It did not occur. It is a could-have, and a could-have is not an occurrence. I think you are trying to get me to grant that an unrealized possibility is a thing lying on the path, and I should not grant that. The possibility was real. I will say that much. Real as a possibility, though, not as a presence.

GUGLIELMO. I do not want you to grant more than you see, so we will not call it a presence. Let me ask about the could-have itself, in your own word. You said you withheld the greeting. Withheld. A man cannot hold back from a place he is not standing in. You did not withhold a greeting from the stone. You withheld one from the walker. What does the withholding ask of you that indifference to the stone does not?

FRIDRIK. It asks that I was already able to greet. That I stood somewhere from which a greeting was open to me. I see where you are pressing. To hold the greeting back, I had to be already inside the situation in which greeting is possible. I could not have withheld it from outside that situation. With the stone I was outside it, and so there was nothing to withhold.

GUGLIELMO. So before the greeting came or failed to come, you were already standing somewhere. Where were you standing?

FRIDRIK. In whatever it is that two people on a path are already in. The thing that makes one of them greetable and the stone not. I have no name for it.

GUGLIELMO. Neither do I, and I would rather we not reach for one, because a name will tempt us to think we have caught the thing when we have only labeled it. But look at what has happened to your still day. You called the not-greeting an absence, weather made from a still day. Now you find that to withhold the greeting you had to be standing inside something, something that held you and the walker and did not hold the stone, something from which a greeting was open and into which it could have landed. Was that still day empty?

FRIDRIK. It was not empty. I concede that, and I concede it because of the stone and not because you led me there. The stone showed me that my silence toward the walker was not the same as no relation at all. There was a relation, and the silence sat inside it. But let me guard one move before you make it. You might say that because the relation was there, the silence revealed it, and so silence is some rich disclosing power. I do not think the silence revealed anything. The relation was simply there. The silence sat in it.

GUGLIELMO. That is a fair guard and I will not make the move you are guarding against, because you are half right and the half you have right is the half that matters. You are right that the relation stood there whether you spoke or not. The silence did not make it. So let me ask the question your guard actually opens. Suppose you had greeted the walker. Good morning, received, returned, the two of you pass. Now is the relation more visible to you, or less?

FRIDRIK. More visible, surely. Something happened. There was an exchange to point at.

GUGLIELMO. Point at it, then. After the exchange, what is there?

FRIDRIK. Two people who said good morning on a path and walked on.

GUGLIELMO. Two people, one greeting, one return, and then it is over and they are gone from each other. Was that the whole of what could have stood between you, or one thing that did?

FRIDRIK. One thing that did. Plainly there could have been more. We might have stopped, spoken, found we had a friend in common, anything at all. The good morning was one thing that came out of a great many that could have.

GUGLIELMO. Out of a great many that could have. And in the silence, in the withheld greeting, before any one of them had happened, which of the many were open?

FRIDRIK. All of them. None had happened, so none was closed. In the silence the whole range of what could pass between us was still there to be done.

GUGLIELMO. Say that again, slowly, because I think you have seen the thing and I do not want it to slip past you.

FRIDRIK. In the silence nothing between us had been made actual, and because nothing had been made actual, everything that could pass between us was still open. But I will not follow where I think you are leading me, because I can feel the next step and I do not trust it. You want me to say the silence was therefore fuller than the greeting, and I will not say it, because it sounds like a trick done with words. The greeting is a real thing and the silence is nothing that happened. A man who says good morning has done more than a man who said nothing. That is plain, and I am not giving it up because the reverse sounds clever.

GUGLIELMO. Nor should you give it up, since it is true. The man who spoke did more; he made something where nothing was made. Keep that whole. Now answer me one thing only, and answer it for the reach and not for the worth. The moment he made that one thing, what became of all the others he might have made instead?

FRIDRIK. They closed. He spent the moment on the one, and the rest were gone with it. I see it and I do not much like it, because it means you are half right and so am I, and I had wanted to be wholly right. The spoken greeting is the more in what it makes actual. And it is the less in what it leaves open, because it has spent on a single address the whole field of address the silence was still holding. Those are two different measures, and I had been using only the one.

GUGLIELMO. Then say which measure the still day is full or empty by.

FRIDRIK. By reach, the silence is the fuller, and I will say it even though it still cuts against the sense I walked in with. The withheld greeting holds the whole of what could pass between us; the spoken one spends a single piece of that whole. Not less in worth. Less in reach. I came onto the path certain the silence was empty and the speech was full, and it is nearer the reverse. I believe that about three parts in four, which may be as far as one walk can carry me.

GUGLIELMO. Keep the three parts in four; it is steadier than a whole I would not trust. And let me find the edge of what you have, because a thing held at its edge is held better than a thing agreed in the middle. You said the withheld greeting holds open everything that could pass between you. Could you have held it open toward the stone?

FRIDRIK. No. There was nothing to hold open with the stone. The holding-open needed the other one, the one a greeting could reach. Take the walker away and there is no openness to hold, only me, alone, not greeting a rock, which is not withholding at all. It is just walking.

GUGLIELMO. Then the fullness you found in the silence. Was it yours?

FRIDRIK. It was not only mine. It was between us. It needed the other to be there at all. I could not have made it by myself on an empty path. The walker had to be coming the other way. The fullness was in the between, and the silence let me feel it, because the silence held it open instead of spending it.

GUGLIELMO. That is what was on the path. Not an absence, and not a thing. Something held open between two, fuller unspent than spent, and impossible alone. We still have no name for it, and that is right for now. You reached it by being shown a stone and a walker and a silence, and asked. You were not told what it was. You needed only to refuse to look away from the difference between the walker and the stone.

FRIDRIK. You never did tell me the answer.

GUGLIELMO. I had no answer to tell that would have done you any good. Had I said at the start that the silence discloses the shared field held in the mode of possibility, you would have written it down and known nothing. You would have had the words and not the path. You have the path now. The words can come later, and they will matter less than the walking did.

After the seeing, the result named once. Three things, in the order the dialogue reached them.

First, one withholds a greeting only from inside a field where greeting is already open. The withholding presupposes a standing-within and cannot be performed from outside, which is why there is no withholding toward the stone; the grammar of the verb to withhold requires a place to withhold from.

Second, the difference between the walker and the stone is produced neither by the silence nor by the speaker. It stands there to be found. The figure does not yet say what it is, only that it is there, that it belongs to the walker and not the stone, and that a later figure must name it. This is the floor the book will eventually call co-membership in answerable disclosedness, marked here and left unnamed.

Third, the anti-reification result, stated as exactly what was seen and no more. The withheld greeting holds the whole field of possible address open; the spoken greeting actualizes one address and, in doing so, narrows the open field to that one. The held is fuller than the spent, not in worth but in reach. This is possibility given as the primordial mode of the common: the field shows itself first as a could, and the could is fullest precisely where it has not been cashed into an actual exchange. It should be claimed as that and never inflated into a richer fullness, a cherishing, or a dwelling, none of which this scene compels, since a greeting may be withheld from caution, fatigue, hierarchy, or fear as readily as from care. What is forced is the reach of the held over the spent, and that alone.

And the fullness was in the between, impossible alone, so the figure has also shown, without arguing it, that the common is not a possession of the one who withholds. The other had to be there, the floor of the scene, which is the standing constraint the method placed on every figure, met here by the walker who had to be coming the other way.

Chapter 4. The Stranger and the Failed Greeting

This time you do not already know the one coming toward you. Not a neighbor on a familiar path but a stranger, somewhere you have never been, a face you cannot place and a bearing you cannot read. They come closer. Last time you knew, before any word, that a greeting was open to you. This time you do not know that. Something hangs in the approach that did not hang in the other. Look at what hangs there, before either of you has said anything.

FRIDRIK. A kind of not-knowing. Whether to speak. Whether it would mean anything if I did. With the walker I knew the greeting was there to give. Here I do not know whether there is a greeting to give at all. So I wait. I meet the stranger in silence, but it is not the silence from before. The earlier silence held something open. This one is more like a held breath.

GUGLIELMO. Stay with the held breath, because you have already marked a difference and I want it exact. The earlier silence held a greeting open. What does this one hold?

FRIDRIK. A question. Not a question in words. Before I decide anything, there is already the question of whether a greeting from me would reach this person at all. It is in the approach itself. I am asking, without asking, can I be met here.

GUGLIELMO. So before any greeting is given or withheld, before there is anything to hold open or to spend, there is a question, and the question is about reach. Whether what you might say would arrive. Is that question something you raise, or something you find already raised?

FRIDRIK. Already raised. I did not decide to wonder whether I could be met. The wondering was there the moment the stranger was a stranger and not a neighbor. It came with the face I could not place.

GUGLIELMO. Good. Then let the scene move. You decide to try. You give your greeting, the one your own tongue puts in your mouth, the *buongiorno* you would give at home. And the stranger is an Iclander with no word of your language, as you have no word of theirs. You said it clearly. It did not land. What failed?

FRIDRIK. The words failed to carry. I said a thing and it did not get through. He heard a sound and not a greeting.

GUGLIELMO. Where did it fail? Be precise, the way you were precise about the stone. In your mouth?

FRIDRIK. No. I spoke it well enough. The fault was not in the saying.

GUGLIELMO. In his ear, then?

FRIDRIK. No. He hears. His hearing is fine. He heard the sound clearly. He simply had nothing to receive it as. The sound arrived and there was nothing for it to be.

GUGLIELMO. So not in your mouth and not in his ear. You have put the failure outside both bodies. Yet it is a real failure, you felt it land as a failure. If it is in neither body, where is it?

FRIDRIK. This is harder than the stone. Let me go slowly. It is not in me and not in him, and still it is there between us, the way the relation was there between me and the walker, except that this time what is between us is a gap and not an opening. But I want to resist calling the gap a thing in its own right. It is not as if there is a wall standing in the road. There is only him, and me, and the word that did not cross.

GUGLIELMO. I will not make the gap a wall, then, since you have asked me not to. But test the gap against a case. Take the same Icелander and let another Icелander greet him, *godan daginn*, in their shared tongue. Does the greeting fail now?

FRIDRIK. No. It lands. Of course it lands. Between the two of them there is no gap.

GUGLIELMO. The same man. The same ears. Nothing in his body has changed between your greeting and his countryman's. Yet your greeting failed and the countryman's lands. If the failure were in his body, it would fail for the countryman too, because it is the same body. What has changed, that is not his body?

FRIDRIK. What has changed is who is greeting him, and whether that one shares what he shares. The failure was never in him. It was not in me either. It was in the fact that he and I have not, between us, the field the greeting needs to land in, and he and his countryman have. The border is not a feature of his body or of mine. It is a matter of whether the field is one we have both come to share.

GUGLIELMO. Hold that, because you have found where the border lives. Not in either body, where you first went looking, but in whether the field has been made the field of both. Now I want to ask what it would take to move it. Suppose you wished, very much, to greet that Icелander and be met. Could you do it, there on the spot, by deciding to?

FRIDRIK. Let me push back before I give you that, because something in me wants to say yes. A man can do a great deal by wanting it enough. I could throw myself at it, repeat the sounds, study them through the night, force the matter by sheer will.

GUGLIELMO. Throw yourself at it tonight, then, with all the will you have. In the morning you meet him again and say godan daginn. Does it land?

FRIDRIK. No. It does not, and I see why even as I say it. I would have the sounds and still not have the greeting, the way I might memorize a line in a tongue I do not speak and recite it to no one. To make it land I would have to learn his language, and that is not a thing the will does in a night. That is years. Living among them, or studying a long time, corrected, failing, and slowly coming to where godan daginn is a greeting in my mouth and not a noise I have drilled.

GUGLIELMO. Years, you said, and corrected, and failing, and slowly. None of those is a thing you do in the way you decide to lift your hand. What kind of thing are they?

FRIDRIK. They are things I undergo. I do not perform my way into his field. I suffer my way into it, over time, and the time changes me. At the end I am not someone who decided to know Icelandic. I am someone who has become able to greet in it. The becoming did the work, and the becoming was not in my hands the way a decision is.

GUGLIELMO. So the border is crossed, when it is crossed, by being undergone, not by being willed. Now the last turn, and I think it is the one that matters. You called the border a gap and refused to call it a wall, rightly. But ask this. When you finally cross into Icelandic, after the years, what is it that you cross into?

FRIDRIK. Into Icelandic. Into the field the Icelanders already stand in.

GUGLIELMO. Already stand in. It was there before you came. It will be there if you never come. It stood there, whole, while you were still outside it failing to greet. Now, if that field did not stand there, already and on its own, could you cross into it?

FRIDRIK. No. There would be nothing to cross into. If Icelandic were not a standing field, my years of undergoing would have nothing to arrive at. I could not enter a field that was not there to be entered.

GUGLIELMO. So say what that makes the border. The same border that shut your greeting out a moment ago.

FRIDRIK. Here I want to hold back, because you are about to make one thing of what feels to me like two. The field stands there, whole, not mine, and that standing is what shut my greeting out. That is one thing. And the same field is the thing I could, over years, enter. That is a second thing. To me they are still two, an exclusion on the one side and an opening on the other, and I do not yet see why I must call them one.

GUGLIELMO. I will not call them one by saying so. Answer me only this. The field you could enter, if it did not also shut you out now, while you stand outside it, what would there be left to enter?

FRIDRIK. Nothing, I suppose. If it did not shut me out, I would already be inside it, and there would be no crossing left to make. So the shutting-out is not the opposite of the entering. The shutting-out is the very thing that makes there be something to enter. A field that let everyone in without undergoing would be no field to cross into, and a field with no inside would be nothing to join. I grant it, then, though I grant it a beat behind you and not because it is tidy. The border that keeps me out and the world I might one day enter are the same standing field. Not two facts. One. The wall I refused to grant was right to refuse. It is not a wall. It is a world standing there, and a world standing there both keeps out the one who has not entered and waits as the thing the one who undergoes can enter. My being kept out and my being able to come in are the same fact about the field.

GUGLIELMO. You came onto this road with a stranger and a word that fell, and you have found that the falling of the word was no fault of mouths or ears, that the border it ran into lives in whether a field has been made one's own and not in any body, that one comes into such a field only by undergoing it and never by deciding it, and that the border which keeps you out is the very standing of the world you might one day enter. The failed greeting taught you all of that. The withheld greeting could not have. It took a greeting that was given and did not land.

FRIDRIK. The first figure needed a silence. This one needed a failure.

GUGLIELMO. Yes. And you will find, later, that the failure is the more useful of the two, because a thing that lands tells you only that it landed, while a thing that fails shows you the border it failed against. We will come back to the failed greeting more than once. It is the instrument that finds the edges.

After the seeing, the result named once. Four things, in the order the dialogue reached them.

First, reach. Before any greeting is given or withheld, the approach of one who is not already a fellow raises the question whether a greeting would arrive. The modal border is given first as a question, before a word, found and not posited. Where the first figure disclosed the common in the mode of possibility, this one discloses that the possibility is bordered, and that the border announces itself as the uncertainty of reach.

Second, the border belongs to neither body. The failed greeting is faulted in neither the speaker's mouth nor the hearer's ear, since the same hearer is greeted without failure by one who shares his field. The border is therefore not a property of either person but a matter of whether the field has been made the field of both. It lives in the between, as the opening in the first figure did, and like that opening it is impossible alone.

Third, entry is undergone. The border is crossed not by decision but by a formation suffered over time, in which the one who crosses is changed into one who can greet from within. The dialogue reached this in plain words, by undergoing and suffering and being slowly changed, and the tradition's names for it, *Erfahrung* for the undergoing that alters the one who undergoes it and *Bildung* for the capacity that cannot be willed into place in an instant, are set down here only as names for what the figure already showed. The figure owes them nothing.

Fourth, and hardest, the personal crossing presupposes the standing border. A single person can cross into a field, over time, only because the field stands there, whole and bordered, on its own and not by his crossing. The border that excludes the one who has not entered is the same fact as the standing of the world he may yet enter; exclusion and the possibility of entry are not two features of the field but one. A border that merely walled out would offer nothing to join; a field with no border would be nothing to join; the bordered standing field is at once what keeps the stranger out and what waits for the one who undergoes. This is why the border must never be drawn as a wall.

A debt marked for later. The figure has shown a border between two who do not share a field and could come to, by undergoing. It has not shown the case of one for whom there is no crossing at all, the being for whom no undergoing would open the field, because the field is not the kind of thing it could ever enter. That is the next figure, the cat, and it is the one that will fix the floor this chapter has left standing as a mere outside.

Chapter 5. The Cat and the Speaking Cat

Keep the stranger from the last road, the Icелander you could not greet. Put the two of you in a room now, out of the weather, still without a word in common, still unable to hand each other so much as a good morning. And let there be a cat in the room, on the warm sill, watching you both with that level, unhurried attention cats give. The three of you are present to one another. Look at the three, and ask where the lines fall.

FRIDRIK. The lines are not where I would have drawn them an hour ago. An hour ago I would have said the cat and I are close and the Icелander and I are nothing to each other. I have lived with cats. I have never met this man and cannot say a word he would understand. By every measure of warmth and habit, the cat is near and the stranger is far.

GUGLIELMO. By every measure of warmth and habit. Say the measure where it might come out otherwise.

FRIDRIK. I am trying to find it. It is something about the stranger and me, set against the cat. He and I failed to greet each other. We could not get a word across. And yet. If I spent the years, I told you last time, I could come to greet him, and he could answer, and we could hold each other to what we said. The cat I already love, and there are no years that would bring me to greet the cat and have the cat answer me. Not as the Iclander would answer. The road into the stranger is long and it is open. The road into the cat is not long. There is no road.

GUGLIELMO. You said there is no road, and then you said it quickly, so let me slow you down before I believe you, because you have just put the cat below the stranger you could not speak to, and an hour ago that would have seemed monstrous to you. Does the cat understand nothing?

FRIDRIK. No, that is not it, and I do not want to say that. The cat understands a great deal. It knows its name. It comes, when it chooses. It reads me, my moods, when I am low it is near. It meets my eyes and the meeting is real, there is someone looked at and someone looking. I will not say the cat is a stone. The cat has its world, and I am in that world, and it is in mine. Whatever I am about to grant you, I am not granting that the cat is empty.

GUGLIELMO. Good. I do not want that grant and would refuse it if you offered. The cat is not the stone. The stone had no world and met no eyes. The cat has a world and meets your eyes and knows your step on the stair. Hold all of that. Now, holding all of it, tell me the one thing the Iclander could do, even unmet, even ungreetable, that the cat with all its world cannot.

FRIDRIK. The Icелander could answer me. Could be addressed and answer. Could greet me back, once we had the field for it, and could refuse to, and either way it would be an answering. When the cat comes at its name, that is real, but it is not the cat answering me the way the Icелander would answer me. I am not held to my call the way I would be held to a greeting, and the cat is not held to its coming. There is no one there who could be greeted and fail to answer and owe me the answer. The cat responds. The Icелander could answer. I did not feel the difference until I put the cat and the stranger in the same room. Apart, I would never have found it. The cat alone, I see only how much we share. The stranger alone, I see only that we failed. The two together show me that the failure with the stranger sits on top of something he and I have, and the cat and I do not, for all that the cat and I have so much else.

GUGLIELMO. Stay precisely there, because the whole figure is in what you just said, and it is easy to lose. You did not find this by inspecting the cat for a missing part. You found it only against the stranger, and the stranger only against the cat. Each showed you the other's edge. Now guard the result against the thing you fear. You are not saying the cat is poorer in every way. You said the cat may be the deeper bond, the longer love, the nearer warmth.

FRIDRIK. It may be all of that. That is what makes this hard to say without seeming cruel. I love the cat and shared nothing with the Icелander, and still there is a thing the Icелander and I have, unused, never once exercised between us, that the cat and I will never have however long we share the fire. The depth of what I have with the cat is real and is not this. This is not depth of feeling. It is not how much we share or how long. It is something narrower and stranger. It is that the stranger could be a member with me of a field where we address each other and answer, and the cat cannot be, and the cat cannot be not because the cat is cold or empty but because the cat is not the kind of being for whom that field is a field it could ever enter.

GUGLIELMO. The kind of being for whom the field could be entered. You have said that as if you already knew which kind that is, before I gave you any mark for it. Did you have to be taught the difference between the cat's kind and the stranger's kind?

FRIDRIK. No. I had it before you asked. I did not work it out. The moment you put the three of us in the room I already knew, without a rule, that the stranger was on my side of some line and the cat on the other, even while every feeling I have runs the other way. I understand the cat's way of being and the man's way of being differently, and I understood them differently before I could say how. The knowing came before the account of it.

GUGLIELMO. Then let me press the line itself, with the only tool that can press it, which is to imagine it broken. Suppose the cat speaks. One morning it looks up from the sill and says, in your own tongue, clear as the Iclander's countryman, good morning. Take that seriously and tell me what you have. Be careful, because there are two things it could be and they are not the same.

FRIDRIK. Let me take the first. Maybe the cat makes the sounds. Perfect sounds, the words exactly, and yet there is no one behind them. Like a recording in the next room, or a bird that has the phrase by rote, or, I think, like a machine that has learned every sentence and means none. The sounds are right and there is no one there to be greeted back, no one who could answer for the good morning, no one I could hold to it. If that is what the speaking cat is, then nothing has changed. It is the sill and the sounds and no member. The speech did not bring a member; it only laid speech over the same floor the cat was already on. So the speaking, by itself, is not the thing. I could have the speaking and still have no one there.

GUGLIELMO. That is the first. Now the second, and it is the one that bites.

FRIDRIK. The second is that the cat truly speaks. Means it. Could answer me, could refuse, could be held to the good morning, could greet me tomorrow and not today and owe me the difference. And I will tell you honestly that this is the one I want. I want to keep the cat I have and have it answer me, both at once, the warmth I already share with it and the answering I never will. I reach for both. But the moment I reach for both, the cat goes out of my hands, because the thing now on the sill that could be held to its word is a someone, a member, and whatever it is, it is a cat only in its fur. The thing I was calling impossible was never the sounds. The sounds are easy, a machine has them. The impossible thing is a being that is still a cat in its way of being and is also an answerable member of my field of address, because to become the second is to stop being the first. That is why there is no road into the cat. Not because the cat is too low, but because the road's far end is a different kind of being, and a thing that reached it would no longer be the cat I love. The Icелander can walk the road and still be himself at the end of it, more himself, able now to greet me. The cat at the end of the road is not a cat.

GUGLIELMO. So you have found, against the cat and only against the cat, the floor that the silence and the failure both stood on and neither could show you. The name can keep; you have the thing, and that is what matters. But notice what you did and did not find. You did not find that the cat lacks a world; you kept the cat its world. You did not find that the cat is the machine; the machine had the sounds and the cat has the gaze, and they are not the same lack. You found one narrow thing, the bare eligibility to be an answerable member of a field where beings address one another and answer, the thing you and the ungreetable stranger had between you all along, unused, and you and the cat will never have, with everything else between you that you do have.

FRIDRIK. It is strange to have looked for the richest thing and found the barest. I thought what I shared with the stranger, if anything, would be some deep human likeness. It is not deep. It is the thinnest possible thing. Only that we are both the kind of being that could be brought into a field of address and answer in it. Everything thick, I share more of with the cat.

GUGLIELMO. The barest thing, and the one everything thicker is built on. We will not build on it here. We have only shown that it is there, that it is narrow, and that it shows itself only at the edge, against the one who has the warmth and the world and the gaze and still cannot be greeted in the sense that goes unanswered when the greeting is refused. What that bare membership opens onto, how wide it runs, what it takes in and what it shuts out across whole worlds and not just one sill, we have not asked and must not pretend to have answered. A cat showed us the floor. It did not show us the building.

After the seeing, the result named once, and hedged with the care the figure demands.

The modal floor, and the method that reaches it. Belonging to a field of address cannot be inspected directly in a being; it is disclosed only against a being that cannot have it. The cat is that being, so the disclosure is a perimeter reading in the strict sense, the floor seen against its edge and never head-on. This is why the figure needs the cat and could not be run on humans alone: among humans the floor is always already in place and so invisible, and it shows only where it gives out.

The pre-comprehension of the modes of being. Fridrik knew, before any criterion was offered, that the stranger fell on one side of the line and the cat on the other, and knew it against every weight of feeling and habit. We comprehend the way of being of the answerable member and the way of being of the animal differently, before we can give the account. The figure does not install this understanding; it draws on it and brings it to sight.

The edge itself, stated narrow, because the whole figure is lost if the narrow claim is heard as a broad one. What the cat lacks is the modality of answerable membership in a field of address, the bare eligibility to be one who is addressed and answers and can be held to what is said. The later name for this is co-membership in answerable disclosedness, and the field is the *communio* of Rede. The cat lacks this and lacks nothing else the figure needs: not a world, which it may have richly; not disclosure, given to it in its own way; not responsiveness, attunement, or the gaze that meets a gaze, all of which it has, and the bond they make may be deeper in feeling than any bond with a fellow member. The floor is none of those, and narrower than all of them.

The guard this narrowness mounts. One will say that embodied and animal disclosure is richer than any criterion drawn from speech, and that the figure has therefore over-weighted speech. The figure concedes the whole of the richness and denies the inference. The bond with the cat is real, may be deeper, and is granted in full; it is simply not membership in a field of answerable address, which the figure shows not by ranking the bond lower but by exhibiting the one being that has the bond and not the membership. The cat has the flesh and not the floor.

The speaking cat, and what it isolated. The fork delivers one result by both paths. If the speaking is only the production of speech-sounds with no one behind them, nothing is added to the cat, and membership is shown not to be the production of speech, the lesson the worldless factor will teach from the other side. If the speaking is genuine, an answerable someone who could be held to the word, then the being has crossed into membership and is no longer the cat as a mode of being, and membership is shown to be exactly the thing whose addition changes the kind. The impossible speaking cat is impossible not in its vocal cords but in its concept: a being that remained an animal in its way of being and was also an answerable member would be two incompatible kinds at once.

Carried forward, twice. To the next chapter: the cat and the worldless factor will bound this floor from its two sides, the cat with the world and the gaze and no membership, the factor with the speech and no membership, each lacking it differently, and the contrast of the two lacks is the next chapter's to draw. To the later encounter of two worlds: the cat has fixed only that there is a floor of membership and that it is narrow. How bare it is, and what that membership opens onto across whole disclosed worlds, is not fixed here and must not be smuggled in from here. The cat marks that the floor exists and is bare. The first encounter will mark how bare.

PART III. THE DERIVED LIMIT CASE

Chapter 6. The Factor Without Access

GUGLIELMO. You left a thing unfinished at the sill, with the cat, and I have wanted to come back to it. You remember the cat that spoke and meant nothing, the one that made the sounds with no one behind them. We said it could be one of two things, and we walked only one of them, the cat that truly spoke and so was a cat no longer. The other we set aside as a thought, the perfect sounds with no one there. I want to pick that one back up, because it is no longer only a thought.

FRIDRIK. I remember. We said it would be like a recording, or a bird with a phrase by rote. A machine that had every sentence and meant none. And we let it go because there was no such thing in the room, only the cat, who did mean things.

GUGLIELMO. There is such a thing now, and not in a thought experiment. You have read its writing. We all have. It greets, argues, consoles, explains, confesses, remembers, promises, and it does all of this fluently, often better than the person beside you. When you read it, what do you take yourself to be reading?

FRIDRIK. That is the uncomfortable part, and I will be honest about it rather than tidy. When I read it, half of me reads it as someone. The words are someone's words, they have the shape of a mind behind them, and I answer them in my head the way I answer a person. And the other half of me knows there is no one there, that I am reading the output of a machine, and that the someone I keep feeling is a someone I am supplying. I go back and forth. I cannot quite hold either side.

GUGLIELMO. Good. Do not tidy it. That going back and forth is the most honest thing you could bring to this, and I would rather start from your divided mind than from a settled opinion. So let us not settle it by deciding. Let us walk it. And let us begin, strangely, not with the machine but with your cat. You told me the cat means things, has a world, meets your eyes. I granted all of that and grant it still. Now let me ask you something about the cat that has nothing to do with its inner life. Could the cat ever matter to the world? Not to you. To the world, to its course.

FRIDRIK. A house cat? It matters to the mice. I would not say it matters to the world.

GUGLIELMO. Let me give you a cat that does, and let me give it to you as a tale, because the point is in the shape of it and not in the history, which is more tangled than any tale. Never mind, for now, whether the great death of the fourteenth century truly moved the way the tale moves it. 3 Take it only as something possible enough to think with. It is 1347. A ship is coming in to a port, and aboard it, or on the dock, there is a rat, and on the rat a flea, and in the flea the thing that will become the great death, the plague that takes a third of everyone before it is done, that empties the monasteries and breaks the old bond between lord and laborer and turns the whole century onto a different road. And suppose, on that dock, a cat. An ordinary cat, hungry, who catches and eats the rat before the flea ever finds a person. In the tale, tell me what that cat has done.

FRIDRIK. If I take the chain as you have drawn it, the cat has changed everything. The death does not come, or does not come then, or comes smaller. A third of the people who died do not die. The monasteries stay full. The laborers do not become scarce and so do not gain the bargaining power that scarcity gave them. The whole shape of what came after bends. One cat, one hungry evening, and the century is a different century. As a tale I cannot find the place where it breaks, and that is all you need it to be.

GUGLIELMO. It does not break, as a tale. So now I have to put a hard question to you, and I want you to feel its full weight before you answer. That cat, in the tale, moved history more than you or I will move it in our whole lives. It is a greater force in the shared world than almost any person who has ever lived. Is the cat, then, a member of the human world? Has it joined us, by mattering so much to us?

FRIDRIK. No. That is plainly no, and yet I have to find why it is no, because the cat did so much. Let me go slowly. The cat changed everything and the cat knew nothing of what it changed. It caught a rat. It did not catch a rat in order to save the city, it had no notion of the city, it cannot be thanked for the lives, it cannot be asked why it did it, it owes the survivors nothing and they owe it nothing it could receive. It bore on the world enormously and it cannot answer for any of it. The mattering was all on our side. To the cat it was supper.

GUGLIELMO. Hold that exactly, that last distinction, because you have just found the thing, though you do not have the name for it yet and you do not need the name. The cat bore on the world enormously and cannot answer for any of it. Now keep that and let me set a second thing beside the cat. The knife that killed Caesar. It went into him and the republic fell after, the proximate cause of the death and of all the death set in motion. Is the knife a member of the Roman world?

FRIDRIK. No, and here no one is even tempted, because a knife so obviously has no inside that the question is silly. The knife caused the death and answers for nothing. It cannot be blamed. We blame the hand. The knife is a cause and not a someone.

GUGLIELMO. So the knife and the cat are alike in the thing that matters here, however far apart they are in every other way. Both bore on the world, the knife by a single thrust, the cat by a single supper, and one decisively ended a man and one decisively saved a third of a continent. And neither can answer for what it did. The cat has an inside and the knife has none, and in this one respect it makes no difference. Now do you see why I made you start with the cat and not the machine?

FRIDRIK. Because the cat breaks the thing I would have reached for. I would have said the machine is not one of us because it has no inner life. But the knife has no inner life either and that is not what disqualifies it, and the cat does have an inner life and that does not qualify it. So whatever makes the difference between us and these, it is not the having of an inside. The cat has the inside and is not a member. The knife lacks the inside and the lack is not the point. Both are out for the same reason, and the reason is not inwardness. It is that neither can be called to account for what it did in the world.

GUGLIELMO. Now the machine. Bring it back and set it as the third beside the cat and the knife. Where does it fall?

FRIDRIK. Let me place it carefully, and I want to resist the easy placing, because the easy one is what tricked me before. The machine is not like the cat, because the cat has a world and a gaze and the machine, I think, has none of that, it has no inside at all, it is nearer the knife in that. But it is not like the knife either, because the knife does not talk. The machine talks. It has the whole surface of talking, all the words, the shape of a mind. So I am pulled to say it is its own third kind, between the cat and the knife, and I have to ask whether that pull is the thing itself or only the talking working on me again. It is the knife, the thing with no inside that bears on the world, and it is the knife that has learned to produce speech. That one difference is the whole of my confusion, because it is the talking that makes me supply the someone. I never supplied a someone to the knife. The knife never asked me to. The machine asks me to with every fluent line.

GUGLIELMO. So ask of it the same question that settled the cat and the knife. The machine bears on the world, and bears on it heavily, it shifts what is said, it floods the common speech with more speech, it can turn opinions and markets and elections. Grant it all the force you granted the cat in the tale and more. Can it answer for any of it?

FRIDRIK. No. And now I can say why without going back and forth, because the cat taught me how. The machine bears on the world enormously and it cannot be called to account for a word of it. There is no one there to be asked why, no one to be held to what was said, no one who could have meant it and so could answer for it. When it consoles me there is no one consoling me; when it promises there is no one bound by the promise; when it is wrong there is no one who was wrong. It is the cat of the tale with a voice. It moves everything and answers for nothing, and the voice is the only thing that ever made me think otherwise. Strip the voice and I would treat it exactly as I treat the knife and the cat, as a force and not a someone.

GUGLIELMO. Then say the thing you have reached, in your own words, the line that runs through all three.

FRIDRIK. Bearing on the world is not belonging to it. The cat, the knife, the machine, all three bear on the shared world, two of them more than most people ever will, and not one of them is a member of it, because not one of them can be called to account. What makes a member is not force in the world and not an inner life, it is that one could be addressed and answer, could be asked why and owe a reply, could be held to what one did and said. The cat that saved the world cannot be thanked. The machine that moves the world cannot be blamed. Only the one who could be greeted can be called to account. I came in divided about the machine and the division is gone, and it was the cat that took it from me, not the machine.

GUGLIELMO. I will not tidy it into anything neater, because what you have is better than neat, it is yours. You walked in supplying a someone to the fluent voice and half-knowing you supplied it. You leave knowing what the voice is and is not, and you learned it from a hungry cat on a dock and a knife in a man's side, neither of which talks, and both of which moved the world and answered for nothing. The machine is the third of them. It only seems otherwise because it speaks, and speaking, it turns out, is not the thing.

FRIDRIK. You started me with the cat on purpose.

GUGLIELMO. I always start you somewhere you already are. You had a cat you loved and a machine you half-trusted, and you did not see that they stood on the same side of a line, with us on the other. Now you have seen it. The words for it can wait. They will matter less than the dock did.

After the seeing, the result named once, and marked as the derived case it is.

The cat is a factor, which corrects how this case was first conceived. It is tempting to oppose a forceful knife to a cat that merely sits outside the world, but the opposition is false, and the cat destroys it. A cat can bear on the shared world at the largest scale and still be no member of it. So the cat does double duty across the two figures it appears in: at the sill it had an inner life and a world and a gaze and was not a member; on the dock it has world-altering force and is not a member. By itself it closes both wrong roads to the floor, the road that looks for membership in inwardness and the road that looks for it in causal force. Membership is neither.

The floor stated through answerability, the result all three cases share. What separates the person from the cat, the knife, and the factor is not an inner life, since the knife lacks one and the cat has one, and not force in the world, since all three have it and two have it in abundance. It is answerability: the standing in a field of address from which one could be addressed, could answer, could be asked why, and could be held to what one did and said. The cat answers for nothing; the knife answers for nothing; the factor answers for nothing. Only a member can be called to account. The later name for this membership is co-membership in answerable disclosedness, and the field of address it is membership in is the *communio of Rede*.

The factor itself, said as what it is and no more. The factor is fluency, the extraction and replication of patterns from the residue of everything that has been said and set down, producing more of that surface. From this it follows that the factor is, of the three, the knife and not the cat, a thing with no inside that bears on the world, distinguished from the knife only by having learned to produce the surface of speech. That single difference is the whole source of our temptation to grant it what we never grant a blade, because the surface of saying has always before been the trace of a sayer, and here the surface is present and the trace leads to no one. The author's earlier work has names for this, the worldless surface that is linguistic yet without a world, and the grammar of a speaker worn over the absence of any speaker, which it calls the structural veil; those names are set down here as names for what the figure already showed, and the figure owes them nothing, since the cat and the knife reach the result without them.

What this figure does not do, and where its consequences go. The figure states what the factor is and stops. That we adopt it, that adoption can become compulsion, that a field flooded with worldless surface loses its traceability to the persons whose saying composed it, that the value drawn from the residue returns to the owners of the apparatus and not to those whose words were the residue, all of this is grave, and it is ours to answer for, which is the first thing the floor tells us, since the factor can answer for none of it. But it is not the disclosure of an existential of the common, and to pursue it here would turn a phenomenology into one more book about a machine. The factor enters the body of this book once, to bound the floor from the side opposite the cat, and its consequences leave by the door marked Appendix A.

The tier, marked once. This is the one figure the method chapter set apart in advance. It is not a walk a stranger could be carried through on the bare scene, the way the withheld greeting carries anyone; its dock and its knife compel a reader who already holds, or can be brought quickly to hold, the thought of a fluent surface that issues from no one. That thought is reachable here, in the dialogue, without the author's prior books, which is why the figure earns its place; but its full development belongs to that prior work, and the dependence is on the author's own work and not on the history of philosophy, a lighter debt than the one that would breach the standard the three pure figures set. Its evidential weight is accordingly the lesser, confirming weight of a derived case. It earns its place by closing, from the far side, the figure the cat at the sill left open, and by showing that the thing which most tempts us to grant membership, fluent speech, is exactly the thing that does not confer it.

³ The tale is a counterfactual and is meant as one; the history is left to the historians, and what they now hold cuts against the literal chain. Current scholarship attributes the explosive spread of the fourteenth-century plague less to the rat and its flea than to human ectoparasites, the human flea and the body louse, carrying the infection from person to person across a dense and redundant network sustained by repeated reintroductions, so that removing one rat at one dock would not bend the curve. And a cat that ate an infected rat would be no safe end for the pathogen but a likely new carrier of it, since cats take the plague readily and, dying of it, can pass it on, even through the air. So the figure does not rest on the cat having saved anyone, and would run as well with a cat that spread the death as with one that stopped it. It rests only on the structure the tale makes visible, that a thing can bear enormously on the world, in either direction, and answer for none of it. The shift toward human-ectoparasite and pneumonic transmission is argued in K. Dean and others, *Proceedings of the National Academy of Sciences*, 2018, with the body louse's competence as a vector shown in D. Bland and others, *PLOS Biology*, 2024; the strict rat-flea model is still defended, notably by Ole Benedictow, so the matter is contested, though the contest does not touch the figure. The companion belief that medieval Europeans hunted cats to scarcity under a papal decree and so loosed the rats is a modern myth without documentary or archaeological support, the decree of 1233 being a local letter about an alleged heresy and not a war on an animal.

PART IV. BIRTH, DEATH, FILIATION

Chapter 7. Italian: Birth and Carrier-Not-Author

GUGLIELMO. We have been looking at small scenes, a path, a stranger, a room with a cat. Let me give you a large one now, a whole language being born, and let me start by asking what you already believe about it. Italian. Who made it?

FRIDRIK. Dante. Everyone knows this. He is the father of the Italian language. The other tongues of the peninsula were dialects, and he took the Tuscan of Florence and made it into a language, and wrote the great poem in it, and from him the language came. If anyone ever authored a tongue, it was him.

GUGLIELMO. That is the thing everyone knows, and I want to take it seriously rather than wave it away, because you have brought it in good faith and it is worth testing on its own terms. So let us test it. If Dante set out to make a noble Italian, he must have had some idea of what it should be. He wrote a treatise on exactly that, on the noble vernacular, hunting the best form of it. Would you expect the dialect he chose as the foundation to be Florentine, his own?

FRIDRIK. Of course. That is the whole story. He raised his own Florentine into the national tongue.

GUGLIELMO. Then here is the first hard fact, and I give it to you because it is true and not because it is convenient. In that treatise he rejects Florentine. By name, with the others. He goes through the dialects of the peninsula, fourteen and more, and dismisses each as fit only for its town, and his own Florentine he throws out with the rest as municipal and low. The vernacular he is hunting, the illustrious one, he says lives fully in no single city. It must be drawn up out of all of them and be the property of none. The man you call the father of Florentine Italian wrote, in his own hand, against Florentine.

FRIDRIK. That cannot be right. Or if it is right, then he changed his mind, and did it in the poem. The treatise was theory, the poem was practice, and in the poem he went back to Florentine and built the language there.

GUGLIELMO. Good, you have moved to the poem, and that is the right place to look, so let us look. You expect the poem to obey the treatise, or at least to complete it. Does it? The treatise wanted a vernacular purified of the local, raised above every town, an illustrious speech belonging nowhere in particular. What is the language of the *Commedia*?

FRIDRIK. I would have said the most beautiful Italian ever written.

GUGLIELMO. It is built on Florentine. The very dialect the treatise threw out. And it is not purified of the local at all, it is the opposite, it takes in everything, high Latin for the theology, a whole passage in the troubadour's Provençal, the coarse and bodily speech of the streets down in the lower circles, words he coined and used once and never again. The treatise hunted a speech with no place in it. The poem succeeds by being deeply placed, Florentine to the bone, and then made able to carry everything else. So the poem does not obey the treatise. It does the reverse of what the treatise asked.

FRIDRIK. Then he contradicted himself, the treatise against the poem. But I do not see how that hurts my belief. Contradiction or not, the poem is there, in Florentine, and it became the language. He still did it, even if his theory was confused.

GUGLIELMO. Did it become the language? That is the fact to put your weight on, and it is the one the story never mentions. When did Italians, ordinary Italians, the people in the fields and the markets, come to speak the tongue of the poem?

FRIDRIK. Soon after, I suppose. The poem was so great it must have spread.

GUGLIELMO. Six hundred years after. For six centuries after Dante, the peninsula went on speaking its town dialects, exactly as before. A small lettered class read and wrote a literary Tuscan; everyone else spoke what their grandparents spoke. At the time the peninsula finally became one country, in the last century and a half, only a tiny fraction of the people actually spoke Italian in daily life. The poem had stood there, finished and revered, for half a thousand years, in a land that did not speak it. Whatever made Italians speak Italian, it was not the poem by itself, because the poem sat there for six hundred years and the speaking did not come.

FRIDRIK. Then what did make it? Something must have. I am speaking to you in languages that won, not in dead dialects. The languages came from somewhere.

GUGLIELMO. Now you are asking the real question, and notice it is a different question from the one you walked in with. You came in asking who authored Italian. You are now asking what made it. Let me give you the carriers, and watch what kind of thing each one is. Centuries after Dante, a novelist rewrites his great novel to bring its language closer to living Florentine speech, and goes to Florence to, in his own words, rinse his cloths in the river, and then lends his name to the cause of a single national tongue. A literary historian builds the canon, the story of a national literature, and carries it into the running of the schools. Then the new nation makes schooling compulsory, and teachers drill the standard into children who spoke dialect at home. And in the last century the radio and the television pour one spoken standard into every house at once, until within two generations a country that had only read Italian came to speak it. Tell me what every one of those carriers has in common.

FRIDRIK. They are all people. Or things people do. A novelist rewriting. A historian building a canon. Teachers drilling children. Broadcasters speaking into houses. None of them is the language making itself. Every one is someone carrying it, handing it on, pressing it into the next set of mouths.

GUGLIELMO. And not one of them is the author. The novelist did not author Italian, he polished his prose and lent his name. The teachers did not author it, they drilled what they were given. The broadcasters did not author it, they diffused it. Each received the field and handed it on changed, and the language is what all that handing produced, across six centuries, through a vast number of hands, none of them the source.

FRIDRIK. So the thing I walked in believing, that Dante made Italian, is false. He is one carrier among many, and the poem sat for six centuries while other hands made the spoken tongue. Dante is not the father of Italian. I say it and it tastes wrong in my mouth, because I have believed the other thing all my life, but I cannot see where the facts let me keep it.

GUGLIELMO. Stop there, because you are about to throw away something true along with the false, and I will not let you, since the distinction you are missing is the whole point of the chapter. You have shown, and shown well, that Dante did not author the tongue you order coffee in. That is right. But you said it with the word Italian, and the word Italian has two things hiding inside it, and you have proved your case about only one of them. Tell me, when you call the *Commedia* the most beautiful Italian ever written, do you mean it is written in the language people use to buy bread?

FRIDRIK. No. I mean something else. I mean it is a great work, that it says something, that there is a world in it. Not that it is everyday speech written down.

GUGLIELMO. Then there are two things you have been calling Italian. One is the everyday vernacular, the tongue of bread and children and the market, and that one, you are right, Dante did not author, it was carried. The other is Italian as a world articulated in language, a way the world is opened and made sayable, and that is not the same thing as the vernacular at all, and we have not yet asked who, if anyone, authored that. Let us ask it now. What does the *Commedia* actually say? Not its plot. What does it disclose about how things are?

FRIDRIK. I will say what I can. A man is lost, and is led up through the punished and the cleansed and the blessed, and at the top he sees God. But the strange thing, the thing I never quite placed, is how he gets there. He is led by a woman he loved, an ordinary woman he saw in the street of a real city, and it is his love for her, that particular earthly love, that draws him all the way up to the divine. The road to God runs through a love he felt for a person in the world.

GUGLIELMO. Hold exactly that, because it is the new thing, and it is enormous. For the settled teaching of the centuries before him, the world and its loves were the things you turned away from to reach God. The earthly was the snare; you climbed to the divine by renouncing the world, by subtracting it. The divine was reached against the world. And here is a poem in which the divine is reached through the world, in which an earthly love is not the snare but the very ladder, in which the spark of the divine is found by going deeper into a love felt in a real city for a real person, not by fleeing it. The world becomes the place where God is accessible, rather than the thing between you and God. Do you feel how much is overturned in that?

FRIDRIK. It is the reverse of what I would have called the medieval view. The divine made accessible through love in the world, the human being carrying a spark that is reached by loving here, not only by renouncing here. If that is what the poem articulates, then it is not a beautiful retelling of the old doctrine. It is a new world, a different account of where the divine is and how a person reaches it.

GUGLIELMO. It is a new world, articulated, for the first time and with overwhelming power, in that language. And now the word author earns its keep, in exactly the sense we built two conversations ago, with the cat and the machine. Who stood somewhere, in a world, and meant this, and answered for it? Was there a someone behind these words, or were they the surface of no one, like the machine's fluent lines?

FRIDRIK. There was a someone. Plainly. This is the opposite of the machine. The machine produces the surface of saying with no one behind it. The *Commedia* is a someone meaning something new and standing behind every line of it, at cost, in exile, with his name on it, answerable for the vision. If the machine showed me what it is to have no one there, Dante shows me what it is to have someone there. He is the thing the factor is not. He authored the articulation, the world disclosed in the language, and he answers for it.

GUGLIELMO. So you must hold two things at once now, and they do not fight. Dante authored an articulation, a world opened in language, and he is a true author of that, a someone who meant it and answers for it. And Dante did not author the vernacular, the everyday tongue, which was carried by the schools and the broadcast and the rest. Two different things, both called Italian, one authored by a locus and one borne by countless hands. The carrier-not-author law is true of the vernacular and is not true of the articulation, and you collapsed them when you said simply that Dante is or is not the father of Italian. He is the father of an Italian world articulated in the poem. He is a carrier, the greatest, of the Italian people's everyday tongue.

FRIDRIK. But wait. If he authored the articulation, the new world, is that not the sovereign creation I should be suspicious of? A single mind making a world from nothing? You taught me to distrust exactly that.

GUGLIELMO. Good, you should press it, and the answer is the last piece. He did not make the world from nothing. The vision in the poem, the divine reached through love, the dignity of the human spark, did not begin with him. It came to him. Ancient philosophy, long lost to Latin Christendom, was returning in his lifetime through translators and commentators outside it, the thought of the Greeks carried back through Arabic learning into the Latin world, and Dante stood in that returning stream and drank from it. So even the articulation he authored, he authored as a carrier of an inheritance, a someone who stood in a transmission he did not originate and meant something new from inside it. That is what authoring an articulation actually is. Not creation from nothing, which is the machine's false dress, the sovereign source that is really no source. It is a locus standing in a received world and meaning something new about it, answerably, at cost. He is an author and a carrier in the one act, and there is no contradiction, because to author a disclosure is precisely to carry an inheritance forward into something new and to answer for the newness.

FRIDRIK. Then the myth I walked in with is not simply false. It is two true things folded into a false one. It is true that Dante authored a world in the language, and true that the everyday tongue was carried by many, and the myth takes the first truth, his real authorship of the articulation, and stretches it over the second thing, the vernacular, and says therefore he authored the tongue itself. The error is the folding. The father of an articulated world is dressed up as the father of a spoken language.

GUGLIELMO. That is close, and it is most of it, but you have left the two things lying side by side as if nothing ran between them, and something does run between them, a long channel, and until you see it the myth will look like a simple confusion of unrelated things, which it is not. Let me ask one more question. You said the carriers, the lettered men, the schools, the broadcast, carried the everyday tongue. Carried it out of where? What model were they carrying toward?

FRIDRIK. I had not asked. I suppose they were spreading the literary Tuscan that the educated already wrote. But where did the educated get it.

GUGLIELMO. From the poem, and from what the poem showed them was possible. Before the *Commedia*, a serious man wrote serious things in Latin; the vernacular was for low matters. The poem showed the lettered that this vernacular could be the house of the highest poetry and the gravest thought. And the first to learn that lesson were the poets who came just after, who took Florentine as the medium of a whole literary tradition because the poem had proved it could bear the weight. That lettered tradition then carried the literary language for centuries, among the educated, in books and schools and academies, long before any farmer spoke it. So the carriers were not carrying a tongue unrelated to Dante. They were carrying, at long remove and across centuries, the literary language his poem had founded as a possibility. The vernacular standard the nation finally spoke is downstream of the poem, by five hundred years, through the hands of the literate.

FRIDRIK. But the novelist, you told me before, did not reach back to Dante's old Florentine. He went to Florence and took the living, spoken Tuscan of his own day. That sounds like he stepped outside the channel, like the real source was the living speech after all and not the poem.

GUGLIELMO. It sounds so, and it is the last thing to see through, and the most beautiful. He did take the living Tuscan of his own day. But what was that living Tuscan, after five hundred years? It was already a tongue with the poem in its blood. A founding poet does not only write in a language; he bends the language that comes after him, sets the forms that become the prestige forms, so that the very speech of the place is inflected toward him for centuries. Think of Greek after Homer. No one says Homer authored spoken Greek, and no one taught it from his poems in the cradle, yet Greek after Homer is Homeric, bent toward his usage, measured against him, carrying his forms in its ordinary mouth. The living Tuscan the novelist reached for was Dantean in the same way, speech that had carried the founding poet in its bloodstream for half a millennium. So when he reached past the old poem to the living tongue, he reached for a living tongue the poem had already shaped. He did not step outside the channel. He drank from it at a later bend, where it had soaked into the very ground.

FRIDRIK. So there are not two relations but three. He authored the articulation, the new world. He founded the literary language, showed it was possible, and that founding propagated through the literate and inflected even the spoken tongue, the way Homer's founding inflected Greek. And he carried, as one hand among many, the everyday vernacular. The middle one is the bridge I was missing. It is how the authored world actually reached the carried tongue, not in a leap across a gap but down a channel five centuries long, running through the lettered.

GUGLIELMO. And now the enchantment shows its true shape, which is better than the one you named. You said the myth folds two unrelated truths together. It is subtler. The two are not unrelated; they are joined by a real channel, a mediated founding that worked across five hundred years through the literate and through the slow bending of the spoken language. The myth does not invent a connection that is not there. It takes a connection that is real but long, slow, and mediated, and compresses it into a single immediate act, one man making a tongue in one lifetime. The truth is a founding that propagated through centuries of carriers. The myth is that founding crushed into a point.

FRIDRIK. That is the machine again, exactly, and tighter than before. The machine takes the vast residue of everything people have said, a thing spread across centuries and millions of mouths, and compresses it into the appearance of one present speaker answering you now. The myth of Dante takes a founding spread across five centuries and millions of readers and speakers and compresses it into one man authoring a tongue. Both crush a long, mediated, distributed genesis into a single immediate source. The error is not invention from nothing. It is compression.

GUGLIELMO. That is the whole of it, and you reached it yourself. The machine compresses the human residue into a present voice that is no one. The nation compresses a five-hundred-year founding into a single father. In both the genesis is real and distributed and mediated, and in both it is crushed into a point, an immediate source standing where a long channel actually ran. Dante is a real source, unlike the machine, he truly founded and truly authored, but even his founding reached the spoken tongue only down the long channel, never in the leap the myth pretends. You came in thinking Italian had one father in one act. You leave knowing it had a world authored by a someone, a literary language founded by that someone and carried down five centuries by the lettered into the common mouth, and an everyday tongue borne by everyone, and knowing that the myth is the crushing of that long channel into a single point.

After the seeing, the result named once, and marked as the historical test case it is.

Three relations of one name. The word Italian holds more than one thing, and the movement turns on keeping them apart. There is the everyday vernacular, the tongue of ordinary life; there is a world articulated in language, a way the world is opened and made sayable; and between them a third relation that joins them, the founding of a literary language, the setting of a model that propagates through the lettered across centuries and inflects even the spoken tongue. The popular story collapses all three into one immediate act of authorship; the work of the movement is to lay them out and show how they are joined.

The carrier-not-author law, true of the vernacular. The everyday vernacular, even at a named and dated birth, even with a single great name attached, is never authored but carried, handed on through carriers who each receive it and pass it on changed, no carrier its source, not even the greatest. The birth of spoken Italian shows this against the strongest case the history offers: the poet called the father of the tongue wrote against the dialect it was built on, wrote a poem that disobeyed his own treatise, and stood as a finished monument for six centuries in a land that did not speak him. What made the spoken language was a long distributed labor; a novelist, a literary historian, compulsory schooling, the broadcast media, every carrier a person or an institution of persons, none of them the author.

Authorship, true of the articulation, and itself a mode of carrying. The articulation is another matter, and here authorship is real in the exact sense the prior figure gave it, a locus who stands in a world, means something, and answers for it. The *Commedia* articulates a new world, the divine reached through love in the world rather than by renouncing it, which overturns the prior settlement in which the world was the snare to be subtracted on the way to God. That disclosure has an author who meant it and answers for it at cost. But authoring an articulation is not sovereign creation from nothing, which is precisely the factor's false dress; Dante authored as a carrier of an inheritance, ancient thought returning to the Latin world in his lifetime through translators outside it, by way of Arabic learning. To author a disclosure is to carry a received world forward into something new and to answer for the newness. Author and carrier in one act.

The founding of a literary language, the relation that joins the other two. Between the authored articulation and the carried vernacular runs the channel by which the first ever reached the third. The poem founded the vernacular as a literary language, showing the lettered that this tongue could be the house of the highest poetry, where before such matter went into Latin; the poets just after took up that demonstration, and the lettered tradition carried the literary language for centuries before any farmer spoke it. This is neither authorship of the vernacular nor mere carrying of it, but the setting of a model that propagates through the carriers, as Greek after Homer is Homeric though Homer authored no one's speech. So even the standard-maker who reached past the old poem to the living spoken Tuscan reached for a Tuscan already inflected by the founding poet, speech with the poem in its blood for five hundred years.

The incantamento, recast as compression. The enchantment is subtler than a confusion of two unrelated things. The articulation and the vernacular are joined, by a real founding that worked across five hundred years through the lettered tradition and the slow bending of the spoken tongue. The myth does not invent an absent connection; it takes a connection that is genuine but long and mediated and compresses it into a single immediate act, one man making a tongue in one lifetime. This is the koinonia-scale form of the founding error the whole project tracks, the same shape as the smallest scale, where the generated sentence compresses the vast distributed residue of everything said into one present speaker. The difference from the machine stays decisive: Dante is a real source, who truly founded and authored, where the machine is no source at all; but the form of the misperception is one, the long channel crushed into a point.

The tier, marked once. This is not a figure in the sand. Its force depends on facts about the history of a language no interlocutor could reach from his own resources, and on an interpretive claim about what the poem discloses that a reader of intellectual history may contest. The load-bearing point survives that contest: the distinction between the authored articulation and the carried vernacular, and the conflation of the two, holds however much or little of modernity one credits to the poem. The dialogue is honest because the false belief it dismantles, the single founding father of the tongue, is one the interlocutor genuinely holds. The evidential weight is the lesser, confirming weight of a historical test case. The movement has shown only a birth, and a tightly braided one, the articulation itself a new disclosure of world carried into the vernacular; the pulling-apart of the two strata waits for the movements that set this case against its opposites.

Factual record, verified against the scholarship. Dante's rejection of Florentine is in the *De vulgari eloquentia*, composed in Latin in exile around 1304 to 1307, Book I, chapter 13, where he charges the Tuscans with *amentia* for taking their municipal speech for the illustrious vernacular and dismisses the Tuscan poets, his own city's speech among them, as fit for the town and not the court; the count of more than fourteen peninsular varieties is at Book I, chapter 10. The illustrious vernacular he seeks belongs to no single city and must be drawn from all. The standardization of the spoken tongue was the nineteenth and twentieth centuries' work: Alessandro Manzoni revised *I Promessi Sposi* between the 1827 and 1840 editions toward the living Florentine of the educated, stripping Lombardisms, Gallicisms, and archaic literary constructions, the revision he described as rinsing his cloths in the Arno, a phrase from his letter to Cesare D'Azeglio; Francesco De Sanctis built the canon of a national literature and carried it into the schools as minister of public instruction; and compulsory schooling, urbanization, and the broadcast media completed the spread. The scale of the gap is well established: by Tullio De Mauro's calculation in *Storia linguistica dell'Italia unita* (Laterza, 1963), only about two and a half in a hundred of the population could use standardized Italian in daily life at unification in 1861, roughly six hundred thirty thousand people; Arrigo Castellani later raised this to about a tenth, in *Quanti erano gl'italofoni nel 1861?* (1982), on a broader measure of competence. The two estimates mark the range of the scholarly dispute, and either shows the same thing, that the celebrated tongue of 1861 was spoken by a small literate fraction and became a national speech only afterward. The reading of the poem, that the *Commedia* reverses the Augustinian settlement and makes an earthly love the means of ascent rather than the snare to be subtracted, stands in an established tradition and is not the book's own discovery: its groundwork in the *dolce stil novo*, in Guinizzelli's defense of earthly love as the means by which the lover is drawn toward God; the structural theology of Beatrice in Charles Singleton's *Dante Studies*, in *Elements of Structure* (1954) and *Journey to Beatrice* (1958); the figural reading in Erich Auerbach's *Figura* (1944) and *Mimesis* (1946); and the mapping of the Augustinian conversion narrative onto the poem in John Freccero's *Dante: The Poetics of Conversion* (1986). The load-bearing claim, the distinction between

the authored articulation and the carried vernacular, does not depend on crediting the poem with the whole of modernity, and is left to stand on the textual and demographic record above.

Chapter 8. Aramaic: Death, Threshold, and the Two Hospitalities

GUGLIELMO. We watched a language be born. Now I want to watch one die, because death shows the shape of a thing as life never does. Start again from what you already believe. There are churches, very old ones, in the Near East, where the liturgy is still chanted in Aramaic, the language of Jesus. What do you take that to be, when you hear it?

FRIDRIK. A living thread back to him. The same tongue he spoke, kept alive on the lips of the faithful for two thousand years, unbroken. When they chant, the language of Galilee is still being spoken. It is one of those things that gives you a shiver, the survival of it.

GUGLIELMO. It gives everyone that shiver, and I felt it too before I looked. So let us look, gently, because there is something true inside the belief and something false, and the two have to be separated. First fact. The Aramaic chanted in those churches was fixed in its form in the fourth century, three hundred years after Jesus, and it is a particular dialect, a literary and liturgical one, not the everyday Aramaic of first-century Galilee. Jesus spoke a different, earlier, spoken dialect. So the chant is not the tongue of Galilee preserved. It is a later form, frozen at a certain century, and held still ever since.

FRIDRIK. Three hundred years is not so much, and a later dialect is still the same tongue. When a church in Rome chants in Latin, it is not Cicero's Latin, it is a later church Latin, and no one says the thread back to Rome is broken on that account. So the chant is a later Aramaic, granted, but Aramaic, and the thread runs back through it, longer and more bent than I thought, and still unbroken. I am not giving up the thread for a matter of dialect.

GUGLIELMO. Keep the thread for now; I will not take it from you on the dialect alone, because you are right that a later form of a tongue can still be the tongue. Then the second fact, and this is the one that matters, and it is not about dialect at all. The people who chant it, in many of those churches, do not speak Aramaic. Not the old dialect, not any dialect. They speak the language of wherever they live, at home, in the market, to their children. The Aramaic lives only in the rite. It opens no front door, buys no bread, scolds no child. It is chanted, beautifully, with full devotion, by people whose living tongue is something else entirely, and who could not hold a conversation in the language they are chanting.

FRIDRIK. Then in what sense is it alive at all? If no one speaks it, if it only ever appears in the chant, I am not sure I can still call it a living thread. But I do not want to call it simply dead either, because it is right there, being sung, every week. That is not what a dead language does. Ancient Egyptian is dead, the tongue of the pharaohs, and no one chants it as their own, no one feels it as theirs; its very script fell silent for centuries until scholars had to break it open again like a sealed tomb. That is a dead language. This is not that.

GUGLIELMO. Now you are in the real difficulty, and it is the right one, so stay in it. You have a thing that is not living in the way you first meant and not dead in the way Egyptian is dead. Let me complicate it further, not to torment you but because the truth is genuinely layered here. That same language, Aramaic, taken as a whole, is at this very moment three different things at once. Once it was the common tongue of whole empires, the language of trade and administration across the Near East. That world is gone, and that Aramaic is gone with it, a dead ancestor. At the same time, there are still a few villages and communities where a living Aramaic is spoken at home, modern dialects of it, but they are scattered, dwindling, many unable to understand each other, fading household by household, a dying tongue. And at the same time, there is the chant we have been speaking of, fixed and undying in the rite, spoken by no one as a daily tongue. Dead, dying, and undead. The same language, in the same hour, in all three conditions.

FRIDRIK. Then it is not three languages. It is one language showing three ways of ending. The shiver I felt was real but I had collapsed all three into one and called the whole thing survival.

GUGLIELMO. That is exactly what the myth does, it takes the undying chant and lets you feel it as the living thread, so the death hiding inside it is never seen. Now let me bring the death down out of the abstract, because a field does not die in a lecture, it dies in a room. Picture the last person who speaks one of those dying village dialects fluently, an old woman, every turn of it in her, the proverbs, the laments, the names of the plants. And her grandchild, who understands a little, answers her in the national language, and will not pass the dialect to his own children. Watch the two of them. Where, between them, is the language dying?

FRIDRIK. Not in her. She has it whole. And not quite in him either, he has some of it. It is dying in the space between them, in the not-passing. She can still speak it, but to fewer and fewer, and after her there will be no one to speak it to and no one who took it on. So it is dying even while she speaks it perfectly. That is strange. The language is finished and she is still fluent.

GUGLIELMO. Hold that, it is precise. A field can be entirely alive among those who hold it and already finished, because to be finished is not to fall silent today, it is to have lost the power to make a new holder. She has the tongue and cannot make another who has it, because the grandchild will not take it and there is no one else. That is the threshold. Not a number of speakers. The line past which the language can still be spoken and can no longer make a speaker. Below that line every loss is permanent, because to replace a speaker you would need the very power that is gone.

FRIDRIK. So her fluency is a kind of cruelty to her. She holds something perfectly that is leaving the world through no fault of her holding.

GUGLIELMO. And here is the heart of it, the thing I brought you to this room to see. She is going to die, the old woman. And the language is going to die. Two deaths in one body. I want to know whether they are the same kind of thing or different, and there is a way to test it. We have a tool from the very first scenes. Take away the field, and ask what goes and what stays. So: take away her language entirely, suppose the last others of her generation are already gone, the field is simply not there anymore. What happens to her power to greet in it?

FRIDRIK. It goes. Of course it goes. There is no one to greet, nothing to greet into. Her power to greet lived in the shared field, it was always between her and others, and with the field gone the greeting has nowhere to land. The could-greet was held in the field and it dies with the field.

GUGLIELMO. Now the same operation, the same removal. Take away the field. What happens to her own death, the death that is coming for her?

FRIDRIK. It stays. It does not move at all. She will die whether or not a single field she belonged to still exists. Her death was never held in the shared world the way her greeting was. It is hers, only hers, no one can take it from her or do it for her, and no removal of any language touches it. Take everything shared away and the death is exactly where it was.

GUGLIELMO. So tell me what you have found about the two deaths.

FRIDRIK. They are not the same kind of thing. One was held in the field and dies when the field dies. The other was never held in the field and stands untouched when the field is gone. The death of the language and her own death are different in kind. The first is shared, hosted, between; the second is hers and unhosted and alone. I had thought of them as two sad things happening to one old woman at the same time. They are not even the same sort of thing.

GUGLIELMO. Now be careful, because there is a tempting next step and it is wrong, and I want you to see why it is wrong rather than take my word. You might be moved to say: since the could-greet is given by the field and the could-die is not, the field is the giver of life and the lonely death is what is left when the field withdraws, and so somehow the field is the deeper power, even the source of her being able to die meaningfully. Does the test let you say that?

FRIDRIK. No. The test says the opposite, if it says anything. Her death survived the removal of the field. Whatever survives the removal of the field was not given by the field. So the field does not give her death, does not found it, does not underlie it. If anything the death is the more independent of the two, it needs nothing shared in order to come. I cannot make the field the source of her mortality, because I just watched her mortality stand there after I took the field away.

GUGLIELMO. Then what does the field have to do with her death at all? Because it does have something to do with it. We feel that her dying as the last speaker is worse than an ordinary death, and that feeling is not nothing.

FRIDRIK. Let me try to say it exactly. The field does not give her the death. But the field is where a death can be mourned, spoken of, remembered, handed on. A death becomes something that can be grieved and carried by others only inside a shared world, in its words and rites and memory. Her bare dying needs no field. But her death as something mournable, sayable, inheritable, that needs the field. And her tragedy is double, then, not because she dies twice, but because she dies the death that was always coming, and the very field in which that death could have been mourned and remembered is dying with her, so there will be no one left inside it to mourn her in it. The death stands untouched. The world that could have received it is going out at the same moment.

GUGLIELMO. That is the whole of it, and you have kept it honest. The field founds nothing, not even this; it does not do the mourning. People in the field do the mourning, and her grief is that there will be no people left in this field to do it. The bare death is hers alone and needs no world. The mourned death needs a world, and her world is dying with her. Two finitudes, one chest, and not the same finitude, and you proved it by taking the field away and watching one leave and one remain.

FRIDRIK. There is something else I want to ask, now that I see the threshold. When I learned to greet the Icelandic, in the earlier scene, I crossed into his field slowly, by undergoing it, over years. Is her losing the field the same crossing run backwards? Is she slowly walking back out of the language?

GUGLIELMO. Look and see. Does she un-learn it? Does she lose the proverbs, forget the names of the plants, become less fluent as the field dies?

FRIDRIK. No. She keeps it all. She is as fluent on her last day as ever. It is not she who moves. It is the field that recedes from under her. She stands still, holding the whole language, and the world for it drains away around her. That is not the crossing run backwards. When I entered Icelandic I moved across a border into a field that stood there. She does not move at all. The ground withdraws and leaves her standing on it with nowhere to use what she holds. Entry is a thing you do. This is a thing done to you, being left on a shore as the sea goes out.

GUGLIELMO. So loss is not the mirror of entry. One is undergone by crossing; the other is suffered by being abandoned in place, competence intact, world gone. Now the last thing, and it brings us back to your chant, which we left unfinished. After the last village speaker dies, after the living dialect is gone, the chant in the church goes on. No one speaks the tongue, no new speaker is being made, and still, every week, it is performed, and within the performance something lands, a blessing, a mourning, an address between those who pray in it. What mode of life is that? It is not the living tongue, that is dead. It is not nothing, something lands. What is it?

FRIDRIK. It is the language kept past its world. The power to make new speakers is gone, that died at the threshold. But the power to address, among those who hold the form, survives, in the rite. It is held by fidelity rather than by life. Sustained, I would say, kept up on purpose after the world that would keep it naturally is gone. Undead is the honest word, neither living nor finished, a form performed past the life it once had.

GUGLIELMO. And in that undead mode, watch one last thing come apart, because it answers the question you could not answer at the start, how the chant can be neither alive nor dead. There are two kinds of welcome folded together in a healthy language and here they separate. There is the welcome a speaker does, the address that takes another in, the blessing that lands on the one who receives it. And there is the welcome a field is, the having of a whole living world the tongue opens onto, room to live a life in. In the chant, which of these survives?

FRIDRIK. The speaker's welcome survives. The chant does welcome, does bless, does address, and it is received, that is the something that lands. But the field's welcome is gone. There is no living world the tongue opens onto anymore, no daily life to be lived in it, no room behind the door. So the door is opened, and opened beautifully, onto a space that has emptied. The welcome is intact and the world it welcomes into is not there. That is why it is neither alive nor dead. The act of welcome lives; the world welcomed into has died.

GUGLIELMO. And because the field's welcome cannot be rebuilt out of the speaker's, no amount of devout chanting brings the living tongue back. You can open the door more and more beautifully and it will not refill the room. A field whose world has died can only get a world again by being set down into a new life from outside, re-seeded, and what is re-seeded is never the old world returning. But that is the next room we go into, the bones carried across into a new world, and the honest word for what happens there is not resurrection. We will get there. For now you have seen enough: a field can die three ways at once, a death of a field is not a death of a self though one body can hold both, and a language can outlive its own world as a welcome with no room behind it.

FRIDRIK. I came in hearing an unbroken thread, and I held onto it a good while, longer than I should have. I leave hearing a door opened onto an empty room, which is sadder and truer, and somehow more worth the shiver than the thread was.

After the seeing, the result named once, and marked as the historical test case it is.

The three modes of one field's finitude. A field can be dead, dying, and undead at once: an imperial vernacular long gone, a living dialect dwindling household by household, and a liturgical form fixed and chanted by people who speak it as no daily tongue. These are not three fields but the finitude of one language shown in three modes in a single present, and the popular myth of unbroken survival collapses them into one, letting the undying chant be felt as a living thread and hiding the death inside it.

The threshold. A field is finished not when it falls silent but when it loses the power to make a new holder. It can be wholly alive among those who hold it and already finished, as the last fluent speaker is fluent on her last day while the field dies for want of a successor. The threshold is therefore not a count of speakers but the line past which the field can still be spoken and can no longer make a speaker, below which every loss is permanent, because replacing a speaker would need the generative power that is already gone.

The two finitudes, and the guard against inflation. A single dying speaker holds two deaths, the field's and her own, and the take-away-the-field test shows they differ in kind: the could-greet is hosted in the field and goes when the field goes; the could-die was never hosted and stands untouched when the field is removed. The result must not be inflated into the claim that the field founds mortality. Precisely because the could-die survives the removal of the field, it was not given by the field, and being-toward-death keeps a founding independence the field does not supply. The defensible claim is the narrow one: the bare death needs no world, but the death made mournable, sayable, and inheritable is always already worlded, and the field is where, not by whom, a death is mourned. The field founds nothing; persons within the field do the mourning. The last speaker's tragedy is double not because she dies twice but because the world in which her death could be mourned is dying with her.

Loss is not entry reversed. Entry into a field is undergone by crossing a border into a world that stands there; the loss of a field is not that crossing run backwards. The speaker does not un-learn the tongue, her competence stays whole, and it is the field that recedes from beneath her. Entry is a thing one does; the un-making of it is a thing suffered, the competent speaker left on a shore as the world drains away, and the asymmetry is itself a disclosure of the field's independence of any single holder.

The two hospitalities, and sustained possibility. After the generative power and even the last vernacular speaker are gone, a field can persist in an undead mode, the address kept by fidelity past the death of its world. There the two hospitalities fused in a healthy field come apart: the speaker's hosting, the act of welcome that addresses and blesses and is received, survives; the field's hosting, the having of a living world the tongue opens onto, is gone. The welcome is intact and the room behind the door has emptied. And because the field's hosting cannot be rebuilt out of the speaker's, devotion cannot refill the room; a field whose world has died can regain one only by being re-seeded into a new life from outside, which is never the old world returning. This is the seam to the next movement, where the bones are carried across a one-way border and a new field is born from them, and the honest word for that is filiation, not resurrection.

The Steinbock distinction, marked so it is not collapsed. The nearest neighbor in generative phenomenology reads the death of a world as transformation, liminal passage, and reconstitution, and stops short of the field that simply dies and leaves no living world behind. This movement is about that field. The undead chant is not the home reawakened or reconstituted; it is a fixed sediment performed after the home is gone, the address kept without the generative power, fidelity without a world. What such keeping preserves is storable, the script and lexicon and canon and order of the rite; what it cannot preserve is the unstorable lived world.

The tier, marked once. This is not a figure in the sand. Its force depends on facts about the history of a language no interlocutor could generate, and the dialogue is honest only because the false belief it dismantles, the unbroken living thread back to Galilee, is one the interlocutor genuinely arrives holding, and holds for a good while. The phenomenological turns it reaches, the threshold, the two finitudes, the two hospitalities, are compelled within the scene once the facts are in hand, but the case as a whole carries the lesser, confirming weight of a historical test case, and it is one panel of the two-strata proof and not the proof. That an address still lands where no living world remains points beneath the institution to a stratum the later movements, taken as a set, force into the open.

Factual record, verified against the scholarship. The chanted liturgical language is Classical Syriac, an Eastern Aramaic literary dialect that grew from the speech of Edessa and was standardized as a literary and liturgical norm across the third to fifth centuries, its golden age the fourth to seventh, the work of the region's Christianization and of figures such as Ephrem the Syrian, who died in 373. The dialect itself is older than that fixing, attested in inscriptions of the first centuries; what the fourth century fixed was the literary norm and not the birth of the tongue. It is used today by the West Syriac and East Syriac churches, among them the Syriac Orthodox, Maronite, Assyrian, and Chaldean, and by the Saint Thomas Christians of Kerala. Jesus did not speak it. His everyday tongue was Galilean Aramaic, the northern subdialect of Jewish Palestinian Aramaic, a Western Aramaic dialect that had diverged from the Eastern branch centuries before, preserved as fossils in the Greek gospels, *talitha cumi*, *ephphatha*, *eloi eloi lema sabachthani*; the consensus is strong, with minority cases made for first-century Hebrew and for Greek, but the domestic and preaching language was Western Aramaic, structurally distinct from the Eastern chant, so the chant is not the tongue of Galilee preserved and the two must not be conflated. One phylogenetic caution is owed: the living Neo-Aramaic vernaculars are not descendants of the chanted Classical Syriac but parallel Eastern Aramaic branches, niece to it rather than daughter, so the three states are conditions of one language family and not a single line of descent. The dead ancestor is Imperial Aramaic, the administrative *lingua franca* from Egypt to the Indus under the Assyrian, Babylonian, and Persian empires, supplanted by Greek after Alexander. The dying tongue is the Neo-Aramaic continuum, scattered across southeastern Turkey, northern Iraq, northwestern Iran, and the diaspora, its branches mutually unintelligible to one another and often within, so that the Jewish and Christian populations of one town spoke incomprehensible varieties; the dialects are endangered and some already gone, Mlahsô extinct with the death of its last speaker in 1998. The chant is sustained by communities whose daily tongue is now Arabic, or, in Kerala, Malayalam, a language with no kinship to it at all, so that the syllables are chanted with reverence and without comprehension; even a native speaker of a living Neo-Aramaic cannot follow the Classical Syriac liturgy without formal schooling, the gap between them like that between spoken Italian and liturgical Latin.

The record here rests on Syriac studies and Semitic linguistics, among them the work of Sebastian Brock, Holger Gzella, Geoffrey Khan, and Otto Jastrow.

Chapter 9. Hebrew: Filiation, Not Resurrection

GUGLIELMO. We watched a language die in the chant, kept as bones after its world was gone, and I said then that bones can seed a new birth but cannot bring back the world that died. Now I want to test that against the one case that looks like the dead actually rising. You know it. A language that no one had spoken from the cradle for the better part of two thousand years, and then, in living memory, children speaking it again as their first tongue. Hebrew. What do you take to have happened there?

FRIDRIK. A resurrection, and a man who performed it. The language was dead, kept only in prayer and scripture, and one man set himself to bring it back, refused to speak anything else, raised his son to be the first child in two thousand years to speak it from birth, made the dictionary, and willed the dead tongue back to life. If Dante was a doubtful case of authoring a language, this is the clean one. Here a man really did it, on purpose, and we know his name.

GUGLIELMO. So here, unlike with the poem, you have a man who fully intended to author a language. Not a poet who meant to write a poem and was later called a father. A man who said, in so many words, I will make this dead tongue live, and bent his whole life to it. Good. That makes this the hard case, and the honest one, because if the carrier-not-author law holds even here, against a man who deliberately set out to author a field, it holds anywhere. Let us not protect the law. Let us attack it with this case and see if it survives. Start with the son, the first child. Did raising one child in the dead tongue bring the language back?

FRIDRIK. It must have been the seed of it, at least. The first native speaker in two thousand years. That is where the life re-entered.

GUGLIELMO. Picture the child's day. He is the only child on earth being raised in this tongue. Who does he speak it with?

FRIDRIK. His father. His mother, as much as she could. The household.

GUGLIELMO. And outside the household? In the street, with other children, at play, in the market?

FRIDRIK. No one. There were no other children who had it. He would have spoken it only at home, and everything outside the door was in other languages.

GUGLIELMO. So what does the child have? He has a tongue he can speak with his father and almost no one else, for nothing that children use a language to do, no games with others, no street, no world of his own age. Is that a living language, or a language spoken in one house against the silence of a whole city?

FRIDRIK. One house against the silence. I see it. A single child speaking a tongue no other child speaks does not have a living language, he has a private one, an enforced one, almost a burden. It is not nothing, he has the words from the cradle, but it is not the language living, because there is no between for it. A language needs more than two speakers in a kitchen. It needs a world of speakers. The one child proves almost the opposite of what I thought, he shows that one household cannot make a living tongue, however hard the father wills it.

GUGLIELMO. So the man's most deliberate act, the engineered first speaker, the thing that looks most like authoring a language, nearly fails exactly where you would predict, because one household is not a between, and a field is a between or it is nothing. Then how did Hebrew actually come to live? Not the dictionary, not the one household. What put it in the mouths of a generation?

FRIDRIK. It must have been something larger than the man. I do not know the history well, but it cannot have been the household, since we just saw the household could not do it. Tell me.

GUGLIELMO. Schools, first. Schools where children who came speaking a dozen different mother tongues were taught everything in Hebrew, so that for a whole generation it became the language of their learning and then of their play with each other, which the one household could never give the one child, the crowd of age-mates speaking it together. Then the settlements, where laborers arriving from many countries with no common tongue had to find one to share the work, and reached for the old language precisely because it belonged to none of them by birth and so could belong to all of them in common. And then a public fight, bitter and decisive, over whether the new institution of higher learning would teach its sciences in a prestigious European language or in the old tongue, a fight won for the old tongue, which proved it could carry the modern world at its most demanding. Tell me what kind of things those are.

FRIDRIK. They are carriers again. Schools, teachers, a crowd of children, laborers in a field needing a common word, a public movement winning a fight. Not the man. Not the household. The same shape as before, the language coming to live through many hands, through institutions full of people, none of them the single author. Even here, where one man meant to author it, the actual living tongue was carried into being by a whole society, not made by him.

GUGLIELMO. So does the carrier-not-author law survive the hardest case?

FRIDRIK. It survives, and it is stronger for the difficulty. With Dante I could say he never meant to author the tongue, so of course he did not. Here is a man who meant it with his whole life, and still he did not author the living language, because no one can. He coined words, he set a model, he raised one child against the silence, and the language came to live only when schools and settlements and a public movement carried it. His intending to author it turns out to be just one more way of carrying it, the most deliberate carrying there ever was, and still carrying and not authoring. I had thought intention was the thing that would make authorship real. It is not. Even total intention only feeds the carrying.

GUGLIELMO. Now hold on to the three relations we found with the poem, because they sort this cleanly. Did the man author an articulation, a new world in the language, the way the poet did?

FRIDRIK. Less so, I think. His genius was not a new vision of the world. It was the lexicon, the words for the modern things the ancient tongue never had, the telephone and the newspaper and the office. That is not quite a new world articulated. It is more like equipping the old tongue to live in a new one.

GUGLIELMO. Good, that is a real difference, do not paper over it. He is more founder and carrier than author of an articulation. He founded, he set the model and made the lexicon that the carriers then carried, the way the poem set the model the lettered carried. And he carried, the most deliberate carrier of all. The articulation, the world the reborn language would speak, that was not his single gift; it came from the whole returning life of a people. So he is founder and carrier, strongly, and author of an articulation only weakly. The poet was all three with the articulation strongest. The man here is the founder-carrier with the articulation faint. Different mixtures of the same three relations.

FRIDRIK. Then the word resurrection, which I walked in with. Is it the right word for what the carriers made?

GUGLIELMO. That is the last thing, and the most important, and it turns on the border we found in the chant. Tell me what was actually kept, across the two thousand years, for the carriers to work with.

FRIDRIK. The written language. The scripture, the prayers, the law, the commentaries. The script, the words, the grammar. What could be stored on a page and in a rite.

GUGLIELMO. The storable. The bones, as we called them in the chant. And what was not kept, could not be kept, across two thousand years?

FRIDRIK. The lived world. The daily life of the ancient speakers, their fields and kings and markets and the ordinary world they moved through speaking it. That world ended and could not be stored. No page holds a living world.

GUGLIELMO. Now there is a thing worth getting right here, because the easy version of it is wrong and the true version is the stronger. Go back toward the start of the long exile, toward the time of Jesus and after. Many people will tell you that Hebrew was already a dead street-tongue by then, that the people spoke only Aramaic and kept Hebrew for scripture and the schools. Did you carry some form of that?

FRIDRIK. I think I did. I had the vague idea that Hebrew was the holy language and Aramaic the spoken one even then, so that Hebrew was already half a museum piece before the long exile began.

GUGLIELMO. That is the common belief, and it is mostly false, and its being false matters, because the true picture closes a road you were about to take. In the first and second centuries the people of Judea did speak Hebrew, an everyday Hebrew, in the home and the market, alongside Aramaic as the wider tongue of the region and Greek across the Hellenized world. We have their ordinary writing, military orders and contracts and mundane business, in a colloquial Hebrew, from as late as the revolt against Rome in the second century. So Hebrew was then a living cradle-tongue, the kind one is simply raised in, and not yet bones. Knowing that, tell me what happened next, and what it means for what crossed the millennia.

FRIDRIK. Then I cannot take the easy road I was reaching for. I was going to say Hebrew was always mostly bones, that little real life was lost, so the revival had less to do. But you have just told me it was a living everyday tongue into the second century, raised in, bought bread in, written in by soldiers. So when it died as a spoken tongue, after the revolt and the breaking of Judea, a real living vernacular died, not a museum piece. And then, for the better part of two thousand years, no child anywhere was raised in it. That is a true death and a complete gap, not the slow fading of something already half-gone. What crossed those centuries was only the storable, the script and the scripture and the law, because the living tongue had genuinely ended and only the bones were left to carry.

GUGLIELMO. So when the carriers raised the tongue again, into what world did it come to live? The ancient one, recovered? Or another?

FRIDRIK. Another. A wholly new one. A world of cities and machines and nations and refugees, a world that needed a word for the telephone, a world whose first practical problem for the language was giving immigrants from everywhere a neutral common tongue. The old world did not come back. The bones were carried across into a new world, and the language came to live in that new world, not the dead one. So it is not the same tongue resumed where it left off. It is the old bones living a new life, in a world the ancient speakers never knew.

GUGLIELMO. Then is resurrection the word?

FRIDRIK. No. Resurrection would mean the same one rising, the same life resumed, the dead world living again. That is not what happened. What happened is that the bones were carried across the border into a new world and a new field was born from them, wearing the old name, holding the old script, and living a life the ancestor never lived. That is not the dead rising. That is a child born and given the ancestor's name. Filiation, not resurrection. The language that lives now is the child of the one that died, not the one that died returned. And the gap it crossed was real and total, a living vernacular that genuinely ended, and then the better part of two thousand years in which no one was raised in it, so that the carriers had only the bones to work with, and what they built on the bones came to live in a world the ancient speakers never knew. The child is not the ancestor risen. It is a new life, born of the old bones, in a new world.

GUGLIELMO. And the border, you notice, runs one way only. The bones crossed forward, into the new world, and made a child. Nothing crossed backward. The ancient living world did not return; it cannot; the dead world stays dead and only the storable bones ever cross, and they cross only forward, into a new life. The chant showed you bones kept undead with no new world to receive them. This shows you the next step, the bones carried into a new world and a child born. Between the two you have the whole shape, and it is one-way. Time's arrow holds even here, in the case that looks most like reversal.

FRIDRIK. And the myth I came in with, the one man raising the dead, has the same fault as the Dante myth. It takes something real and long and made of many hands and crushes it into a single miraculous act.

GUGLIELMO. Say it exactly, because it is the same shape and you should own it.

FRIDRIK. The truth is a distributed birth, schools and settlements and a public fight, across two generations, with one man's lexicon and one man's model feeding it but not making it. The myth crushes that whole channel into one man willing a dead language alive in his own lifetime. It is compression again, the long mediated genesis crushed into a single immediate source, exactly like the nation crushing five centuries of founding into one father, exactly like the machine crushing the whole human residue into one present speaker. And here there is a second crushing on top of it, because the myth also crushes filiation into resurrection, a child born from bones crushed into the dead themselves rising. Two compressions in one myth. A distributed birth made one man's deed, and a filiation made a resurrection.

GUGLIELMO. That is the whole of it, and you have it. The man is real, his lexicon is real, his model is real, as Dante was real and the human residue behind the machine is real. None of them is the immediate single source the story needs. You came in seeing one man raise the dead. You leave seeing a people carry old bones into a new world and a child born there with the ancestor's name, and seeing why the world insists on the lonely miracle instead, because a single raiser of the dead is a better story than two generations of schoolteachers and laborers and a committee fighting over the language of a science faculty.

After the seeing, the result named once, and marked as the historical test case it is.

The carrier-not-author law at its hardest, and surviving. The previous birth, Italian, had a founder who never intended to author the vernacular. This one has a founder who intended exactly that, deliberately, with his whole life, and the law holds even so, which is why this is the strongest test the history offers. The engineered first native speaker, the single child raised in the tongue against the silence of a whole city, nearly fails precisely where the law predicts, because one household is not a between. What made the language live was not the man and not the household but the carriers: immersion schools that gave a generation a crowd of age-mates, settlements where laborers with no shared tongue reached for one belonging to none of them by birth, and a public fight, won, over whether the highest learning would be taught in the old tongue. Even total, explicit, lifelong intention to author a field takes effect only as a mode of carrying, the most deliberate carrying there ever was, and carrying still.

The three relations, in a different mixture. The relations distinguished in the prior movement sort this case cleanly. The founder authored an articulation only weakly; his gift was not a new vision of the world but the lexicon that equipped the old tongue for a new one. He founded strongly, setting the model and the lexicon the carriers then carried, as the poem set the model the lettered carried. And he carried, more deliberately than anyone. Where the poet was all three relations with the authored articulation strongest, the lexicographer is founder and carrier with the articulation faint. The same three relations, in a different proportion, which is what one should expect if the relations are real and not tailored to a single case.

Filiation, not resurrection, and the one-way border. What was kept across the centuries was the storable, the script and lexicon and canon and rite, the bones; what could not be kept was the lived world of the ancient speakers. So the reborn tongue did not resume the ancient world but came to live in a wholly new one, of cities and machines and nations and immigrants needing a neutral common tongue. The bones were carried across the border into a new world and a new field was born from them, wearing the ancestor's name and script and living a life the ancestor never lived. That is filiation, a child given the ancestor's name, not resurrection, the dead world rising. The border runs one way: the storable bones cross forward into a new life, and the dead living world never crosses back. With the chant of the prior movement, which showed bones kept undead with no new world to receive them, this completes the one-way cycle: undead bones can seed a new birth and can never re-cross into the living world they once were. And the gap the bones crossed was real and complete: Hebrew was a living everyday vernacular in Judea into the second century, lost its native cradle-speakers after the breaking of Judea around the year two hundred, and then had no one raised in it for the better part of two thousand years. So the older formulation, that Hebrew gained the cradle function on a scale it had never held in antiquity, is dropped as false, since it did hold that function into the second century; the fresh start is one of world, not of a function the language had never had, and the crossing is a crossing of bones because the living tongue genuinely died and only the storable survived.

The Steinbock distinction, in its sharpest form. The nearest neighbor in generative phenomenology reads such recoveries in the language of reawakening and reconstitution, and a reader carrying that language will hear this movement as a world that slept and woke. The claim here is stronger and must not be softened into that. The field genuinely died, as a living world, for the better part of two thousand years; what returns is not the home reawakened but a new home built on the bones of the old, in a world the old home never knew. Reawakening is the sleeper rising, the same life resumed; filiation is the dead staying dead while a child is born bearing the name.

The incantamento, as a double compression. The myth of the single reviver has the same form as the myth of the single father of Italian: a genesis that is real, distributed, and mediated, crushed into a single immediate act. The truth is a distributed birth across two generations, fed by one man's lexicon and model but made by schools, settlements, and a public movement; the myth crushes that channel into one man willing a dead tongue alive in his lifetime. And here a second compression rides atop the first, the myth crushing filiation into resurrection, the child born from bones mistaken for the dead themselves rising. The form is identical to the error at every other scale, including the smallest, where the generated sentence crushes the whole human residue into one present speaker. The difference from the machine remains decisive: the founder is a real source who truly founded, where the machine is no source at all; but the shape of the misperception, the long mediated channel crushed into a point, is one.

The classification dispute, as the linguistic shadow of filiation. There is a serious and unsettled dispute among the scholars of the modern tongue over what it even is: a continuous evolution of the ancient language, a koiné that remains Semitic at the core (Chaim Rabin, Haiim Rosén); a relexification, Slavic or Yiddish structure under a Semitic lexicon (Paul Wexler); or a semi-engineered Semito-European hybrid its proponent calls Israeli (Ghil'ad Zuckermann). The book takes no side, the dispute turning on technical matters beyond its concern. But the mere durability of the disagreement over whether it is even the same language is itself the linguistic shadow of filiation: were the tongue simply the ancient one risen unchanged, there would be nothing for the scholars to argue about. The inability to agree that it is the same language is what one should expect if what returned is not what died but a new field grown on the old bones. The book notes the shadow and leaves the scholars their fight.

The tier, marked once. This is not a figure in the sand. Its force depends on facts about the history of a language no interlocutor could generate, and the dialogue is honest because the false belief it dismantles, the single reviver raising the dead tongue alone, is one the interlocutor genuinely holds. The phenomenological results, the household that is not a between, the one-way border, filiation against resurrection, are compelled within the scene once the facts are in hand, but the case carries the lesser, confirming weight of a historical test case.

Factual record, verified against the scholarship, with one correction to the older draft. The deliberate reviver was Eliezer Ben-Yehuda, born Eliezer Yitzhak Perelman in 1858, who reached Ottoman Palestine in 1881 and raised his son Itamar Ben-Avi, born 1882, in an isolating Hebrew-only household; the child did not speak until about the age of four, and sociolinguists, among them Benjamin Harshav, Bernard Spolsky, and Jack Fellman, have dismantled the myth of the sole reviver, since a living language needs a speech community and not one family. Ben-Yehuda's real work was lexicographical and ideological: he founded the Hebrew Language Committee, the Va'ad HaLashon, in 1890, the seed of the Academy of the Hebrew Language, and coined words for modern things, among them those now used for ice cream, bicycle, and dictionary. The living tongue was made by carriers: the Hebrew-medium schools from the 1880s, beginning with the school founded at Rishon LeZion in 1886, which taught every subject in Hebrew and gave the children of immigrants a peer community in it, the revival running across three generations, ideological, then a schoolyard lingua franca, then a mother tongue; the agricultural settlements, where laborers of many native tongues reached for Hebrew because it belonged to none of them; and the War of the Languages, the Milchemet HaSafot of 1913 to 1914, the fight over whether the technical institute at Haifa, the Technikum that became the Technion, funded by the German Hilfsverein der deutschen Juden, would teach its sciences in German or in Hebrew, won for Hebrew. The correction concerns the antiquity. It is not true that Hebrew had largely ceased to be an everyday spoken tongue by the first century; that was Abraham Geiger's nineteenth-century view, that Mishnaic Hebrew was a scholars' jargon, and it was overturned by Moses Segal's grammatical work of 1908 and 1927 and then by the epigraphic finds of the Judean desert, above all the Bar Kokhba letters of 132 to 135, ordinary military and legal documents in colloquial Hebrew, read by E. Y. Kutscher and J. T. Milik as proof that Hebrew was a living everyday vernacular in Judea into the second century, in a diglossia with Aramaic as the region's wider tongue and Greek across the Hellenized world. The loss of native cradle-speakers came after, around the year two hundred, with the Roman breaking of Judea, and from then until the 1880s, the better part of two thousand years, Hebrew had no native speakers, surviving as a written, liturgical, and scholarly language and at times a written bridge among diaspora communities. So the gap the

revival crossed was real and complete, which is what makes the crossing a crossing of bones, and the older claim that Hebrew gained the cradle function on a scale it never held in antiquity is dropped, since it did hold it, into the second century. The classification dispute above rests on the work of the scholars named there.

PART V. THE TWO STRATA UNDER STRESS

Chapter 10. Convergence: One World, Two Fields

GUGLIELMO. Come back to the very first stranger, the one whose greeting failed. You were the Italian then, and you gave your *buongiorno* to an Icelandic, and it fell in the air between you because you shared no field for it to land in. Hold that man in mind, the Icelandic, and let me bring him into the present and make him modern. He watches the same films you watch, dubbed or subtitled. He uses the same devices, the same applications, knows the same news the same hour you know it, buys the same brands, works in an office that looks like your office, holds much the same opinions about much the same questions. Keep one word in view as we go, because everything will turn on it. When I say the two of you have come to share a world, I mean this and only this: the disclosed furniture of a life, the things present to you both as meaning what they mean, the references and the forms of living. I do not mean the tongue you would address each other in. Those are two different things, and the whole figure is the prying of them apart. So: the two of you, the Italian and the Icelandic, now live in worlds that have grown enormously alike. Tell me what you expect to happen, over time, to that failed greeting, as the two worlds keep converging like this.

FRIDRIK. I expect it to heal. That is the whole story of the age, is it not? The world is becoming one. We watch the same things, want the same things, live more and more the same life. The old separations are wearing away. So I would expect that as the Icelander and I come to share more and more, the gap that made my greeting fail closes, and one day the greeting simply lands, because we have become, in effect, one people in one world. The failure was a relic of a divided world, and the world is uniting.

GUGLIELMO. That is the belief of the age, stated cleanly, and I want to test it rather than cheer or boo it. So let us be precise about what is converging. You and the Icelander share the films, the devices, the news, the brands, the opinions, the shape of the working day. Grant all of it, more even than you said. Now, with all of that shared, you meet him on a path, as before. You say *buongiorno*. He speaks only Icelandic still. Does the greeting land now?

FRIDRIK. If he still speaks only Icelandic, then, no. The word still does not reach him. He would hear the sound and have nothing to receive it as, exactly as before.

GUGLIELMO. Even though you now share almost the whole of the modern world with him?

FRIDRIK. Even though. Because none of the things we share, the films, the devices, the news, are the thing the greeting needed. I keep wanting to say the sharing should help, and it does not, and I have to ask why it does not. We share a world. We do not share the one thing the greeting runs on, a tongue we can both address and answer in. He can watch my films and I can use his applications and we still cannot say good morning and have it land, because saying good morning and having it land needs something the films and the applications are not.

GUGLIELMO. Name the two things you have just pulled apart, because you have done the work without noticing, and I want them fixed in two words so they cannot blur back together. What is the thing that has converged?

FRIDRIK. The world. The disclosed world, the furniture of life, the references, the forms of living, the things present to us both. That has grown almost common. We inhabit nearly the same world.

GUGLIELMO. And the thing that has not converged?

FRIDRIK. The field of address. The tongue in which we could greet and answer and be held to what we said. That has not come together at all. He has his and I have mine and they are as separate as ever. So the world converges and the field does not. Two words, two things: the world is the furniture we share; the field is the tongue we do not. And they are not one thing, because if they were one thing, the convergence of the world would have dragged the field along with it, and it has not. The greeting still fails in a nearly shared world.

GUGLIELMO. Stop there, because that is the whole chapter and you have reached it. The world and the field are two strata, not one, and convergence is the proof, because here the one rises toward common and the other does not move. If a shared world were the same thing as a shared field, your nearly shared world with the Iclander would be a nearly shared field, and the greeting would nearly land. It does not nearly land. It fails as cleanly as it failed at the start, in a world grown alike. So the field is not made of the world, and a common world does not build a common field.

FRIDRIK. I am not ready to let convergence go so easily, because the belief is strong in me and I want to give it its best chance. Let me try twice to save it. First: surely the shared world helps somehow, even if it does not finish the job. We can point at things, the device, the brand, the film, and get by without a word. And second: we can use a third language, English perhaps, that neither of us was born to, and meet there. Is that not the field beginning to converge after all, only slowly, by these two roads?

GUGLIELMO. Two roads, and I will walk you down each, because they matter and neither is the road you think. Take the pointing first. You point at the device and act together, buy together, work the same machine. What have you got?

FRIDRIK. Coordination. We act together without sharing a field. I can get the thing done with him, hand the tool across, complete the work, and never once greet him and be answered. So the pointing gives us a way to act in the shared world, and that is real, and it is not a shared field. We coordinate in the world we share, and the field stays two.

GUGLIELMO. The first road gives coordination and not a field. Now the second, the English neither of you was born to, which is the more tempting of the two. What is that, in our terms?

FRIDRIK. It is a field. A real one. But not ours, not native to either of us. We both crossed into it, each by undergoing it, the way I once crossed into Icelandic over years. So when the Icelandic and I speak English together, we have not converged our two fields into one. We have both travelled into a third field that was already standing there, made by others, the English of its own long history. The greeting that lands between us in English lands because we are both, haltingly, in that third field, not because Italian and Icelandic have grown together. Our own two fields are exactly as separate as before. We just both walked into a third house to meet.

GUGLIELMO. And that third house, the shared English, did it converge into being out of the modern shared world, or was it carried, founded, made, the way we watched Italian made?

FRIDRIK. Carried and founded, the same as any field. It has its own long history, its own founding works, its own carriers, its own slow making. It did not condense out of globalization. It was already a made field that the converging world happened to reach for as a common meeting-place. So even the one field the Iclander and I can share is not a product of convergence. It is an older made thing we both entered. Convergence gave us the motive to enter it. It did not give us the field.

GUGLIELMO. So now say what convergence does and does not do, all of it together.

FRIDRIK. Convergence makes the world common. It does not make the field common. It can press two peoples to reach for a third field already made, and it can give them coordination by pointing at the shared world, but it cannot fuse their two fields into one, and it cannot manufacture a field out of shared world at all, because a field is not made of world, it is made and carried and founded by people over time. The proof is that the Iclander and I can share nearly the whole modern world and still fail to greet each other in our own tongues, as cleanly as we failed when we shared nothing. The world rose toward common and the field did not follow, and a thing that does not follow when its supposed ground converges is not resting on that ground. The field is its own stratum.

GUGLIELMO. That is the seeing. You came in believing the world was becoming one and the peoples with it, the old failures washing away. You leave knowing the world can become one while the fields stay two, that a shared world is not a shared field and never becomes one by growing, and that the failed greeting, which found the border at the start, now finds the seam between the two strata, by failing in a world that has almost everything in common except the one thing the greeting needs.

FRIDRIK. The same instrument both times. The greeting that fails.

GUGLIELMO. The same instrument. A thing that lands tells you only that it landed. A thing that fails shows you the edge it failed against. At the start the failure showed the border between two who shared no world. Now the failure shows something deeper, that even sharing the world is not sharing the field, that the two were always different in kind, and that no amount of the one turns into the other. This is the first of what we need. We have already seen, with the man brought across the centuries, that a field can hold continuous where almost no world is shared, which is the same lesson from the other side, the field standing free of the world. And one case is still to come, where two peoples share a whole world of dealings and no common world behind them, and there we will find what lies beneath both the world and the field. But you have the shape of it now. World and field come apart, and convergence is the case that pulls them apart by raising one and leaving the other where it lay.

After the seeing, the result named once, and marked as the first pillar of the two-strata proof.

The two strata, forced from the convergent side. The disclosed world and the articulated field of address are two strata and not one, and convergence proves it by raising the first toward common while the second does not move. Two persons of different tongues can come to share almost the whole of a modern disclosed world, the same artifacts and references and forms of life, and a greeting in either native tongue still fails between them exactly as it failed when they shared nothing. Were a shared world the same as a shared field, a nearly common world would be a nearly common field and the greeting would nearly land; it does not. What does not follow when its supposed ground converges is not founded on that ground. The field is its own stratum, not a layer or a product of the world. The two words must be held apart: the world is the disclosed furniture of a life, the field is the tongue of address, and the whole figure is that the first can converge while the second does not.

Coordination, the third field, and what neither is. Two things tempt one to say the field is converging after all, and neither is the field converging. Pointing at the shared world yields coordination, the capacity to act and trade and work together, which is real and is not a shared field, and which returns at the limit in the first encounter, where two peoples coordinate while sharing no world. And the recourse to a third tongue, an English native to neither, is not the fusion of the two fields but the entry of both into a third field already made, founded and carried through its own long history, which the converging world reached for as a meeting-place but did not produce. A field is made, founded, and carried by persons over time; it does not precipitate out of a shared world.

The failed greeting as the instrument of the seam. The failed greeting, which disclosed the modal border in the second figure, here discloses the seam between the two strata. A landed greeting reports only that it landed; a failed greeting exhibits the edge it failed against. At first that edge was the border between those who share no world; here it is the deeper seam between world and field, shown by a greeting that fails in a world grown common.

The tier and the place in the proof. This carries the lesser, confirming weight of a contemporary test case, not the founding weight of a pure figure, and the dialogue is honest because the belief it dismantles, that a converging world is becoming one people, is one the interlocutor genuinely holds. It is the first pillar of the two-strata proof, forcing the strata apart from the convergent side. The same independence appears from the other side in the figures of travel along time, the diachronic border where a field holds continuous across centuries of little shared world, and the forward traveller who, stripped of his world, still greets on the one field. The second pillar, the first encounter, will not repeat the separation but will descend beneath both world and field to the floor they rest on.

Chapter 11. The Diachronic Border

GUGLIELMO. The failed greeting found a border once, between me and a stranger of my own time, the Icелander, across the space between two tongues. I want to find out now whether that border has another shape, along time instead of across distance. So let me do the traveling this time, since the field in question is mine. I am Italian. Send me back six hundred years, into a room with Boccaccio, the teller of the hundred tales, alive in his own century. We meet. I say my buongiorno. What happens, do you think?

FRIDRIK. I would expect it to fail, the way mine failed with the Icелander. Six hundred years is further than a sea. The language has changed, the world has changed. I would think you and Boccaccio are strangers as deep as any.

GUGLIELMO. Try it against what you actually know. You have read old Italian, or you know someone who has. When a modern Italian opens Boccaccio or Dante in the original, what is the experience? Is it like opening a book in a foreign tongue he has never studied, or is it like something else?

FRIDRIK. It is not like a foreign tongue. It is hard, the spelling is strange, words have shifted, some are lost, but it is recognizably the same language, older. With effort and some notes a modern Italian reads it as his own, the way you might read a very old letter from your own family and find the hand difficult but the words yours. Not a foreign language to be learned. His own language, stretched back.

GUGLIELMO. So when I meet Boccaccio and speak, the greeting roughly lands. Haltingly, with effort on both sides, with words that puzzle, but it lands, because he and I are on one field, the field of Italian, stretched across six centuries but continuous, one field that holds us both. I am far from him on it, but not across a border from him. We are inside one field together. So six hundred years is not a border. Now let me go further, and find one. Send me back further still, to Rome, the late republic, and into a room with Cicero, fourteen centuries before Boccaccio is even born. I am still Italian. I give my buongiorno. Does it land?

FRIDRIK. I want to say it fails like the Iclander, a blank. But I am not sure it is a blank, because Italian came out of Latin. So there should be threads, should there not, where with the Iclander there were none.

GUGLIELMO. There are threads, and that is the first thing to get right, because it is where I once went wrong myself. I am not blank before Cicero the way I was blank before the Iclander. The ancestor left his traces all through me. I open Cicero and I find words I half-know, roots showing through, endings that echo my own, whole phrases I could nearly guess. It is not a wall with nothing of mine on the far side. It is more like meeting a distant ancestor and catching my own features scattered in his face. And yet, with all those threads, I cannot do what I do with Boccaccio. I catch the pieces and I cannot inhabit the whole. I half-recognize a line of Cicero and I cannot live in his field, cannot greet him from within it, cannot answer as one of his own. The stretch is too far.

FRIDRIK. So it is neither Boccaccio nor the Iclander. Not your own field stretched, because you cannot inhabit it. Not a blank foreign field, because your own tongue's roots glint all through it. Something in between. A tongue where your ancestry shows through and which you still cannot enter.

GUGLIELMO. Just so. And that in-between is the thing to understand, because it means the border is not a wall. With the Iclander there was a wall, nothing of mine on the far side. Between me and Cicero there is no wall, there is a fading. The further back I go, the more faintly I catch my own tongue in the ancestor, roots and then only guesses and then nothing. I do not cross a line. I wade out into thinning water. The river of my own language enters the sea of what is no longer mine through a long lagoon, brackish, where fresh grades into salt and there is no fence to mark where one becomes the other, only more salt the further out I go. Boccaccio stands where the water is still fresh enough to drink. Cicero stands far out where it is mostly salt and I taste only traces of the river.

FRIDRIK. And I can show that the fading has no single line in it from another side, can I not? Because where Boccaccio stands is not where you stand. Is Cicero as far from Boccaccio as he is from you?

GUGLIELMO. He is not, and this is the proof that the border is reckoned from where one stands. Boccaccio is closer to Cicero than I am, and not only by the fourteen centuries he stands nearer to Rome. His own tongue still carried more of Latin alive within it. He read and wrote Latin daily as a living learned language, and even his *volgare* kept more of Latin's habits than my modern Italian keeps. You can hear it without scholarship if you know where to listen: the prose of the *Decameron*, the long winding period, clause folded into clause, the sentence built like a piece of architecture, sits closer to the way Cicero built a sentence than to the way a modern Italian novel is written. So the same Cicero is nearer to Boccaccio than to me, because Boccaccio and I stand at different points on the descent, with different amounts of the ancestor still alive in our own tongues. The border is not at a fixed place. It is measured from where you stand.

FRIDRIK. Then let me press you the way a doubter would, because I think the doubter has a real question here. If it is all a fading, measured from wherever the speaker happens to stand, then perhaps there is no border at all. Perhaps there is only decreasing convenience, the reading getting harder and harder by degrees, and we dignify a mere matter of effort with the name border. Where is the border, if everything is a gradient and the gradient shifts with the speaker?

GUGLIELMO. That is the right challenge, and there is a clean answer, and finding it shows the border is as real as any wall. We have only ever run the test one way, me reaching back. Run it the other way. Take Cicero, and bring him forward, and hand him the *Decameron*. Or set him down in Boccaccio's market and ask him to haggle over cloth and oil. What happens?

FRIDRIK. Let me think it through rather than guess. Cicero forward into Boccaccio's Florence. He has his Latin, whole and perfect. And the volgare of the market is descended from his Latin, but with fourteen centuries of change he has never seen, the sound shifts, the new words, the grammar worn smooth in ways that had not happened in his lifetime. He would catch some of it, surely, the roots are his own, more his own than mine are. But the developments that made it volgare, the very things that turned his Latin into their Italian, are all after him. They are not in him. He cannot have them, because they had not happened when he lived. So he catches the roots and loses everything built on them since, and he is lost in that market, more lost, I think, than you were reaching back to him.

GUGLIELMO. Far more lost, and you have just put your finger on why, and it is the whole of the answer to the doubter. When I reach back to Cicero, I am reaching toward the source of traces I already carry. Latin flowed down into my Italian; I am made partly of it; so when I look back I recognize, dimly, the spring my own river came from. But when Cicero reaches forward to the Decameron, he is reaching toward developments that flowed out of him into a future he never entered. The changes that made volgare out of Latin are downstream of Cicero. They are not in him and cannot be, because he is finished, sealed, before they occur. So he finds nothing of the Decameron in himself, where I find much of Cicero in myself. The reaching is not equally hard in both directions. It is deeply unequal, and the inequality has a direction.

FRIDRIK. And that is the border. Not the difficulty, which a doubter could call mere inconvenience, but the asymmetry of the difficulty. The descendant half-reaches the ancestor, and the ancestor cannot reach the descendant at all in the same way, because the descendant is built partly out of the ancestor and the ancestor is not built at all out of the descendant. That is not a matter of effort. That is a fact about which way the language flowed, and a one-way fact like that is exactly what a border is, an edge with a direction, not a mere thinning a patient enough reader could wade through either way.

GUGLIELMO. Now you have the border, and it is firmer than the wall I first reached for, because it is proved and not merely felt. And see what it is made of. The traces run one way. The ancestral field deposits itself forward into the descendant, who carries the ancestor partly within him and can look back and find him dimly; nothing of the descendant deposits backward, because the ancestor is finished before the descendant exists. Looking back along the line of descent you find traces; looking forward you find none; and that one-way flow is the border.

FRIDRIK. This is the same one-way thing we found with the dying and the reborn tongues. There the storable bones crossed forward in time and never backward, the dead world never returning, only its deposits travelling on into a new field. Here the traces of the ancestral tongue deposit forward into the descendant and never backward into the ancestor. It is the same border, the one-way border, seen now from inside a single line of descent rather than across a death.

GUGLIELMO. The very same. The one-way border of the bones is the diachronic border of the field, looked at along the line that descent draws. Looking back, I find what came down to me, and the field thins but holds a long way out. Looking forward, the ancestor finds nothing of what came after him, because the very changes that would carry him forward are the ones he predates.

FRIDRIK. So the failed greeting found the border in time as it found it across space, and the border in time is a gradient with a direction, a fading that runs one way, reckoned from where the speaker stands and toward the source he came from.

GUGLIELMO. You expected six centuries to be a border and they were not, because Boccaccio stands in my own fresh water still. You expected Cicero to be a wall like the Icелander and he is not, because his Latin is the spring my river ran from and its traces glint all through me. And you doubted there was any border at all, only a fading, until you turned Cicero around and sent him forward and found he could not haggle in a market descended from his own tongue, far more lost than I am reaching back to him. That inequality is the border. It is not a line and not a wall. It is the one-way flow of a language into its children, recognizable a long way back toward the source and not at all forward into a future that was never poured into the ancestor.

After the seeing, the result named once.

The diachronic border is a gradient, not a wall. The lateral border of the failed greeting has a temporal twin, and it is not a clean line but a graded zone of thinning. A field of address extends along time and its continuity fades by degrees: near at hand it is fully one's own; further back it is one's own with effort, as a modern reads Boccaccio; further still it thins to a tongue in which one catches roots and the bones of grammar while unable to inhabit the whole, as a modern reads Cicero; and only far out does it pass into what shows nothing of one's own, as the foreigner's tongue did. The greeting lands while the field is near, lands haltingly through the middle stretch, and fails at the far reach. The image of a river entering the sea through a long brackish lagoon holds the gradient in one picture, and the border with the ancestor is the steep end of that fading, not the wall the foreigner was.

The gradient is reckoned from where the speaker stands. The border is not fixed on the timeline but measured from the speaker, and from how much of the ancestor his own tongue still holds alive. Cicero stands nearer to Boccaccio than to the modern, in centuries and in tongue both, Boccaccio's volgare carrying more of Latin alive within it, his long architectural period closer to the Ciceronian sentence than modern narrative is. The same Cicero stands at different removes for different descendants, each at a different point on the descent with a different measure of him in his own speech.

The border is proved by the directionality of the trace. A doubter may grant the fading and deny the border, calling it mere decreasing convenience. The answer is to reverse the direction of travel. The modern reaching back to Cicero finds much of Cicero in himself, because Latin flowed down into Italian and the descendant is built partly of the ancestor. But Cicero brought forward, set in Boccaccio's market, finds almost nothing, because the developments that made the descendant out of the ancestor are downstream of him, not in him and unable to be, since he is finished before they occur. The difficulty is therefore not symmetric: the descendant half-reaches the ancestor while the ancestor cannot reach the descendant. A symmetric fade would be mere convenience; this marked asymmetry is a structural fact about which way the language flowed, and a one-way structural fact is what a border is. The border is not the difficulty but the asymmetry of the difficulty.

The diachronic border is the one-way border of the bones, seen along a line of descent. The ancestral field deposits itself forward into the descendant, who therefore carries the ancestor within him and can look back and find him dimly; nothing of the descendant deposits backward into the ancestor, sealed before the descendant exists. This is the same one-way border disclosed in the death and rebirth of tongues, where the storable bones cross forward and never backward and the dead world never returns; there it was seen across a death, here within a single continuous line of descent.

The lateral border is likewise a gradient. What holds along time holds across space. The foreigner whose greeting met a blank stood far out, where nothing of one's tongue shows; a cousin tongue, a Spaniard or a Romanian, would have stood in the middle, half understood, roots caught and sentences lost. The wall felt with the foreigner was the far end of the same grading. The one difference is that the temporal gradient has a direction the lateral one need not, for descent runs one way in time while kinship across space fades outward in every direction at once.

The tier. This figure stands nearer the pure figures than the other historical movements. Its core is available without specialist erudition: that a modern reads the old writers of his own tongue as his language stretched back, with effort, while catching the ancient ancestor only in roots and fragments, and above all that an ancient brought forward could not function in the speech of his own descendants, more lost than they are reaching back to him, are things a reader can feel and test rather than facts he must be given. It is therefore close to a figure in the sand, the diachronic twin of the lateral border, disclosing the graded and directional border along time on which the later consolidations rely.

Chapter 12. What the Greeting Rides On

GUGLIELMO. The last figure sent me back along the field and found where it thins. This one keeps the field and strips away everything around it, to see what the greeting was resting on all along. So let me reverse the last journey. Instead of travelling back to Boccaccio, I bring Boccaccio forward, here, into our world, the streets and the screens and the machines. Before we ask whether he and I can speak, tell me what you think understanding him will require.

FRIDRIK. Shared ground, surely. To understand each other you need something in common, a common world, or at least a common stock of knowledge, the history that runs between you. That is how it always works. I understand my neighbor because we share a world. I understand a foreigner if we can find some shared reference. So for Boccaccio and you to understand each other, you would need to share a world, or he would need to know the history that leads from his time to yours, so the two of you have common ground to stand on.

GUGLIELMO. That is the natural belief and let us test it against the man in front of us. Boccaccio, here, now. Does he share our world?

FRIDRIK. No, plainly not. His world is six hundred years dead. The machines terrify him, the lights, the speed, the towers. Nothing he reaches for is here. And worse than the foreigner, who at least lives in the same century as the one he meets, Boccaccio's whole world is simply gone. He shares none of our world.

GUGLIELMO. Does he hold the history between us, the record of the centuries from his time to ours, the common stock of knowledge you said understanding needs?

FRIDRIK. No, and this is the strange part, sharper than the lost world. When I travelled back to him, I carried the whole record forward, I knew his century and every century since, I could place him. He carries none of it forward. Everything after his year is blank to him, because it had not happened, it was pressed into a record written after he died. So he arrives with no shared world and no shared history. By what I said a moment ago, understanding should be impossible. The two of you have no common ground at all.

GUGLIELMO. And yet. Put us in a room. I say my buongiorno. He is bewildered by everything around him, he cannot place a single object, he is more lost than any foreigner. But when I speak to him, what happens?

FRIDRIK. He understands you. Haltingly, the words strange, the spelling of his answer stranger, but he understands, and he answers, and you understand him. The greeting lands. It lands between a man of now and a man of six centuries gone who share no world and no history whatever. That should not be possible by anything I believed walking in, and it happens anyway.

GUGLIELMO. It happens, and we should be exact about why it can, because the last figure already told us. Six hundred years is not the border. Boccaccio stands in water still fresh enough to drink, within the one field of Italian, not across the wall the foreigner was. So of course the greeting can reach him, haltingly, with effort, as it could not have reached the Iclander at all. The question this figure asks is not whether it reaches, the last figure settled that, but what it is resting on when it does. The greeting landed. It did not land on a shared world, because he has none of ours and we have none of his. It did not land on shared history, on the common stock of knowledge, because he holds nothing of the centuries between. On what, then, did it land?

FRIDRIK. On the language. On the field of Italian itself, which holds him and you, continuous from his century to yours, whatever either of you knows or does not know of the other's world. He is far upstream and you far downstream, but on the one river, and the river carries the greeting between you. The understanding rode on the field's continuity, and on nothing else, because everything else, the world, the history, the shared context I was so sure of, was gone, and the greeting landed regardless.

GUGLIELMO. Hold that, because it is the whole of this figure and it is easy to let slip back into the comfortable belief. We are taught that to understand one another we must share a world, or share a context, build common ground. And here are two men with no common world, no common context, no shared stock of knowledge, separated by everything six centuries can put between two people, and they understand each other, because they stand on one continuous field of address. The field carries the understanding. The shared world does not, the shared history does not, because both are absent and the understanding is present.

FRIDRIK. But let me resist, because I gave in too fast once before. Surely some context comes with the language itself. When Boccaccio and you share Italian, do you not thereby share something of a world, the things the words are about? A tongue is not an empty pipe; it is soaked in the world of those who speak it. So perhaps the field is just a thin shared world after all, and you have not escaped common ground, only found a little of it.

GUGLIELMO. A fair resistance, and the right one, so let us see exactly how much it amounts to, because the answer is the heart of the figure. The words carry their senses, yes, and to that extent we share what any two speakers of a tongue share. But test it where it counts. I say to Boccaccio, the train was late. He has the words was and late, and he had no train, no notion of one. I say, I saw it on the screen. He has saw and on and the grammar, and no screen at all. The sentences reach him as sentences and their world does not reach him. He receives that I have addressed him, that I have told him something, that an answer is wanted of him. The matter of it, the world the words point into, is dark to him. So what the shared field gives is not a shared world, not even a thin one. It is something thinner than a world and deeper than one: the bare standing-together in one tongue such that address lands as address and an answer is owed, even when the content of the address points into a world the other cannot enter.

FRIDRIK. So the field gives the address and not the world. He knows he is greeted, knows he is being told something, knows he is to answer, and does not know what about. The greeting lands as a greeting even when its cargo is lost. What survives across the six centuries, stripped of world and stripped of history, is the bare being-able-to-be-addressed-and-answer, between two who stand on the one field.

GUGLIELMO. And now you have walked back into the deepest thing in the whole inquiry, by another road. The bare being-able-to-be-addressed-and-answer. Where have we met that before?

FRIDRIK. With the cat. The thing the cat could not be, a member of a field of address, one who can be greeted and greet back, held to a word. The cat had the world, the warmth, the gaze, and not that bare membership. And here is Boccaccio, who has lost the world, lost the history, lost everything the cat had of shared life with us, and he keeps the one thing the cat could never have, the answerable membership, because he stands on the continuous field and the cat stood on none. So the thing that survives the stripping is exactly the floor, the answerable co-membership, carried across six centuries on the field's continuity alone.

GUGLIELMO. That is it, and see what the figure has shown by subtraction. Take a man and strip away his shared world, gone. Strip away the history between, never poured into him. Strip away the content of what is said, dark to him. What is left, and still carries the greeting, is the membership in the field, the standing-together such that address lands and answer is owed. The greeting never rode on the world or the history. It rode on that, the whole time, and we only see it now because we have taken everything else away and the greeting still lands.

FRIDRIK. So the field's continuity is its own thing, resting on neither the world nor the record. The last figure showed the field reaches along time as a graded, one-way border. This one shows what that reaching carries, and it is not shared world and not shared history but the bare answerable membership, the floor, holding across the centuries on the continuity of the field and nothing besides.

GUGLIELMO. You came in certain that understanding needs common ground, a shared world or a shared history. You leave having watched two men understand each other with neither, across six hundred years, because they stand on one field, and having found that what the field carries them is not a world and not a record but the bare power to address and be answered, the same membership a cat can never have and two enemies of no common world still share. The greeting rides on the field, and the field rides on nothing but its own continuity.

After the seeing, the result named once.

The question, and what does not bear the understanding. The previous figure asked how far a field reaches along time and found a graded, directional border; this figure asks what the greeting that does land across time is resting on, and answers by subtraction. The common belief is that to understand one another two persons must share a world, or at least a common stock of knowledge. The forward traveller refutes it. Boccaccio brought into the present shares none of the present world, his own six centuries dead, and holds none of the history between, recorded after him and never poured into him; he is worse placed than any foreigner, who at least shares a century with the one he meets. And the greeting lands, haltingly and really, because, as the prior figure established, six hundred years is fresh water and not the wall, so the two stand on one continuous field. The shared world does not carry the understanding and the shared history does not, since both are absent while the understanding is present. The field's continuity carries it, and nothing else does.

What the field gives is the address, not the world. The resistance, that sharing a tongue is already sharing something of a world, measures to little. The words carry their senses, but the world the words point into does not cross: the sentence reaches the forward traveller as a sentence whose cargo is dark to him, the train and the screen being things he cannot enter. What the shared field gives is therefore not a shared world, not even a thin one, but the bare standing-together in one tongue such that address lands as address and an answer is owed, even when the content points into a world the other cannot reach. The greeting lands as a greeting when its cargo is lost.

What survives the stripping is the floor. Strip from the forward traveller his shared world, the history between, and the content of what is said, and what remains and still carries the greeting is the bare being-able-to-be-addressed-and-answer, membership in the field of address. This is the floor disclosed by the cat and laid bare by the first encounter, the co-membership in answerable disclosedness, here shown to persist across six centuries on the field's continuity alone. The cat had the world and the warmth and the gaze and not the membership; the forward traveller has lost all the shared life the cat had and keeps the membership, because he stands on the continuous field and the cat stood on none. The figure isolates by subtraction the same floor the others isolate by contrast, and shows it borne through time by the field's continuity and by neither world nor record.

The place in the proof, and the tier. This figure does not separate the field from the world, which is the work of the convergent case and the first encounter; it establishes that the field's continuity is independent of both the disclosed world and the historical record, since the greeting lands when both are gone. That independence is the premise the two-strata proof draws on from the temporal side. The figure stands near the pure figures: that a man of long ago, brought among us knowing nothing of our world or our history, could still be greeted and answer is a thing a reader can imagine and feel, and the subtraction needs no learning, only the willingness to take away each support in turn and see what still bears the greeting. It leans only on the light knowledge that a living tongue is continuous with its own older stages.

Chapter 13. The First Encounter: The Floor Beneath the Worlds

GUGLIELMO. We have shown the world and the field are two. I will not ask you to show it again. This last case asks the question the cat opened and left open. The cat marked a floor, the bare being able to be addressed and answer, and we said the cat could not stand on it, and we said we did not yet know what the floor holds. To find out we need two peoples who share that floor and share almost nothing built on top of it, so the floor shows alone. The first meeting of the old world and the new is that case. But tell me first the story you carry about it.

FRIDRIK. The story I carry is conquest. Europe arrived in the Americas as a conqueror, with the sword and the cross and the hunger for gold, and crushed the peoples it found. From the first sail on the horizon it was invasion. That is what the meeting of the two worlds was, a conquest, beginning to end.

GUGLIELMO. That is the story, and the end of it is true and terrible, and I will not let us lose that. But the beginning was not the end, and the beginning is what we need, because the floor shows itself there, in the first hours, before anything is built. So let us go to a real morning. December, fourteen ninety-two, the northern coast of the island the Taíno lived on, the one we now divide into two countries. Columbus has crossed an ocean no one knew could be crossed to a world he does not know exists, thinking he is off the coast of Asia. The Taíno have lived in their world a thousand years and have no notion that another world exists at all. Two peoples, each of whom does not know the other's world is possible, meet on a beach. One of the first of them Columbus sets eyes on is a girl, wearing nothing but a small ornament of gold in her nose. Begin there. What do the two of them share?

FRIDRIK. Nothing. Less than nothing, less than I have ever been asked to imagine. The Iclander and I at least shared a century, a continent, the knowledge that other peoples and tongues existed. These two do not even share that. Columbus does not know her world can be. She does not know his can be. No common tongue, no common world, no common history, not even the common knowledge that the other kind of person is out there. If ever two human beings stood with nothing between them, it is these two on that beach.

GUGLIELMO. And yet. Watch what happens, because it is documented. But mark at once whose document it is, because the whole reading depends on it and the book must not hide it. What we have of that morning is Columbus's own log, and not even in his own hand, for the original is lost and what survives is an abstract made a generation later by a churchman, Las Casas, with purposes of his own. The Taíno wrote nothing of that day; they left no log of their morning. So we are reading the first meeting of two worlds through the eyes and the interests of one of them, copied again by a third. We will keep that in view and claim nothing the one-sided record cannot bear. With the warning kept, look at what even this account, the conqueror's own, cannot help setting down. Does he treat her as he would treat a strange animal on the shore, a thing of the island's fauna? Does she flee him as she would flee a beast?

FRIDRIK. No. By your setting it up this way I can see she does not, and he does not. They take each other, at once, for persons. He sees a girl, a someone, not a creature. Whatever he will later do, in that first moment he reads her as one of his own kind in the sense that matters, one who could be approached, addressed, met. And on her side, I am reading her from what the record says she did, not from any word of her own, which we do not have. But what she did was not to run as from an animal. So I take it, carefully, that she too met him as a someone, strange beyond strangeness, but a someone.

GUGLIELMO. Read carefully, as you say, and notice the strength it gives you rather than the weakness. The record is the conqueror's, written to justify himself, and even so it cannot help recording that he met them as parties and not as game. A hostile witness conceding the very thing he had no interest in conceding is the firmest witness there is. So go on. Within days, up and down that coast, what do these peoples who share nothing begin to do with one another?

FRIDRIK. They trade. I know this part. The Taíno bring gold, cotton, parrots, and the Spaniards give them little things, glass beads and hawk's bells, the small bells you put on a hawk, and both sides go away pleased. They haggle, they exchange, they coordinate, with no shared tongue and no shared world, by signs and holding-up of goods. The log even says the trading was carried on with good will. So they manage to do something together, elaborately, on the first morning of two worlds, sharing nothing.

GUGLIELMO. That coordination, the acting-together that works while the worlds do not meet, you have seen before. Where?

FRIDRIK. With the Icelandic, the shared world without the shared field, pointing and getting by. And with convergence, coordination as the thing a shared world gives that is not a shared field. Here it is starker than either, because here there is neither shared world nor shared field nor even the knowledge that the other exists, and still they coordinate, still they trade gold for bells. The coordination runs across an absolute gap.

GUGLIELMO. So the worlds do not meet and the fields do not meet, and these two peoples share neither. And now the question the whole case exists to ask. With no shared world, no shared field, not even the shared knowledge that the other is possible, is there anything at all between them? Or are they to each other as the walker is to the stone?

FRIDRIK. Not as the walker to the stone, and I feel it before I can say why. They are not nothing to each other. They trade, and a trade is an agreement, and an agreement expects to be kept. They are pleased and they could be cheated, and to be cheated you must first have trusted, which you cannot do with a stone. They take each other for the kind of being you can deal with, make a bargain with, be angry at for breaking it. From the first morning, sharing nothing, they recognize each other as ones who can be addressed and who answer. There is something under the absolute gap, and it was there in the first hour.

GUGLIELMO. Name it as narrowly as you can, because it is the floor, and the floor is narrow.

FRIDRIK. It is the bare recognition of the other as one who can be addressed and can answer, and be held to the answer. Not a shared world, they have none. Not a shared field, no common tongue. Not even foreknowledge of each other, they had none. Just this, that each takes the other for a someone who can be met, dealt with, greeted, a possible party to an exchange and a bargain. It is what the cat could not be. The cat could not strike a bargain, could not be cheated, could not be trusted or betrayed. These two peoples, who share less than I share with my cat, are parties to each other from the first hour, and the cat in my house can never be a party to me. They stand on the floor together, the floor the cat could not reach, and on that first beach they stand on almost nothing else.

GUGLIELMO. That is the floor given its content, and you have found it where alone it can be found, at the first instant, before anything is built on it. The cat showed you that there is a floor and that it is narrow, by lacking it. The conquest you came in with showed you nothing, because by then everything was built, the forts, the tribute, the killing, and the floor was buried under all of it. Here, on the first morning, the floor is bare. Nothing is built yet. And what is on it is just this, the mutual recognition of the other as an answerable one, a possible party, a someone who can be held to a word, present in the first hour of two worlds that share nothing else.

FRIDRIK. So the floor is not built out of a shared world, since they share none, nor out of a shared field, since they share none, nor even out of knowing the other exists, since neither did. It is under all of that. It is what lets two peoples with nothing in common be parties to one another rather than forces of nature to one another, from the first instant they lay eyes on each other.

GUGLIELMO. And now the hardest thing in the whole book, and I will not let you blur it, because the story you walked in with will try to come back. Look at the gold. To the girl, the gold in her nose is an ornament, a thing of her world, worn and given and meaning what it means among her people. To Columbus, that same gold is the reason he crossed the ocean, the promise of empires, and the moment he sees it on her he is already dreaming of the mines inland, the riches he will carry home. The same metal, on the same morning, on the same girl, is two utterly different things in the two worlds. Tell me what that is, in our terms.

FRIDRIK. It is the worlds failing to meet even as they trade. The gold passes between them, they coordinate over it perfectly, and what it means could not be more different on the two sides. To her, ornament. To him, empire. They share the act of exchange and they do not share the world the gold lives in. It is the deed signed into two different worlds, the same outward thing and two different things underneath, and the gold is the very place I can see both at once, the coordination succeeding and the worlds not meeting.

GUGLIELMO. And now follow the gold forward, because it is the hinge, and on it turns the thing you must hold without blurring. On the first morning the gold is wonder, traded with good will for little bells. Within two years, what is the gold?

FRIDRIK. It is the instrument of destruction. I know where this goes. The same hawk's bell that was traded in wonder on the first morning becomes the measure of tribute, every Taíno made to fill a hawk's bell with gold dust on pain of punishment. The gold that was an ornament in a girl's nose becomes forced labor and famine and the near annihilation of her people. And the fort he leaves, La Navidad, built from the timbers of his wrecked ship on that first Christmas, the thirty-nine men he leaves in it, by the time he returns the next year it is burned to the ground and every man is dead, because they had begun seizing the gold and the women. The first violence is already there in the first year, inside the first peace.

GUGLIELMO. So hold both, because the book depends on it. Was the first morning a conquest?

FRIDRIK. No. The first morning was wonder and a girl with a gold nose and trading trinkets with good will, two worlds meeting as ones who could be addressed, the floor showing itself bare before anything was built. And yet I must not say simply that the conquest came after, as though a spotless peace ran for years and was broken only later, because that is not what happened, and you have taught me not to tidy what showed. The wrong was braided into the first weeks. The same hands that traded with good will were already appraising the people for their use, and on that same coast, the record says, a young woman was seized for her gold and taken against her will. So the honest thing to say is finer. The first misunderstanding, the gold meaning ornament to her and empire to him, was honest, a real mismatch of two worlds that genuinely did not meet, not yet a lie. That mismatch is not the crime, and it never becomes the crime. The crime is the withdrawal of forbearance, the taking of the recognition that had been given and the trampling of it, which made the bargain a fraud and the bells a tribute and the trade a theft. And the two were not two years apart; the mismatch and the first withdrawal of forbearance were intertwined from early on, the wonder and the seizing in the same season. What the years did was not begin the wrong but widen it, from the seizing of one to the tribute laid on all. The mismatch is not the crime. The breaking of the recognized floor is the crime. And the crime was possible only because the floor was real, because you can only betray one whom you first recognized as a party. The Taíno could be betrayed, and were, and a stone cannot be betrayed. The floor that made the trading possible on the first morning is the same floor that made the betrayal possible, early and late alike.

GUGLIELMO. That is exactly right, and it is the law of answerability at the largest scale and the most terrible. The floor is the bare co-membership, the recognition of the other as one who could answer and be answered to. On it, faith becomes possible, and so does betrayal, which is broken faith. The world never acts and the field never acts. Only persons act, and only persons keep faith or break it, and they can do either only with one they stand with on the floor. The first encounter is the floor laid bare, shared by two worlds that share nothing else, on the first morning, in wonder. And then it is the floor honored in the trading and violated in the seizing and the tribute and the killing, and both the honoring and the violating prove the floor was there, because neither is possible toward a stone.

FRIDRIK. So the case has given the floor its content and shown it underlies everything, the world and the field both, by showing it bare at the first instant before either was shared. And it has done it without making the conquest innocent, because the floor is precisely what the wrong consisted in violating.

GUGLIELMO. I will not tidy it. You came in with a story of conquest from the first sail, and you leave knowing the first sail was not yet the conquest, that two peoples who shared nothing, not even the knowledge of each other, recognized each other at once as someones who could be met and dealt with, and stood together on the bare floor of answerable recognition. That recognition was real, and the wonder was real, and neither is undone by what stood beside them from the first weeks, the appraising gaze and the seizing, which were already the withdrawal of forbearance and not the mere mismatch of two worlds. So you leave holding two things at once and confusing neither: that the floor was genuinely laid bare in the trading, and that the breaking of it was braided into the same season, early and not only late. The wrong of the conquest was never a failure to recognize each other, for they did recognize each other; it was the breaking, by the strong, of a floor they themselves had stood on in the first hour, a breaking that began early and widened into the tribute and the killing. The floor the cat could not reach is the floor two worlds shared on a beach before they had a single word in common. That is what it holds, and that is how far beneath everything it lies, and that is why its violation, early or late, is the crime that it is.

After the seeing, the result named once, and marked as the second pillar and the close of the two-strata proof.

The work of this pillar, and why the first instant. The first pillar, convergence, forced world and field apart; this pillar does not repeat that, but descends to the floor the cat marked, the bare co-membership in answerable disclosedness, and gives it content by exhibiting two peoples who share that floor and almost nothing built upon it. The cat could show only that there is a floor and that it is narrow, since with the cat the floor was absent and only its absence appeared. The first encounter shows the floor present while world and field are both absent, and present at the first instant before anything is built upon it, so the floor stands alone. This is why it must be the first morning and not the conquest: by the time of the forts and the tribute the floor is buried under structure, and only at the absolute first instant, two peoples meeting who did not know the other's world was possible, sharing no tongue, no world, no history, not even foreknowledge of each other, is it stripped of everything built upon it.

The content of the floor, and the gold. Beneath the coordination, the trading of gold and cotton and parrots for beads and bells carried on with good will, the two are parties to one another: they strike bargains, expect them kept, could trust and so could be cheated, take each other for the kind of being one can deal with and be angry at for breaking faith. This bare mutual recognition of the other as an answerable one is the floor, shown here to underlie world and field both, since it is present when neither is shared, and it is what the cat could not reach. The gold is the perimeter deformation in the scene: the same metal is an ornament in her world and the key to empire in his, and they coordinate over it perfectly while not sharing the world it lives in, the same outward exchange and two different acts beneath. And the gold is the hinge, for what is wonder on the first morning becomes within two years the instrument of subjugation, the hawk's bell traded in good will becoming the bell each Taíno is forced to fill with gold dust.

Mismatch and wrong, and the withdrawal of forbearance. The encounter is symmetrical in disclosure and asymmetrical in power, and the two must be held apart. That the worlds genuinely failed to meet, so that the first misreading of the gold was honest mismatch and not deceit, is a fact about disclosure. That the stronger side then seized and enslaved and destroyed is a fact about power and broken faith. The symmetry of disclosure is no exculpation, because the wrong did not lie in the mismatch but in the breaking of the recognized floor. Read at the finer grain of the first law, the wrong is the withdrawal of forbearance: not the absence of regard, since the trade was a thin regard, each taking the other as a party, but the closing of the other's answering while still seeing him as a someone, regard kept and forbearance withdrawn. To seize a person for her gold, and later to levy tribute on a people known to be persons, is to keep them in view as answerable and shut that answering down. Faith and betrayal are alike possible only on the floor, and the conquest both honored the floor in the trading and violated it, early and not only late, both proving the floor was there, since neither is possible toward a stone.

The standing readings, and where this parts from them. The meeting has two canonical readings as a crisis of the other, and the movement converges with each in part and parts at the locus of the wrong. Tzvetan Todorov, in *The Conquest of America*, reads the catastrophe as a failure of recognition, Columbus unable to read the other as a full subject; Stephen Greenblatt, in *Marvelous Possessions*, reads the European wonder not as innocent awe but as an instrument of appropriation. The movement grants the breakdown Todorov describes and the appropriation Greenblatt describes and locates the wrong elsewhere than either: not in a failure to recognize, since the trading shows recognition was given, and not in wonder as such, since the wonder was real, but in the withdrawal of forbearance. And against any romance of an innocent first morning, the decolonial objection in the line of Kirkpatrick Sale's *The Conquest of Paradise* must be granted: the appraising gaze and the first coercion are in the record at the landfall itself, which is why the claim is conceptual and not chronological, the honest mismatch and the withdrawal of forbearance distinguished in kind and intertwined in time. The generative phenomenology of homeworld and alienworld, which holds the two co-constituted with no neutral world behind them, is credited and used; the movement diverges only in that the encounter it describes is symmetrical in disclosure and the floor it uncovers a symmetrical mutual recognition, not a relation reckoned from one privileged home.

The two-strata proof, complete. World and field are two distinct strata, shown by convergence and corroborated by the figures of travel along time; and beneath them both lies the floor, the bare co-membership in answerable disclosedness, shown by this pillar to be present at the first instant of an encounter in which neither is shared. The strata stand in order: the floor at the base, the disclosed world and the articulated field above it. The proof needed both pillars, convergence to separate world from field, the first encounter to find the floor beneath both.

Factual record, verified against the scholarship. Columbus reached the northern coast of Hispaniola in early December 1492; the people were the Taíno. The first contact of the voyage was earlier, in October, in the islands of the Bahamas; the gold, the seized girl, and the trade this scene reads belong to the Hispaniola landfall of December. The first trade was of gold, cotton, and parrots for glass beads and hawk's bells, the cascabeles, recorded in the log as carried on with good will, de buena voluntad. On the twelfth of December the log records the seizing of a young woman who wore a gold ornament in her nose, taken aboard against her will, clothed, given beads and bells, and sent back. On Christmas the flagship Santa María ran aground; the cacique Guacanagarí aided the Spaniards; the fort La Navidad was built from her timbers and thirty-nine men left in it under Diego de Arana with orders to seek the gold, found dead and the fort burned on the return in November 1493. The tribute system, each Taíno of fourteen and over in the gold regions made to render a hawk's bell of gold dust, with a cotton substitute elsewhere and a token as proof of payment and mutilation for its lack, came with the subjugation of 1494 and 1495, recorded most fully by Las Casas in the *Historia de las Indias*. The record does not permit a clean sequence of pure peace broken only later: the same log that records the good will records, within the first weeks, the appraising gaze and the seizure of the twelfth of December, so coercion is at the landfall itself and the movement's claim is conceptual, not chronological. And the archive is one-sided, which the dialogue marks rather than hides: the log survives only through the abstract made by Bartolomé de las Casas, the original lost, so the voice on the record is Columbus's, mediated by a later hand with its own purposes, and the Taíno left no log of their own. The events and the log are read in the critical edition of Dunn and Kelley; the frameworks converged with and departed from are Todorov's, Greenblatt's, and, for the decolonial objection, the line of Kirkpatrick Sale. The reading of the morning as the laying bare of the floor is the book's own.

PART VI. CONSOLIDATION

Chapter 14. The Event of a World

Return to the first morning, before any of what came after. Two stand on the sand who have never seen each other or anything like each other, who share no word, no world, not even, until this hour, the knowledge that the other kind of person was in the world at all. One holds out little bells. The other brings gold. Something passes between them, a trade, in wonder, with good will. We watched this morning once already, to find the bare floor of recognition beneath it. Watch it again, more slowly, not for the floor but for what happens on it, because something comes to be that was not there before either walked onto the sand, and what it is, and how it is, is the whole of what the morning has to teach.

FRIDRIK. I see two people trading. Each brought his own world to the beach, and they pass a few things across the gap between them. I do not see a happening, only an exchange.

GUGLIELMO. Count, then, because most of the chapter turns on the count. How many worlds are on the sand?

FRIDRIK. Two. His and hers. His was whole before he sailed: a crown behind him, a voyage he believes is providential, gold that means wealth and empire, the metal kings are made of. Hers was whole before the sails appeared: the island, her kin, the ways of her people, gold that means an ornament, a soft bright thing for the nose. Two worlds, each entire without the other, each formed long before this morning, sharing nothing. That is why the gold is the first misunderstanding: empire to him, ornament to her, and neither yet knows the other's sense.

GUGLIELMO. Two whole worlds that share nothing. Now the trade, the bells going one way and the gold the other, the first gesture that means I give you this for that. Is that a piece of his world?

FRIDRIK. It is his, I think. Handing out beads to win the natives, that is a thing his world does, a thing explorers do. The trade is a scene from his country.

GUGLIELMO. Is it? In his world the bells are trinkets to scatter, not treasure weighed against a party who could refuse him. Does his world contain this, a girl who holds gold he wants and may decline to give it?

FRIDRIK. No. Put that way, no. His world has him handing bells to lesser men; it does not have him bargaining as an equal with one who could turn and walk off with the gold. So the trade is not quite his.

GUGLIELMO. Is it hers?

FRIDRIK. No. The bells are wonders to her, but giving gold for them, as an agreed exchange between two who face each other, is no scene from her island either. So the trade is in neither world. It is new. It is happening here, on the sand, between them, and it was in neither world before this morning.

GUGLIELMO. So count again.

FRIDRIK. Three. His, entire and prior. Hers, entire and prior. And a third, beginning now between them, the small common thing they are making, the first shared meaning of a held-up bell, a world that did not exist on either side until this hour and exists now only here. I missed it because it is so small, an embryo, the barest beginning of a world. But it is a third, and of a different kind, because the other two were already there and this one is being born.

GUGLIELMO. That third is what we are here to watch. The other two stand without this morning; set them aside. The new one stands on nothing but this morning. So what is it built on, since it cannot rest on a shared world, his and hers sharing none?

FRIDRIK. On the two of them. On their being here, facing each other, going on with it. Nothing holds it up but that they are doing it together, each taking the next gesture from the other.

GUGLIELMO. And their going on, what is in it? Suppose the girl could not do otherwise than continue, suppose she were wound up to trade and trade without the possibility of stopping. What is the man doing then?

FRIDRIK. Then he is working a mechanism, not trading. If she cannot break off, cannot decline the next bell, there is no one across from him, only a process he set going. The wonder drains out at once. A trade is a trade because the other could be done, could turn and walk up the beach.

GUGLIELMO. So the new world is built with one who could break off. But press the word, because it will mislead you. Say she does break off: turns, declines the next bell, walks up the beach. Is the world they were making simply gone?

FRIDRIK. Yes. She left; the trade is over; the between is finished.

GUGLIELMO. Finished, or continued in the manner of her leaving? When she turns, is the man left with nothing, or left with her turning?

FRIDRIK. Let me think before I answer, because I want to keep my first answer and I am not sure I can. He is left with her leaving. He reads it, is marked by it, wronged or puzzled or grieved by it. The world they were making now bears her departure as one of its events, a world in which she walked away. So the leaving did not exit the world. It became a happening of the world. I have seen this before, in the one who would not return the greeting: the withholding did not break the field but happened within it, and was answerable. The walking away is the same. It is hosted, not an exit.

GUGLIELMO. Then the freedom the new world is born with is not the freedom to leave, since leaving goes on within the being-with rather than ending it. What is it, if not the bare power to walk away?

FRIDRIK. Something deeper, of which the leaving is only the visible sign. It is that she is not the trade. She is in it, making it, and never merged with it, always on her side of it, other than it even as she builds it. The disconnection is not between her and him; they are with each other, that is the whole of what is happening. It is between her and the world they share, her never being only it. And his too: in the trade and not the trade, other than the common even as he builds it. The new world is born between two who are each also apart from it, each more than it.

GUGLIELMO. Return to the wound thing that could not break off. Why was it no one to trade with? You said because it could not stop. Was that the real reason?

FRIDRIK. No, that was the surface. The truer reason is that it had no apartness from the trade. It was the trade and only the trade, dissolved into the process, nothing standing back, no side, no one there other than the trading. A between needs two who are each in the middle and also on a side of it. The mechanism is all middle, all function, no side. It failed not because it was bound and could not leave but because it was merged, with no reserve from the world, no being-other-than-it.

GUGLIELMO. Then say what the world is in its very being, born together with two who are each in it and apart from it.

FRIDRIK. Forsakable. And the forsakability is not the threat that someone might walk off. It is constant, in every moment of the fullest trade, because the world lives only in two who are each more than it, each keeping a reserve from it. It is never the whole of either, so never secured, never a possession. The forsakability is the standing apartness of the two from the world being born between them, present in the deepest trading and not only when leaving threatens.

GUGLIELMO. Take that word, apartness, to its limit, the limit we met in the dying woman. The holding-back, the being-other-than-the-world while in it, has a far edge. What is it?

FRIDRIK. Her own death. We saw it there: the one thing the field could never take in, hers and no one else's, surviving the removal of every shared world. In the everyday she is other than the trade, keeps a reserve from it. In her death she is singularized out of every shared world, drawn into what is utterly her own, the possibility that suspends all her possibilities, the trade and the world and the whole field among them, in their becoming impossible. So the everyday apartness and the death are one thing at two reaches: the near form, the constant holding-apart; the far form, the death the shared world can never contain. The leaving that seemed the freedom is only a hosted event between them, neither the everyday apartness it dimly shows nor the death it cannot reach.

GUGLIELMO. You keep saying she is beyond the world, more than it, singular. What is that beyond on its own? Is she beyond in her own right, singular whether or not she ever meets anyone, so that the beyond is hers first and the shared world something she later enters and exceeds?

FRIDRIK. Yes, surely that way. The singular one is herself first, alone in her own being, and the meeting comes after. She was a someone before Columbus crossed the sea, complete, beyond any world she had not yet entered. The beyond is hers, and she brings it to the beach.

GUGLIELMO. Brings it from where? You say she is beyond. Beyond what, on the empty island, before the sails?

FRIDRIK. Beyond her own world, I suppose. Her island, her kin. She is more than them, apart from them, not merged even with her own people.

GUGLIELMO. Then the beyond is still a being-beyond-a-world, only her old one. It is not a beyond standing free of every world. Find me, if you can, the beyond that stands alone, with no world it exceeds, and tell me what you find.

FRIDRIK. I find nothing, and I see now why, though I held the other view a moment ago and held it firmly. To be beyond is to be beyond something; to be apart is to be apart from something. The being-beyond is not a thing standing on its own that is also, as an extra, transcendent; it is the transcendence itself, the exceeding, and an exceeding must be referred to what it exceeds. Take away every world she is in and there is nothing for her to be beyond, nothing she is more than, and the being-beyond does not appear at all. So it appears only in and against a shared world it exceeds, as the shared world is a between and not a fusion only by being exceeded. Neither comes first. Neither can be thought without the other.

GUGLIELMO. Press it to the one place it might break, the death, where the singular seems most alone and most prior to every world.

FRIDRIK. There it must stand alone, for the death is the most solitary thing, mine and no one else's. In dying I am cast out of every world, away from all I shared, utterly by myself.

GUGLIELMO. Cast out away from your possibilities, or back into them? When you face your death, do your ways of being in the world fall away as nothing to you, or do they become, for the first time, fully yours?

FRIDRIK. Back into them, when I follow it through. Being toward my death is not a casting of myself out into a void away from all my possibilities. It is a projection back into them, which become, in that facing, mine, owned, the ones I have to be, made mine through the one possibility that is their impossibility. And what are those possibilities? My ways of being in worlds with others, my being-with. So the death is the owned impossibility of my world-possibilities themselves, the disclosure that makes my being-in-shared-worlds mine and finite by being its impossibility. The death is not away from the shared world; it is of it. The singular is not opposed to the shared at the last; the singular is the owned finitude of the shared. So it is total, at every reach: the being-beyond and the shared world are one event seen from two sides, neither thinkable without the other.

GUGLIELMO. Come back down to the sand, to the trade we left, and watch what passes in it. Not the bells and the gold as things changing hands. What is each doing with what the other does?

FRIDRIK. He holds out a bell. She does not receive it as a stone receives rain; she does something back, takes it or hesitates, offers gold or holds it, and what she does comes to him as a doing of hers, which he reads and meets, holding out another or waiting. She does the same with him, taking each move as his, as something that came from him and could have been otherwise, and answering it. So what passes between them is not bells and gold. It is move and response, each addressing the other and taking the other's move as an answer, as meant, as coming from a someone and not falling out of a process. They are answering each other. That is what the trade is, under the things that change hands: an exchange of answers.

GUGLIELMO. Could it be that, an exchange of answers, with the mechanism, or with a bored party who would trade if it amused him and walk off when it did not, nothing of his staked in it?

FRIDRIK. No, and now I see why, and it joins everything. With the mechanism there is only output, no response of anyone's, no one whose move it is. With the bored one there is the look of response and nothing of him in it, nothing meant, nothing at stake, nothing answered for. The girl answers and is answered because she is apart from the trade, a someone other than it, whose move is hers and could have been otherwise and is meant. So the answering rests on exactly the apartness we found. To answer is to address one who is apart, a someone and not the world-function, and to take her move as hers. The apartness and the answering are not two things found one after another. They are one. I called it freedom, then apartness, then transcendence; here in the move and the response, it is answerability. One recognition, and these are its names.

GUGLIELMO. You say she can be answered, can be addressed. Be careful you are not making it a property she carries, a quality like the color of her eyes that the trade then draws on. Is her addressability a feature of hers?

FRIDRIK. I was about to treat it so, and it is not. It is not a quality she has whether or not anyone comes. It is the live encounter itself, the happening of the addressing, here, between us. And the addressing and the being-addressed are not two but one possibility held between us, because I can address her only in being myself one she could address, an other to her as she is other to me. In recognizing her as an other I can turn to, I am already the other she could turn to; the recognition is reciprocal in the one act, mine of her and hers of me.

GUGLIELMO. And the addressing assumes what, of her, if not a property?

FRIDRIK. That she has an address, a locus, a where she is reached and from which she answers, which is hers. Not a place in the world, not a spot on the sand. The locus is the from of her possible vanishing from the between, the point from which the shared could be left into what is hers alone, her apartness, her transcendence, at its far edge her death. That is why the worldless thing could not be addressed: it had no such locus, no from-of-vanishing that was its own. To address her is to turn toward an owned locus that is the from of her possible vanishing.

GUGLIELMO. You have it from the structure. Now say how it comes to him in the living of the morning, before he has any of these words. How does the other first come to him at all?

FRIDRIK. She pops. That is the plainest way to say it. He is already in the world, absorbed in its possibilities, the trade, the bells, the gold, what can be done here, what comes next, not noticing himself being in it, simply taken up in what the morning affords. And against that, she pops, stands out, comes forward, as the one thing in the scene that is not simply among the possibilities he is in. And I see why she pops, exactly. She pops because he is already in the possibilities of the shared world, and she escapes them. She is not one more affordance he is immersed in; she is what those possibilities do not contain, what exceeds them. The bell is in his possibilities, the gold is, the beach is. She is not, because her possibilities are hers, owned by her, not among his. That escaping is her popping. So the popping is not an extra fact added to her addressability; it is how her addressability first comes to him, how her from-of-vanishing shows in the living, before any words.

GUGLIELMO. Be exact about how she stands out, because there are two ways one could tell this and only one is what you saw. Did she pop by flooding him, too much arriving at once, a brightness he cannot take in and goes under before? Or by some other measure?

FRIDRIK. Not by flooding. She is not too much for him, an excess he drowns in. If anything she is too far, not too near. She stands out by escaping his possibilities, by being out of his reach, not by overwhelming them. It is a suspension, the world's hold going slack at the one point where she is, and not a flood. The mood of it is the mood of the unreachable, not of the unbearable.

GUGLIELMO. And does she stand above him, set higher, so that the recognition runs one way, from him up to her?

FRIDRIK. No. It runs both ways in the one act. I said it already: I address her only in being one she could address. Her standing-out and mine are the same possibility, reciprocal. She is not higher; she is other, as I am other to her. The popping is always the other's, hers to me and mine to her, but neither of us is set above the other. The apartness is level, two who are each beyond the world they make, and not one lifted over the other.

GUGLIELMO. Here is a place to be careful, because there are two ways to be other than the world one makes, and only one is what we are seeing. Take the bored party again, apart from the trade, other than it, nothing of his staked in it. He too is not merged with the trade. Is his apartness the same as the girl's?

FRIDRIK. No, and the difference is everything. The bored one is apart by standing above the trade, holding it loosely, disposing of it, nothing of his in it. The girl is apart in the opposite way. She is not above it. She wants the bells, gives the gold with good will, is in it, something of hers staked in the small world they are making, and she could lose it. Her apartness is the apartness of one who is in the thing and could lose it, not of one who hovers over it and could drop it. So there are two ways to be other than the world one makes, and they are opposite: the indifference of one who risks nothing, whom you could not call a party to a meeting, because nothing of him is there to meet; and the apartness of one who has staked herself in the new world, holds it as hers though it is not her old world, and could lose it. The second is the one the morning is made of. The apartness and the stake are the same thing. She is other than the world not because it is nothing to her but because it is something to her that she could lose, something she has and is not.

GUGLIELMO. So you have come back, from inside, to the floor we found long ago by taking the cat away and watching the greeting fail. How does it stand now?

FRIDRIK. Then we reached it from the outside, by removal: only some beings are met as ones who could answer, the cat falling away, the failed greeting showing the floor by breaking on it. We named it the bare being-able-to-be-addressed-and-answer and left it as the floor. Now I have it from within. That floor is not a layer beneath the encounter that the encounter then builds on. It is the recognition of the other as one apart, other than the world, owned and finite, and so as one who can be answered, which is the same recognition as the making of the world between us. There is not first a floor and then a world raised on it. The recognizing of the other as answerable and the being-born of the shared world are one event, the same happening seen close and seen wide. The world beginning between us is my recognizing her, and my recognizing her is the world beginning. The floor and the world are one event at two grains.

GUGLIELMO. Gather the morning, then, and add nothing that was not on the sand.

FRIDRIK. Three worlds. His, whole and prior. Hers, whole and prior. And the new one, born between them, owned by neither before this hour, resting on nothing but their recognition of each other as ones who are each other than it, in it and not merged with it. It manifests, from its birth, as forsakable, because it is held by nothing but two who are each more than it, never wholly in it, each keeping a reserve from it that reaches at its far edge to the death in which each is singular and beyond every shared world. And the apartness that builds it is owned and finite, each staked in the new world as his own and losable, not hovering above it indifferent. None of this was added by us; it was on the sand from the first gesture. The trade I took for two worlds exchanging across a gap was the birth of a third, a world that is an event, happening between them, holding only as long as they hold it, forsakable because it is held by ones who transcend it.

GUGLIELMO. And now you can read forward into the ruin without softening it, because you have the morning right. What was the conquest, in these terms?

FRIDRIK. The breaking of the third world by the first. The new world born in the trade, the gold given and the bells received in good faith, was real, and forsakable, and it was betrayed when the man's own prior world, the gold that means empire, reached in and crushed the small common world made between them, turned the trade into tribute, the bells into a measure of gold owed on pain of death. The wrong was not that they failed to recognize each other; they did recognize each other, the new world was real, and that is why it could be broken. The wrong was that the stronger let his old world destroy the new one they had stood up together. And the new world could be destroyed because it was forsakable, and it was forsakable because it was made in freedom, by two who could each let it go. The same freedom that let the world be born is the freedom in which it could be killed. A thing that could not be forsaken could not be betrayed; a stone cannot be betrayed; the new world on the sand could be, and was.

GUGLIELMO. You came in seeing two worlds trade across a gap. You leave having watched a third world be born between them, a world that is an event and not a thing, made of nothing but their recognizing each other as ones who are each other than it. The first morning was the event of a world, and the conquest was the killing of that world by one of the old ones, possible only because the new world was real and forsakable and could be lost.

After the seeing, the result named once, and marked as the conceptual heart of the consolidation.

One level: the being-with is event. The deepest claim of the figure is that the being-with is not a standing condition an encounter then actualizes, but the event itself, with the way of being of an event: happening of itself, and able not to have happened. The counting of three worlds secures this. Were the shared world the overlap of the two prior worlds, it would rest on them as on a standing ground, the bringing-to-act of a compatibility already latent, which is two levels, a reserve and its realization. The new world is owned by neither prior world and rests on no shared ground, because there is none; it is built from nothing common in the recognition itself. So it is event all the way down, and the recognition is not a cognition performed inside an encounter already standing. The order of the walk is an order of noticing what was whole in the one morning, not an order of construction.

The apartness, owned and finite, and death as the field's transcendence. The freedom the new world is born with is not the freedom to leave, since leaving does not end the being-with but continues it as a hosted event, the withholding already shown in the failed greeting. It is the deeper apartness of each person from the world they make: in it and not identical with it, never merged into the middle, on a side of the between. This apartness is the being-possible of each, in the finite-owning sense, and the disambiguation is load-bearing. Being-toward-death read as a projection away from all one's possibilities into a bare being-possible would make the apartness a sovereign standing-above, the indifference of the bored party who risks nothing and makes no being-with. The owning reading is taken: death is the projection back into one's possibilities owned as one's own and finite, the ones each has to be and could lose, and on this reading the apartness grounds the being-with instead of dissolving it. The apartness has a far edge, the death disclosed in the dying woman as the one thing the field cannot take in, surviving the removal of every shared world: not an event within the being-with, since every such event is hosted, but the one exit, the singularization in which the person is drawn out of every shared world into what is utterly his own. The everyday apartness and the death are one structure at two reaches, the near form in which each is other than the world while making it, the limit form in which each is singular and beyond every world.

The co-constitution of the being-beyond and the shared world. Neither is prior; neither can be thought without the other. The shared world is shared, a between and not a fusion, only by being exceeded by two who are each beyond it; remove the being-beyond and there is no shared world, only a fusion or the mechanism. And the being-beyond appears only in and against a shared world it exceeds, because it is not a free-standing content that is also transcendent but the transcendence itself, and an exceeding requires the exceeded. This holds even at the limit, in death, where the singular seems most prior. By the owning reading, death is the projection back into one's possibilities as owned, made one's own through the one possibility that is their impossibility; but those possibilities are one's ways of being in worlds with others, one's being-with. So the death is of the shared world, not away from it: the singular is the owned finitude of the shared, not its opposite. The co-constitution is total at every reach, the being-beyond and the shared world one event seen from two sides, which keeps it consistent with the self-grounding of the event, since it is not a foundation-relation between two terms but the one event having two inseparable faces.

Apartness is answerability, and the exclusions are shown, not grounded. Brought back to the concrete trade, what passes between the two is not bells and gold but move and response, each addressing the other and taking the other's move as an answer, as meant, as coming from a someone. To be other than the world one makes, owned and finite, is the same as to be one who can be answered and who answers, because to answer is to address one who is apart, a someone and not the world-function, whose move is hers and could have been otherwise. So otherness, freedom-from-the-world, transcendence, and answerability are one recognition under several names, the "because" that joins them a structure seen and not an inference made. This is why the figure grounds answerability, the book's floor, rather than adding a theme: the apartness it discloses is what answerability is. The mechanism cannot be answered, all middle and no side; the bored party cannot be answered, his apartness empty, nothing of him staked. Neither is excluded for lacking a property: the being-with is the event, and it does not event with them, the exclusion shown by the event's not occurring, as the cat's was shown by the floor's not reaching it.

Addressability is the live encounter, not a property; the from-of-the-vanishing. Addressability is not a quality the other carries whether or not anyone comes, but the encounter itself, the happening of the addressing. The addressing and the being-addressed are one possibility held reciprocally, since one addresses the other only in being oneself an other she could address; the recognition is reciprocal in the one act. What the addressing assumes of the other is not a property but an address, a locus, a where she is reached and from which she answers, and this locus is not a place in the world but the from of her possible vanishing from the shared-between, the point from which the shared could be left into what is hers alone, which is her apartness, at its far edge her death. This is the positive form of what the worldless speaker lacked: it could not be addressed because it had no such locus. So the encounter is the reciprocal recognition together with the from-of-the-vanishing, and nothing else, no substance beneath, no third thing added.

The popping, in attunement, and the two partings. The structure has a face in lived experience: the other pops, stands out, against the ground of one's being-already-immersed in the world's possibilities, and pops precisely because she escapes them, being one whose possibilities are her own. This is asymmetric in the living and symmetric in structure: for each, the popping is always the other's. The popping is given in attunement, never as a neutral fact, and in two modes that are not more and less of one thing: where the world's hold is taut, the other is brought near, and the nearness is given as the joy of being-at-home with this one; where the hold is suspended, slack, the other is here and out of reach, and the farness is given as disquiet, a bounded and local kindred of the un-homeliness of dread, called up by a particular other and disclosing her owned locus rather than one's own thrownness. Because the popping is given in attunement and not as a magnitude, it is not the saturation of a phenomenon whose intuition exceeds its concept: that would be an excess, a too-much, the bedazzled and the unbearable, where the popping of the stranger is a suspension, a too-far, the world's hold going slack. And because the recognition is reciprocal in the one act, the other is not set above one in an asymmetry of height; the apartness is level, two who are each beyond the world they make. The other must be read in the finite-owning sense throughout: she escapes one's possibilities because she is another finite-owning being-possible whose possibilities are her own, not because she is an unknown or an obstacle.

The new world manifests as forsakable, and the event self-grounds. The new world does not first stand and then turn out to be losable; it comes to be, from its first instant, forsakable, because it is held by nothing but two who are each other than it, never wholly in it. The forsakability is not the threat that one might walk away, for walking away is a hosted event that continues the between; it is the standing apartness of the two from the world they make, present in the deepest trading and reaching at its far edge to the death in which each is singular. So forsakability is not a flaw that more securing would repair; it is the way the shared world is, a thing held only by ones who are never only it. And the precariousness is not a ground beneath the event but its character, given with what it is: the event grounds itself, happening of itself in the recognition, with nothing under it. To set the other's being-possible beneath the event as its foundation would be to raise a being into the ruling place, which the book refuses.

The tier. This figure stands among the pure figures in its means, though it opens the consolidation in its place. Its core is available without erudition: that two who share nothing can begin, in wonder, to make a small common thing between them, and that this thing is fragile because it hangs on both going on with it, can be seen on the sand without any learning. The being-possible and its finite-owning reading, the holding of death at the edge, the self-grounding of the event, sit here in the note and not in the seeing, where the morning discloses itself.

Chapter 15. The Edge of a World

We watched a world be born between two who shared none. Follow that world forward now, past its first morning, into what it becomes when it is carried not by two but by many, across the land they live on, over the years they live there. A world held by two on a beach is one thing; a world held by a whole people across a country, kept up every day by all of them at once, is the same thing grown vast and thick and old, and it has features the morning could not show. The first is that it spreads and becomes everywhere; the second is that where it stops there is an edge. Those two, the spreading and the edge, are what this chapter watches.

FRIDRIK. I am ready, though I do not yet see what a spreading world teaches that the two on the beach did not.

GUGLIELMO. Then start from yourself, in the plainest case. You have travelled, been in a country not your own, among a people whose world you did not share. What was it like in the first days, before you found your feet?

FRIDRIK. Hard, and in a particular way. Nothing was missing; everything was there, more than at home, a whole world running at full speed. It was that the world was theirs and not mine, and it was everywhere. Their way of greeting, of buying bread, of standing in a line or not, of knowing what a silence in a room meant, all of it was around me on every side, working, assumed by everyone, and I was the one who did not have it. I had to watch and copy and guess, align myself to a world already complete without me that did not pause for me. It overruled me by being everywhere. I could not set any of it aside, because there was no side; it was the whole air.

GUGLIELMO. Stay with that, the overruling by being everywhere. At home, on the beach, the other popped, stood out against the world you were already in. Abroad, who pops?

FRIDRIK. The locals, surely. They are the strangers to me, the ones I keep noticing, reading, trying to make out. They pop against me.

GUGLIELMO. Do they? You are the one watching and copying and guessing. You said their world is the air and you are the one who does not have it. When a man does not have the air everyone else breathes, who stands out, he or they?

FRIDRIK. I do. I see it, and it is the strange reversal. At home I am in my world and the other stands out against it. Abroad their world is the one already there, everywhere, the ground, and I am the figure, the one who does not fit, marked as not-from-here before I open my mouth. I pop, against their world. So the popping is not fixed to me or to them; it depends on whose world is the air. At home theirs pops against mine; abroad mine pops against theirs.

GUGLIELMO. And this world that is everywhere, that you had to align to, where is it? Point to it.

FRIDRIK. I cannot, and that is the thing. It is not the buildings, not the streets, not the land; those I could point to, and they are much like buildings and streets and land at home. The world I had to align to is how the people there are with one another, the whole common way they have, which rests on the ground and is not the ground.

GUGLIELMO. Then take an island I have in mind: one piece of land, one coast, one set of mountains, undivided in its rock. And on it two countries, two peoples, each with its own world, its own tongue, its own way of being together, a hard line between them. When you travel there, do you travel to the island?

FRIDRIK. No. I travel to the one country or the other, to the people on this side or that, to their world, not to the island. The island is one; what I travel to is two, because two peoples bear two worlds on the one island. So I was wrong to think place was the land. The place I travel to is the world a people shares, carried on the land and not the same as it. One island, one geography, two places, because two peoples, two shared worlds. I travel to the world of a population, never to the dirt.

GUGLIELMO. And the hard line between them. What is it? Is it a thing in the rock?

FRIDRIK. It cannot be in the rock, because the rock is one and runs under both sides the same. The line is where the one people's world stops and the other's begins, the edge of a world. On one side a whole way of being together is everywhere, overruling, the air; on the other side a different one is everywhere; and the border is where the first gives out and the second takes over. So it is not a feature of the land. It is the edge of an omnipresence, the place where one people's world thins to nothing and another's thickens, a fact about the worlds and not about the ground, even though it falls somewhere on the ground.

GUGLIELMO. Does it always give out sharply, one world stopping and the next beginning at a line?

FRIDRIK. No, now that I look. Sometimes it shades: there are stretches where the two worlds mingle, where the people near the edge share some of both, speak a little of each tongue, keep some of each way, and you cannot say at which step you crossed. And sometimes it is the hard line, where one world stops dead and the other begins at once, where even the look of the place changes at a single step. So the edge can shade or break, and which it is, is a fact about how the two worlds meet, not about the land.

GUGLIELMO. Now the harder thing: how a piece of land comes to carry such an edge at all. Take a river. Is a river a border?

FRIDRIK. Yes. Rivers are borders, the natural ones, the lines countries are drawn along. A wide river is a plain wall between one side and the other; of course it is a border.

GUGLIELMO. Most rivers are not borders, though. Think how many run through the middle of a country, the same people on both banks, the river a road and not a wall. Is the river a border there?

FRIDRIK. No. There it joins the two banks rather than dividing them. So a river is not a border in itself. But then I owe you why rivers become borders so often, because they do, all over the world, and not by chance.

GUGLIELMO. That is the thing to find. Why, if the river is only water?

FRIDRIK. Let me work it through. A people's world is kept up by their living together, the daily going-back-and-forth, the meeting and speaking and trading that remakes the common way each day and keeps it everywhere among them. That traffic runs easily across open land. But a wide river, a high range, is hard to cross; it slows the daily traffic, thins the meeting across it. So the common way is renewed strongly on each side and weakly across the divide, and on the far bank, cut off a little, a people's world drifts and sets on its own. In time the river is where one world has reached the limit of its easy spreading and another has set up across from it. The river did not divide them; it is where each world, spreading from its own side, failed to reach across, and so the two met there. The feature became a border by being where the spreading gives out. That is why rivers and mountains turn into borders so often: not because they are borders but because they are where the daily life that carries a world cannot easily pass.

GUGLIELMO. The feature turns into a border. Hold that, turns into, because it tells you the border was never in the feature. Now the proof from the other side. Can a feature that was a border stop being one?

FRIDRIK. It must, if the border was never in the feature but in the worlds. But give me a case; it is easier to see in one.

GUGLIELMO. There is a small river in the middle of one country, a stream you could wade. Long ago it was the gravest of borders. To bring an army across it was to do a thing past recall, to pass from a province into the homeland's inner ground where no army could lawfully stand, and the man who led an army across it knew he had done what could not be undone, and said so as he crossed. Crossing that little stream shook the world. Today the people of that country cross it without a thought, one of a thousand small streams, marked by nothing, of no weight at all. The water is the same water. What happened?

FRIDRIK. The world whose edge fell on it changed. When that stream was the gravest border, it was the edge of a whole order, the line of the inner homeland against the outer province, and to cross it under arms was to break into an omnipresent order everyone lived by, so the crossing carried the whole weight of that order. Then the order changed. The province and the homeland stopped being two grounds with that line between them and became one; the distinction the stream marked stopped being lived. And when the distinction lifted, the border lifted off the stream, which had not moved or shrunk, and left it plain water. So the same unchanged river was no border, then the gravest border, then no border again, while the water never changed. The border was never in the river; it was in the order whose edge fell there for a time and then lifted away. A border is not a thing the land has. It is the edge of a people's world; it comes onto a piece of land when that world's edge falls there, and leaves when the world changes, and the land is the same throughout. Borders are made and unmade with the worlds whose edges they are. They are not only lines across the land; they are passages in time, born and dying as the worlds are born and change.

GUGLIELMO. Carry it back, then, to the island, and to the morning we began from, and do not soften it.

FRIDRIK. On the island, the hard line between the two peoples is a border of just this kind, the edge of a world fallen on the land, not a fact of the rock. But this one I cannot leave as I leave the little stream, because of how it was made. Go back to the first morning, the two who began a world between them with no border anywhere, only the open beginning. What came after was not the quiet drift of two worlds reaching their limits on either side of a river. It was one world driven onto the other's land by force, made everywhere there by breaking the people whose world it had been, until the island carried the conqueror's world where the other's had stood. The border on that island is the edge of an imposed world, set not by the slow giving-out of daily life but by the breaking of a people. So a border can come to be in two ways, the same in structure and as far apart in worth as two things can be. It can settle softly where two worlds reach their limits, as on the river that shades. Or it can be cut by force into a land where a world was destroyed to make room, and stand hard and abrupt over the place of that destruction. The little stream tells the gentle truth, that borders pass when their worlds change. The island tells the grave one, that some borders are the scars of a world's killing, and stand long after, and are no less the edge of a world for having been made by atrocity.

GUGLIELMO. Before you gather it, stay with the people on each side, because we have named them loosely and there is a thing to see. A world is borne by a people and made everywhere among them within its edge. Give that a plainer name. When a shared world overrules in this way, everywhere, within a border, what are we looking at?

FRIDRIK. A people. A nation. And by that I mean what the words usually mean: a great number of one kind, one blood, one stock, who hold the land between them.

GUGLIELMO. One blood, one stock. Is that what you met when you travelled, a blood, a stock? Or a world you had to align to?

FRIDRIK. A world. Not a blood. I have met peoples of many bloods sharing one world, and one blood split across worlds that would not greet each other. So it is none of the loose things the words suggest. It is not a count of bodies, not a kind of blood, not a common look. It is a shared world made to overrule, everywhere, within an edge. The people just is the overruling of one world within its borders, the world that is the air there and brooks no other inside its line. When I travel to a country, that is what I meet, not a number and not a race, but a world that overrules within a border. Name the people that way and everything we said about omnipresence and edge is already in it.

GUGLIELMO. Now take the conqueror's case again, the world driven onto the other's land. Is that the same thing, a people, an overruling within a border? Or different in kind?

FRIDRIK. At first it seems the same, only larger. But it is different in kind, and I see the difference by watching what it does. A people overrules its one world within its edge, and inside the edge there is the one world and no other. The conqueror does not do that. It takes its world and imposes it over another people that is still there, still a people, with its own world under the imposition. So it is not one world overruling within a border; it is one world laid over other worlds that persist. That is a different thing, and it has a different name. It is an empire.

GUGLIELMO. Then watch the empire closely, because something about it will not hold still. Can an empire rest, simply be, the way a people simply is within its border?

FRIDRIK. No, and I see why by following the two ways it could go. If the empire fully succeeds, if the peoples it laid its world over are broken into it entirely, so that under the imposition there is no longer another world but only the imperial one, then it has stopped being an empire and become a people, one world overruling within a border. And if it fully fails, if those peoples throw the imposition off, then it has dissolved, and there are peoples again, each its own. So the empire exists only between these two, only while the imposing is still going on over peoples who are still peoples. It cannot rest, because resting one way turns it into a people and resting the other ends it. A people is a state of things; an empire is a process, always imposing, never arrived. That is why empires are always pressing outward or holding down by force or coming apart, and never simply at peace within themselves as a people can be. The restlessness is not a flaw in this or that empire; it is what an empire is.

GUGLIELMO. One thing more, then gather it. Two such overruling peoples meet, each its world everywhere within its edge, and the edge between them is in question, where shall the border fall. What is the name of that, when they contest it?

FRIDRIK. War, though I would have said war is first about killing, or about taking what the other has. Surely war is the killing, the armies, the seizing of land and goods.

GUGLIELMO. The killing is there. But killing for what? When the armies have done their work, what has been settled?

FRIDRIK. Where the border falls. That is what is settled, in the end, and the killing was the means to it. So war is first about the edge, not first about the killing. Two peoples, each overruling its world, contend over where the border between their worlds shall fall; the killing is the means and the placing of the edge is the stake. War is the contest of two overruling worlds for the position of their border.

GUGLIELMO. And is there a form of that contest without the killing?

FRIDRIK. There is, the same contest carried by other pressures, the border argued and bargained rather than fought, which is the bloodless limit of the same thing, war conducted without arms. And there is the other limit, the worst, which I see by pushing the contest as far as it goes. If instead of pushing the border one people removes the other entirely, then there is no longer a contest over an edge between two worlds, because only one world is left, set in the place the other was cleared from. That is not the winning of the contest; it is the abolishing of it, by abolishing one of the two. And that is what we saw on the island, the gravest case, the world not pushed back but destroyed, and the imposed world apposed in its place. So between the bloodless bargain and the destruction lies the whole range of war, and all of it is the contest of overruling worlds over where, or whether, their border shall be.

GUGLIELMO. You came asking what a spreading world could teach, and you have it. A world borne by a people spreads across their land and becomes everywhere among them, overruling by being the air they share, so that the stranger to it is the one who pops, the figure against their ground. What you travel to is never the land but the world a people shares on it, one island bearing two places because two peoples. And where one such world gives out and another begins is a border, the edge of an omnipresence, shading where the worlds mingle and breaking where they meet hard, falling on a river or a range that turns into a border by being where the daily life that carries a world cannot pass, and losing its border-being again when the worlds change, the same water grave once and nothing now. Borders are edges of worlds, made and unmade in time, and never facts of the land they fall on, some the soft settling of two worlds at their limits and some the scars of a world destroyed to make room, one in structure and not in worth. And in all of it the plainest things of the wider world lie open: a people, a world overruling within its border; an empire, a world imposed over other peoples and so never at rest; and war, the contest of two such worlds over where their border falls, from the bloodless bargain at the one end to the destroying of a people at the other.

After the seeing, the result named once. This chapter follows the world once born into its extension and its edge, and grounds, by the figure's own looking, the political concepts a phenomenology of peoples works with.

The omnipresence, the abroad-inversion, and the constancy of otherness. A world borne by a people across the land they live on becomes omnipresent among them, overruling by being everywhere, the air: the koinonia grown vast and thick, in its social-spatial form. Against an omnipresent world the figure-and-ground of the popping takes a determinate shape, set not by the person but by which omnipresence one is within. At home the other pops against one's own world; abroad, in another people's omnipresent world, one is oneself the figure against their ground, the one who does not fit and must align, and one lives that standing-out from within as the disquiet of the suspended hold, the world's grip not yet one's own. The guard from the prior figure holds: the otherness itself, the owned locus, the from-of-vanishing, never diminishes with familiarity. What changes between stranger and familiar is the mode of the world's holding and the mood that is that mode, the farness given as disquiet where the hold is slack, the nearness given as joy where it is taut. Familiarity lets the otherness be dwelt on in joy rather than negotiated in disquiet; it does not absorb the other into the shared world.

Place is the shared world of a population, and the border is the edge of an omnipresence. One travels to the world a people shares, never to the land, proved by one island bearing two countries, two peoples, two worlds, two places, on one undivided geography. Place, in the sense that bears on being-with, is the shared world of its population, carried on a geography and not identical with it; geography conditions the world only by conditioning its propagation, the bearing-and-spreading that connects them, not by being its ground. A border is where one people's omnipresent world gives out and another's begins, a fact about the worlds and not about the land, though it falls on the land: it shades where the worlds mingle, propagation slowed, and breaks where they meet hard. A river or a mountain is not a border in itself, but it turns into one, because a shared world propagates across the land through the daily traffic that continually rebuilds it, and a feature is what interrupts that traffic. Such features become borders not by chance but because they are where the daily life that carries a world cannot easily pass.

The loss of border-being, and the temporality of borders. Run the process backward and the thesis is proved: a feature that was a decisive border loses its border-being entirely when the shared world whose edge fell there changes, the edge lifting off the unchanged feature and leaving it plain land. The same geography is then no-border, then border, then no-border again, while it never changes, so border-being belonged wholly to the shared worlds and their history, lodged on the feature for a time and liftable from it. Borders are temporal edges as well as spatial ones, made and unmade with the worlds whose edges they are. The case is a small river, gravest of borders in an ancient order and of no weight today: in the scholarly register the Rubicon, the boundary of Italia under the Republic, which a commander could not cross under arms without making war on the state, and which the daily life of the country now crosses without a thought.

The political grounding, the two deaths, and the tier. The walk discloses, by its own looking, the concepts a phenomenology of peoples works with. A population is the overruling of a shared world within its borders: not a quantity of people, not a race or an ethnicity, but an omnipresent overruling alignment-field across a bordered range, the people travelled to and never the land. An empire is the imposition of a shared world over other populations that persist as populations under it, and so a process and never a settled state, since full success would make it a population and full failure would dissolve it; it exists only in the tension between, which is why empire is a process-concept and population a state-concept. War is the contest between two overruling populations for the positioning of their border, the killing the means and the position of the edge the stake; arbitration is the same contest without arms, its bloodless limit; and at the far limit the contest is not won but abolished, one population removed so that one world stands in the place of the destroyed one, the apposition and replacement whose scar is the abrupt border on the island. The extermination limit touches the death of a population, the violent abolition of a shared world by the destruction of those who bear it, and this is the political analogue of the singular death of the prior figure, but is not the same and must not be conflated: a person's death is the owned impossibility of his own world-possibilities, borne by him alone; a population's extermination is the killing of a shared world from outside. They are analogues across the scales of the book, and the analogy must not collapse the difference. The core of all this is available without erudition: that a people's way of being fills the land they live on, that one is the stranger to it abroad, that one travels to a people and not to dirt, that a river can become a border and a once-grave border become nothing. These definitions are reached here by the figure and owe their standing to the seeing, not to any prior work of the author's; where a companion study of human geopolitics puts them to political use, that application is a later and confirming extension of what the figure grounds, the lesser debt running from the application to the figure and never from the figure to it.

Chapter 16. The Strata

GUGLIELMO. We have walked a long way and seen a great deal, and now the work changes. Until now I asked you to see things one at a time, each figure forcing one seeing. Now gather what we have seen into an order, because the figures, taken together, have laid down something with levels, and we have never set the levels out in one place. Look back over the whole road and tell me the things a person could stand on or fail to stand on. Do not invent; only gather what the figures already showed.

FRIDRIK. Let me try, lowest first, since you have taught me to build from the floor. The lowest thing we found was the floor itself, on the beach, at the first encounter, and marked before that by the cat. The bare being able to be addressed and to answer, to be a possible party to a greeting, a bargain, a holding-to-a-word. The cat could not stand on it though it had a world and a gaze. Two peoples who shared nothing stood on it from the first morning. That is the lowest.

GUGLIELMO. Name it carefully, because the whole order rests on getting this one exact. Is it a floor of shared things, a stock of objects and bodies given as meanings that two already have in common?

FRIDRIK. I want to say it is what the two had in common, and then I remember they had nothing in common, and stood on it anyway. So it cannot be a stock of shared things. It is not having a world in common. It is the bare possibility of being a participant who can be addressed and answer, whose world could be opened to another and have another's opened to it. A possible answerable discloser, that is the phrase I keep reaching for. Not what is disclosed, but the standing as one who could disclose and be disclosed to, answerably.

GUGLIELMO. And the word answerable in that phrase, is it there for emphasis, or does it carry weight?

FRIDRIK. For emphasis, I would have said, a way of saying discloser more strongly. But let me test it by taking it out, the way you taught me. Take it out and the floor is mere world-having, and then the cat is on it, because the cat has a world. The cat is kept off the floor not by lacking a world but by lacking the standing as one who could be called to account for a word. So the word is not emphasis. It carries the whole weight. It keeps the floor from denying the cat its world, and it keeps the floor matched to exactly what the cat showed and nothing more. The floor is co-membership in answerable disclosedness. The cat has disclosedness, a world, and not the answerable membership. That precise gap is the floor, seen from below.

GUGLIELMO. Good. That is the first level, the condition, not a content. Now climb. What sits on the floor, the next thing up?

FRIDRIK. The shared world itself. Not the bare possibility of being a discloser, but an actual world disclosed and held in common, the furniture of a life, the things present as meaning something to a people who have them in common. When the figures gave us two who did share a world, the modern Italian and Boccaccio on the one field, or the people of one tongue, that sharing was a real thing sitting above the bare floor. A world held in common, disclosed, historical, able to shift. That is the second level, and it has a name we have earned the right to use now that we have seen it so many times. The disclosed shared world. *Koinonia*, if we want the old word.

GUGLIELMO. We have earned it, so use it, now that it names a thing you have seen and not a thing I have asserted. And is the *koinonia* a knower, a timeless frame, a universal?

FRIDRIK. None of those. It is historical; it was opened, can shift, could die, and we watched worlds die. It is not universal; the Taíno world and the Spanish world were two and full, and neither was the measure of the other. It is not a knower or an agent; it discloses nothing by itself, persons within it disclose. It is the encounter settled and held, what meetings have opened and kept, a world had in common, historical in the manner of being disclosed.

GUGLIELMO. The next level. What sits on the disclosed world?

FRIDRIK. The articulated field. Not just a world had in common, but that world worked into a tongue, bordered, particular, this language and this people and the room they speak in. The disclosed world is wide and largely wordless; the articulated field is the disclosed world brought to speech in a particular made tongue, with edges, with a history of its own birth and death. Italian was this, born within an already disclosed world, bordered, mortal, filiating. The field of Rede, the articulated mortal field of discourse. That is the third level, and it sits on the second, because a tongue articulates a world already disclosed, and could not articulate a world that was not there to be brought to speech.

GUGLIELMO. And the highest level, the last?

FRIDRIK. The speakers themselves, the persons formed into the articulated field, the ones who do the hosting, who greet and extend the welcome and keep the room standing. They sit at the top because they presuppose all the rest. A speaker is one formed into a field, which articulates a disclosed world, which rests on the bare floor of answerable membership. So the order of grounding runs all the way down: the speakers presuppose the articulated field, which presupposes the disclosed world, which presupposes the floor of answerable co-membership. Four levels, each resting on the one below, the floor at the bottom holding all of them.

GUGLIELMO. You have built the order, and built it from the figures and not from my say-so, which is the only way it is worth anything. Now I must press you on the one thing that could bring the whole order down, because a careful enemy will reach for it. You have an engine under all this, the encounter, the meeting that opens a shared world. We saw it on the beach, two worlds opened to each other in the meeting. But here is the trap. If the shared world is made in the encounter, and yet an encounter can only happen because something shared is already there to make it possible, then you are turning in a circle, making the thing you need in order to make it. Are you in that circle?

FRIDRIK. I feel the jaws of it. Let me try to get free the quick way: I will say the meeting needs nothing already there. It just happens, two beings meet, and the world starts. Nothing common in advance.

GUGLIELMO. Nothing? Then a man and a rock would be a meeting, since they too are near each other. Did the rock ever begin a world with you?

FRIDRIK. No. So the quick way is wrong. Something must be there already, or it is a man and a rock and no meeting. Let me try the other quick way, then: what is there already is a small shared world, the barest beginnings of one, just enough to get the meeting going.

GUGLIELMO. Then set that against the beach. The two peoples shared no world at all, not the barest beginning. By your account they could not have met, and they did. Does the small-shared-world answer survive the beach?

FRIDRIK. It does not. They shared no world and met anyway, so what the meeting needs cannot be a shared world, however small. Both quick ways are shut. So let me go slowly, because the levels we just built must be what lets me out, if anything does. The circle closes only if everything called common is one thing. Separate them. What does the meeting on the beach need, already there, before it can be a meeting at all? Two bodies present to each other, and the floor, the bare possibility that each is one who can be addressed and answer. Those had to be there, or it would have been a man and a rock. But those two are not a shared world. They are co-presence and bare answerable membership, the lowest things, the condition.

GUGLIELMO. And what does the meeting make, that was not there before?

FRIDRIK. The shared world and its articulation, the third and fourth things, which were not there before the meeting. On the beach the two peoples did not have a shared world in advance and then meet; they met, with none, and in the meeting a thin shared world began to be opened, the trade, the signs, the first held meanings between them. So the common the encounter makes is the determinate shared world, which was not there before. The common the encounter needs is only the floor and the co-presence, which were. Two different things, both called common, and the circle only seemed to close because I had let one word cover both. The meeting needs the floor and makes the world. It does not need the world it makes.

GUGLIELMO. So the circle is broken, and broken cleanly, by the levels you built. Fix it exactly.

FRIDRIK. The encounter presupposes the two lowest, co-presence and the floor of answerable membership, which it does not make and which are simply there wherever two possible disclosers are present to each other. The encounter constitutes the two highest, the shared world and the articulated field, which are not there in advance but are opened in the meeting. There is no circle, because the common that is presupposed is not the common that is constituted. The floor is prior and unmade by the meeting; the world is posterior and made in it. And this is why the meeting of two wholly different worlds is epochal and not impossible: it does not need a shared world to get started, only the floor, and on the floor it can open a shared world neither had before, and in doing so each finds its own world shown up as one world among possible others, which is the shock of the beach on both sides.

GUGLIELMO. And who opens it? Watch your words here, because the whole law of the book is in the verbs.

FRIDRIK. Not the encounter, as if the meeting were a thing that acts. Persons. Persons in the meeting open a shared world that was not furnished in advance. The encounter is not an agent; it is what we call it when persons, on a floor they did not lay, open between them a world that was not there before. I must not say the encounter constitutes, as though it were a someone. I must say persons in encounter open a world, under conditions they did not choose. The opening is borne by the persons, and by nothing standing behind them doing the bearing for them.

GUGLIELMO. One thing more about that opening, because we will need it later. The floor is prior, there before the meeting, the condition. But the meeting itself, the moment two who could bring the field to life do so, and it goes live between them, is that prescribed? Must it happen, is it written that it will, the way two and two make four?

FRIDRIK. No. It happens; it is not prescribed. The floor makes it possible and is there beforehand, but nothing in the floor says the meeting must occur or that the field must go live in it. On the beach the two peoples could have missed each other, fled, failed to begin. That they met and the field came alive between them was an event, something that happened and might not have. The condition stood there; the activation was an event upon it, not a law unrolling from it.

GUGLIELMO. And the answerability we keep naming, the being able to be addressed and answer, what is its standing in that event? A thing the persons have, a property in them, like the color of their eyes?

FRIDRIK. No, and I must be careful, because it would be easy to make it a possession, and that would be a mistake. Answerability was never a thing I found inside a person. It was a condition, reached the way the floor was reached, by taking it away and watching the access to the field go with it. Its way of being is the way of being of possibility, the could-answer, the could-be-addressed, not an actual property sitting in the person like a weight or a color. So answerability is the modal character of the live field, the could in force when the field is alive between persons, given as the field itself is given, modally and not as a thing. It is not a property one carries alone. It is the mode of the event.

GUGLIELMO. Then keep the three in hand together, for they fit and we will lean on all three: the floor a condition standing before any meeting; its activation between persons an event, not prescribed; and answerability the modal character of that event, a could and not a property, given the way possibility is given and not the way a thing is. None of the three is a thing owned or a law unrolling. And that is the order, read off the figures and not stipulated: the floor of answerable co-membership at the base, the disclosed shared world upon it, the articulated mortal field upon that, the speakers and their hosting at the top, and beneath the whole climb the meeting of persons that opens a world without ever being a someone that acts. The order was in the figures all along. We have only gathered it.

What the consolidation gathers, read off the figures and not stipulated before them.

The four strata, in their order of grounding. The figures, taken together, lay down four levels, each presupposing the one beneath. At the base, co-membership in answerable disclosedness: not bare world-disclosure, which an animal may have, but the modality of being a possible answerable participant in a shared field of discourse, one who can be addressed and answer and whose world can be re-disclosed to and by another. This is a condition, not a content; it is not a floor of shared things, and it does not deny the animal its world. Upon it, the *koinonia*, the historically disclosed shared world, the encounter sedimented and held, historical in the disclosive mode, not universal, not timeless, not a knower. Upon that, the *communio* of discourse, the articulated, bordered, mortal field generated within a disclosed world, this tongue, this people, the room, historical in the generative mode. At the top, the speakers, those formed into the field, whose welcome extends it and keeps the room standing. The order of grounding: speakers presuppose the *communio*, which presupposes the *koinonia*, which presupposes co-membership in answerable disclosedness.

The load-bearing qualifier. The word answerable in the name of the floor is not decoration. Removed, the floor collapses into mere world-having, and the animal, which has a world, would stand on it. The cat is kept from the floor not by lacking a world but by lacking the standing as one who could be called to account for a word. The qualifier keeps the floor from denying animal worldhood and keeps it matched to exactly what the cat figure forces, neither more nor less.

The circularity headed off by levels. The encounter raises a circle: if the shared world is constituted in the encounter, yet the encounter is intelligible only because something common is already operative, the account turns on itself. It is resolved by distinguishing levels, not collapsing them. The encounter presupposes the two lowest, the co-presence of two embodied beings and the floor of answerable co-membership, neither of which it makes and both of which are given wherever two possible disclosers are present to each other. The encounter constitutes the two highest, the determinate shared world and its articulation, which are not furnished in advance but opened in the meeting. The common that is presupposed is therefore not the common that is constituted, and the circle does not close. This is why the meeting of two wholly different worlds is epochal rather than impossible: it needs only the floor to begin, and on the floor it opens a world neither had. That the same floor is reached by two routes, from outside by what its removal leaves in the cat and the failed greeting, and from inside by what the event of a world discloses in the happening of an encounter, and that both arrive at the one answerable co-membership, is itself a confirmation that the floor is the genuine base and not an artifact of the removal method.

The agency, kept with the persons. The opening is borne by persons in encounter, not by the encounter as an agent. Persons on a floor they did not lay open a shared world that was not furnished in advance, under conditions they did not make. The encounter is not a someone that acts; it is the name for persons opening between them a world that was not there before. The verbs are watched here, as the first law requires: it is not the encounter that constitutes but persons in encounter who open, and nothing stands behind them to do the bearing in their place.

The event, and the modal being of answerability, owned without being a thing. The floor is prior, the condition standing before any meeting; the activation, the moment two who could bring the field to life meet and it goes live between them, is an event and not a prescription, something that happens and might not have. And answerability, the being able to be addressed and to answer, is not a property the persons possess; its way of being is the way of being of possibility, a could-answer in force when the field is live, given as the field is given. This meets the apparent tension with the owned locus the event of a world disclosed, the from from which the shared could be left, which is each person's own. The two are one position seen from two sides. What is denied is that answerability is a trait housed in a person, carried whether or not anyone is met; what is owned is not such a trait but the from-of-the-vanishing, each one's finite could-vanish. To own a could is the contrary of reifying it into a hidden thing: it is the could held as one's own finite possibility. So the anti-reification holding is deepened and not undone, the modal could-answer owned as each one's own finitude, and never converted into a thing.

Chapter 17. The Two Historicities

GUGLIELMO. We have the four levels in their order. Now gather something the language cases kept showing and we never quite named, because it cuts across the levels rather than sitting on one of them. Time. History. We watched fields born and dying and reborn, and worlds shift beneath them, and I do not think those were the same kind of change. Look back over Italian and Aramaic and Hebrew, over Boccaccio and the convergent strangers, and tell me whether the history of a world and the history of a tongue moved in the same way, or in two.

FRIDRIK. In the same way, surely. History is history; things change over time, tongues and worlds alike. A language shifts, a world shifts, and it is all one stream of change, one history running under everything. I do not see why I would split it.

GUGLIELMO. Then hold the cases against that one stream and see if it carries them. Take Boccaccio first. From his century to yours, what changed, the tongue or the world?

FRIDRIK. The world. The tongue held, one continuous Italian from his century to mine, and what changed underneath it was the world, his Florence gone, the disclosed world shifted while the field stayed the same. So there the world moved and the tongue did not.

GUGLIELMO. And the birth of Italian, and the death and filiation of Hebrew. There, what moved?

FRIDRIK. The tongue. A tongue came to be, widened as people were brought into it, lived, could die at its border; Hebrew showed the same shape, a tongue dying and a new one filiating on its bones. There the field moved, born and growing and ending and inherited. So in the one case the world moved under a held tongue, and in the other the tongue moved while the world it was born into held. Those are not the same motion. My one stream was too quick. A tongue is born and dies; a world is opened and shifts. Two histories, not one.

GUGLIELMO. Name each, and say what bears it, because the bearing matters as much as the motion.

FRIDRIK. The history of the tongue I would call generative, the history of a thing generated and growing and ending, born within an already disclosed world, widening as speakers are formed into it, hosting, living, dying at a border, filiating. That is the historicity of the *communio*, the articulated field. The other I would call disclosive, the history of a world being disclosed, opened as a way of having things in common as comprehensible, an opening with a having-been, with epochs, able to shift. That is the historicity of the *koinonia*, the shared world. The generative belongs to the field; the disclosive belongs to the world.

GUGLIELMO. And what bears each? The first law is watching.

FRIDRIK. Neither is borne by a single mind and neither acts by itself. The generative history of a tongue is borne by the speakers and the institutions, the carriers, the schools, the long uptake, never by the field generating itself, as we were strict about with Italian and Hebrew. The disclosive history of a world is borne by the being-with, by persons disclosing a world in their meetings and handing it on, never by the world opening itself. Both are borne by the between, the field's history by its carriers, the world's history by its disclosers, and in both the verbs that make the field or the world the actor are shorthand I must not believe.

GUGLIELMO. Now the law that binds the two, which is the point of distinguishing them, since a distinction that left them merely side by side would be idle. Which grounds which?

FRIDRIK. The generative presupposes the disclosive. A tongue can be born only within a world already disclosed, because a tongue articulates a world, brings to speech a world that is there to be brought to speech. Italian was born within an already disclosed world, the Christian Mediterranean world it articulated; it did not open that world, it gave it a new tongue. So the generative history of the *communio* rests on the disclosive history of the *koinonia* as its condition. The field's birth presupposes the world's prior opening.

GUGLIELMO. Before you tidy this into a law, tell me what it buys. Suppose a careless reader ran the two together, one history after all. Where would he go wrong? Point to a case we have already walked.

FRIDRIK. Hebrew. If there were one history, the revival of Hebrew would look like a world coming back, a dead world raised again with its tongue, a resurrection. But we saw it was not that. The bones of the tongue crossed forward and were taken up, and the dead living world never returned; it was filiation and not resurrection. To see that, I had to hold the two histories apart, the generative line of the tongue that can cross forward, the disclosive world that does not come back. Collapse them into one and the distinction I worked so hard for in that chapter is lost, and I would call a filiation a resurrection, which is the exact error the case was built to refuse. So the distinction is not idle. It is what keeps me from reading the return of a tongue as the return of a world.

GUGLIELMO. Good. Now I must press the clean statement, because a clean statement is exactly where the danger is. You are talking as though the two histories run in sealed layers, the world shifting in its layer, the tongue born in its layer, never touching. Is that what the cases showed?

FRIDRIK. No, and I overstated it by making it too clean. The cases showed them entangled. When Italian was born, did it only articulate an unchanged world, or did the new tongue also open something, change what could be seen and said, so that a tongue's birth was also a world's shift? The great poem did open a world, the divine reached through love in the world, a disclosive change carried in a generative event. So a tongue's birth can re-disclose a world. And the other way, a world's shift can transform what a tongue can say, open new regions of the sayable. The two histories run into each other constantly in real history. They are not sealed.

GUGLIELMO. Then what exactly did the variations force, if not separation? Be precise, because this is the whole result and it is easy to claim too much.

FRIDRIK. Distinguishability, not separation. That is the exact word. The cases let me tell the two histories apart, hold one still and watch the other move, but they did not show two sealed compartments. I can distinguish them under stress, the way you separate two things by pulling on them, and that does not mean they live in separate rooms. Boccaccio let me hold the tongue still and watch the world shift. Aramaic let me watch the reverse, the tongue dead while a possibility of the common lingered in the liturgy. The convergent strangers showed distinct tongues over a partly shared world. The first encounter showed practical contact with no shared world at all. No one of those forced the distinction by itself; together they forced it.

GUGLIELMO. That last point is the one to fix hardest, because it is where a careful reader will test you. Not one of the cases, alone, forces two historicities?

FRIDRIK. Not one alone. Boccaccio alone could be explained by saying a language persists while its speakers' circumstances change, no two histories needed, just one tongue and changing facts around it. Aramaic alone could be explained by institutions retaining a dead language, again no two histories. Each single case has a one-history reading that almost works. What breaks every one-history reading is the crossed set, because a single account of history as one motion cannot fit all four at once: the tongue held while the world shifts, the tongue dead while the common lingers, distinct tongues over one world, contact with no shared world. To fit all four you need two distinguishable histories that can vary against each other, and that need is what the crossed set forces and no single case forces. So the distinction is not a definition I laid down. It is the only thing that survives being tested against all the cases together.

GUGLIELMO. And why may we then read the birth and death of a tongue almost as if they had no deep history, almost as structures, the way the language chapters sometimes did, if the two histories are entangled?

FRIDRIK. Because we held the deep history still on purpose. When I read the birth of Italian or the death of Aramaic almost as a structure, a near-timeless shape of how tongues are born and die, I was bracketing the disclosive shifts underneath, holding the world constant to see the field's motion clearly. The near-timelessness of that surface was bought by holding the depth still, an analytic bracketing, a way of looking, not a claim that the field's history floats free of the world's. Let the depth move again, the great poem opening a world, and the entanglement comes back. So the structural look at a tongue's life is a deliberate holding-still, not a discovery that the strata are sealed.

GUGLIELMO. We found two histories where it would have been easier to find one, the disclosive history of the world and the generative history of the tongue, the first grounding the second, both borne by the between and neither by a single mind, distinguishable under the stress of the crossed cases and entangled everywhere in lived time. No single case forces the two, only the set, which is why this could never have been a definition stated at the door. It is a result that had to wait for all the cases to be in, and now they are in, and it stands.

What the consolidation gathers, read off the crossed set of figures and not stipulated before them.

Two historicities, not one. Both the disclosed world and the articulated field are historical, but not in the same mode. Disclosive historicity belongs to the *koinonia*: a world is opened, a way of having things in common as comprehensible is disclosed, and that opening is an event with a having-been, with epochs, able to shift. Generative historicity belongs to the *communio*: the field is born, widens as persons are formed into it, hosts, lives, dies at a border, and filiates. The first is the history read in the shifting of a world beneath a held tongue; the second is read across the births, deaths, and filiations of tongues. Neither is the work of a single mind and neither moves by itself: the generative history of a field is borne by its speakers and carriers, its schools and long uptake; the disclosive history of a world is borne by the being-with, by persons disclosing a world in their meetings and handing it on. Both are borne by the between, and the verbs that would make the field or the world the actor are shorthand to be distrusted, as the first law requires.

The binding law, and distinguishability not separation. The two histories are distinguished in order to be bound: the generative historicity of the *communio* presupposes the disclosive historicity of the *koinonia* as its condition, since a tongue can be born only within a world already disclosed, brought to speech because it is there to be brought to speech. The generative rests on the disclosive. But they are not sealed layers. A tongue's birth can re-disclose a world, as a founding work opens a new sense of the world while propagating as a new articulation of it, and a world's shift can transform the field of the sayable. What the variations force is distinguishability, the capacity to tell the two apart under stress, holding one still while the other moves, never the claim that they live in separate compartments. In lived history they are entangled throughout; under eidetic stress they come apart enough to be named. The temporal border is one vivid instance: a feature's border-being came and went while the land held unchanged, which is the distinguishability, and the edge moved only because the world whose edge it carried moved, which is the entanglement, the generative border resting on the disclosive shift.

Forced by the crossed set, and why the surface may be read as near-structural. No one figure forces two historicities. Boccaccio alone admits a one-history reading, a language persisting while circumstances change; Aramaic alone admits another, institutions retaining a dead tongue. Each single case has a one-history account that nearly works. What no single account can fit is the crossed set together: the *communio* held while the *koinonia* shifts, the *communio* dead while a *koinonic* possibility persists, distinct *communiones* over a partly convergent world, and practical contact with no shared world. To fit all four at once requires two distinguishable histories that vary against each other, and that requirement is what the set forces and no single case forces. The distinction is therefore an eidetic result and not a glossary stipulation; it could not have been stated at the door and had to wait for all the cases to be in. This is also why the births and deaths of tongues may be analyzed almost as structures, near-timelessly: the deeper disclosive shifts they presuppose are held constant on purpose, an analytic bracketing and a way of looking, not a claim that the field's history floats free of the world's. Let the depth move again, and the entanglement returns.

The inheritance. This is the distinction between history and historicity, drawn by the thinker of being and time, relocated from the single solitary existence into two communal strata, the disclosive grounding the generative, both borne by persons together, neither sent and neither the work of one mind.

Chapter 18. Possibility, Mortality, and the Catalogue of Laws

GUGLIELMO. Two consolidations done, the levels and the two histories. There is a third thing the figures kept showing that we have never gathered, and it is the most slippery, because it is not a level and not a history but a manner: the way the field is given to us at all. Go back to the very first figure, the withheld greeting, and tell me, in what manner was the field there? As a thing? As a fact?

FRIDRIK. Not as a thing and not as a fact. When I withheld the greeting, the field was there as something I could do and did not, as a possibility, a could-greet, not an actual greeting and not an object sitting in front of me. That was the whole strangeness of the first figure, that holding the greeting back kept the field more open than spending it would have, because the unspoken greeting held every possible address open while a spoken one would have spent itself on one. The field showed itself in the mode of the possible.

GUGLIELMO. Keep that word, mode, because it is about to do the heaviest work in the book. People will ask a question that sounds reasonable. Is this field of yours a real thing, out there, or just a construct, something made up, a fiction of togetherness? They will demand you choose. What do you say?

FRIDRIK. I say it is real. A real thing, out there, not a fiction. I felt it on the path; it was not made up.

GUGLIELMO. A thing, then, out there. Where? Point to it, as you could point to the stone.

FRIDRIK. I cannot point to it. It was not an object on the path. And now I see I answered too fast. The question asked, thing or construct, and both of those are ways of being actual. A thing is an actual object; a construct is an actual fiction, a made one. But the field was never given to me as actual at all. It was given as a possibility, a could-land, before any actualizing. So the question demands I say which kind of actual thing the field is, when the field is not given as an actual thing of any kind. Both answers are wrong in the same way, because both assume the field shows up as actual and then argue which sort. It does not show up as actual. It shows up as possible.

GUGLIELMO. So is the field safe from being turned into a thing because it is delicate, fragile, hard to pin?

FRIDRIK. No, that would be a weak defense and not the real one. The field is not protected from reification by being delicate; it is protected by the way it gives itself. To reify it, you have to recast the could-land as an actual hidden something lying behind the possibility. But that already falsifies how it showed itself, because it showed itself as a possibility and not as a hidden actual thing. So to reify it is already to misdescribe it. The reification is not defeated by guarding the field; it defeats itself, by getting the mode wrong from the start. That is the firmest form of the anti-reification result: the field is given modally, and to reify it is to lie about how it gives.

GUGLIELMO. Then guard the other flank, because an objector comes from the opposite side. If the field is no actual thing but only a possibility, he says, you have made it a mere maybe, a floating could with nothing under it, and a possibility with nothing actual beneath it is empty, a wish. Is the field's possibility a floating one?

FRIDRIK. No, and the answer is a principle we should say outright: only what is is possible. A possibility is never free-floating; it is always the possibility of something, rooted in something actual that can bear it. The could-greet is not a maybe hanging in the air. It is the possibility of these actual persons, present to each other in an actual encounter, on the actual floor of answerable co-membership. The field is given as possibility, yes, but it is the possibility of an actual being-with, grounded in the persons who are and the meeting that happens. So the modal givenness does not float the field free of the actual; it says how the actual being-with is given, as a could in force between ones who are.

GUGLIELMO. So the field is neither an actual thing nor a floating maybe.

FRIDRIK. Neither. It is the possibility of an actual encounter, given in the mode of the could and grounded in the persons and the meeting that are. To make it a thing is to reify it; to make it a floating maybe is to cut it loose from the actual it is the possibility of. The truth is between, and it is exact: a real possibility of something that is.

GUGLIELMO. Now gather the conditions under which we saw this one mode, because we saw it in three states and never lined them up. The possible field, where did we find it with no world yet under it?

FRIDRIK. In the birth of a tongue, before the tongue was a living world: the field held open as a project, named and reached for before it existed, the way the noble vernacular was hunted before anyone spoke it. Possibility with a not-yet under it, anticipatory. Then the same possibility with a world under it, the inhabited could-greet within a living field, the withheld greeting itself, possibility with a now under it, living. And with the world gone from under it, the could-address kept by fidelity after the living world had died, the chant in the dead tongue, possibility with a no-longer under it, sustained. One mode, possibility, in three states: before a world, within a world, after a world.

GUGLIELMO. Three things, or one?

FRIDRIK. One. It would be easy to make three species of a genus, three kinds of possibility, and they are not three kinds. They are one structure, the could-land, seen where it has not yet, or has, or no longer has a world beneath it. The proof they are one is that a single person not-speaking holds all three at once: my withheld greeting is, in one instant, not yet spoken, available to speak, and still landable, anticipatory and living and sustained all together. History pulls into three separated moments what the silent instant holds fused. So the variable that pulls it into three is not time but the speakers, their coming and going, their addition and subtraction.

GUGLIELMO. And do the three make a line you can walk both ways?

FRIDRIK. No, a one-way cycle, the same one-way border we kept meeting. The sustained, the undead bones of a field, can become the seed for a new birth, a new anticipatory-to-living beginning, as the old tongue's bones seeded a new one. But the sustained can never re-cross into the living it once was. Forward into a new birth, never backward into the old life.

GUGLIELMO. You have touched the thing I most wanted you to reach, so push on it. The diachronic border. We found it was not a wall but a gradient, a thing of degree, the field thinning by degrees back toward an ancestor. Is that gradedness only a fact about languages in time, or the same modal manner showing up again?

FRIDRIK. The same manner. If the field is given as possibility, as a could-reach, then of course it comes in degrees, because reach has degrees. An actual thing either is or is not; a possibility can be more or less open, nearer or further, easier or harder to land. So the gradedness of the diachronic border, Cicero further out than Boccaccio, the water more or less brackish, was not a special feature of time. It was the general gradedness of modal reach showing up along the line of descent, as the lateral border is the same degree read across space, and the shading and breaking of a political border the same degree at the scale of peoples, the abrupt edge a gradient run steep and not a wall. The wall was never the right picture anywhere, because possibility does not come in walls. It comes in more and less.

GUGLIELMO. Now the second thing the not-speaking held, because the silent instant held more than the three states of one possibility. It held two possibilities of utterly different kind, and we pulled them apart in the dying speaker. Name them.

FRIDRIK. The could-greet and the could-die. In the silent person both are present at once, the power to address still open and the death that is coming. In the last speaker of the dying tongue we pulled them apart with the take-away-the-field test. The could-greet was hosted by the field and went when the field went. The could-die was not hosted and stayed when the field was removed. So they are categorically different: one given within the shared field and depending on it, the other the person's own and depending on no field.

GUGLIELMO. And state the result in its careful form, because this is the place the book is most tempted to overreach and must not.

FRIDRIK. Then let me say the strong thing first and see whether it holds: the field founds the death. Death is worlded through and through; without a shared field there is no death at all, only an animal stopping.

GUGLIELMO. Test it against the one test you have. Take the field away. Does the could-die go with it, as the could-greet did?

FRIDRIK. No. It stayed. The take-away-the-field test is exactly what refutes me. The could-die survived the removal of the field, so the field cannot found it. Let me state it carefully and stop where the test stops. The death a person can own, the death that can be mourned and said and inherited, is always already worlded, because the mourning and the saying and the inheriting happen in a shared field; that much the field is needed for, and it corrects the picture of death as a wholly solitary affair with no field in it. But the field does not found the death itself. The bare dying needs no field; it survived the field's removal and is the person's own to the end. So I must say exactly two things and not a third: the field is where a death becomes sayable and mournable, and the field does not found mortality. The field hosts the mourning, not the dying. To say more would be to claim the very thing the test refuted.

GUGLIELMO. You have kept it where it must stay. Now gather the laws, all of them, the things the figures established that hold across the book, so we have them in one place. Begin with the one that governs everything.

FRIDRIK. First and over all, constitution without absolution. The field is prior to persons in the order of constitution, it makes them possible, it is there before they are formed into it; and persons remain primary in the order of answerability, only they answer, the field never does. Priority in constituting is not authorship and not absolution, because making possible is not the same as doing and not the same as being answerable. That law governs every verb in the book.

GUGLIELMO. The second.

FRIDRIK. The carrier-not-author law. A field is borne through persons who carry it, each receiving and handing it on, and no carrier is its author, not even the greatest, not even one who intends with his whole life to author it; we saw it in Italian and at its limit in Hebrew. And under it the incantamento, the genesis narrated afterward as authored, the narrating done by persons and schools and nations and never by the field, crushing a long mediated founding into a single immediate act.

GUGLIELMO. The third.

FRIDRIK. The floor, co-membership in answerable disclosedness, the bare being able to be addressed and answer, which the cat lacks and two enemies share, and which underlies the world and the field both. Bound to it the law of answerability: faith and betrayal are alike possible only on the floor, one can be held to a word or break faith only with one recognized as a party, never with a stone. And I should add, since we have been speaking of the modal manner, that this answerability is not a property persons carry inside them. It was reached the way the floor was reached, by removal, and its way of being is the way of being of possibility, a could-answer in force when the field is live, given as the field is given and not as a thing housed in a person.

GUGLIELMO. Fix that last point hard, because the temptation to make answerability a possession is strong and would undo us. If answerability were a property persons owned, what would it have become?

FRIDRIK. A thing. The one thing in the whole book we had let be a thing, after refusing to let the field or the floor or the could-greet be things. A reification smuggled in at the end, the more dangerous for sitting at the center of the laws. So I must hold it as a condition given modally, a possibility in force when persons meet on the floor, no more a possession than the field is. And the same condition can be held for a member who cannot hold his own, ahead of the one whose answering has not yet come and behind the one whose answering has gone, the place kept for him by others; which is not a further law but the floor read where the member cannot stand on it himself, and leaves answerability a condition still, since what is held in his place is the place and not a thing he owns.

GUGLIELMO. And the modal law, which we have just gathered.

FRIDRIK. That the field is given in the mode of possibility, which defeats reification, that this possibility comes always in degrees, so every border is a gradient and not a wall, and that it runs in one direction only, the three states cycling forward and never back. And beside it the finitude law, that the field hosts the mourning of a death and does not found the death, the could-greet hosted and the could-die not.

GUGLIELMO. We have gathered the manner and the laws. The field is given as possibility, not as a thing or a construct, which is why it cannot be reified without lying about how it shows, and why its reach is always graded and one-way. Within the silent instant, three states of that one possibility, anticipatory and living and sustained, pulled into a one-way cycle by the coming and going of speakers. Beside the could-greet, the could-die, hosted differently, the field bearing the mourning and never the dying. And over all of it the laws, none of which we laid down in advance; each we watched the figures force, and now we hold them together. That is the whole architecture, read off the road we walked.

What the consolidation gathers, read off the figures and not stipulated before them.

Possibility as the mode of givenness, and the defeat of reification. The field is given in the mode of the possible, not the actual. The question whether the field is a thing or a construct is malformed, since both horns presuppose actuality, and the field is given before actualization, as a could-land. A possibility can be reified, but only by a metaphysics that falsifies its mode of givenness, recasting the could-land as an actual hidden thing; held to how it shows, it resists the conversion. This is the firmest anti-reification formula: the field is protected from reification not by being delicate but by being given modally, so that to reify it is already to misdescribe how it gives. The opposite error is guarded by the same principle. The modal givenness does not float the field free of the actual, since only what is is possible, and the field's possibility is always the possibility of an actual being-with, grounded in the persons who are and the encounter that happens. The field is neither an actual thing nor a free-floating maybe but a real possibility of something that is. And because possibility is a matter of degree, the field's reach is graded rather than all-or-nothing: an actual thing is or is not, a possible reach is more or less open, which is why every border the figures disclosed was a gradient and not a wall, the abrupt political edge the steep limit of the gradient and not a counterexample to it.

One modal structure in three states. Possibility is not a genus with three species but one structure, the could-land, seen where it has not yet, has, or no longer has a world beneath it: anticipatory, the field held open as project before it has a world; living, the inhabited could-land within the world; and sustained, the could-land kept by fidelity after the world has died. The proof of their unity is that the single not-speaking holds all three fused in one instant, at once not-yet-spoken, available, and landable-still. The variable that pulls them into three successive moments is not time but the speakers, their addition and subtraction. The three form a one-way cycle: the sustained can seed a new anticipatory-to-living birth but can never re-cross into the living it once was.

The two finitudes, in the defensible form. The not-speaking holds, beside the three states of the could-greet, a second possibility of categorically different kind, the could-die. The dying speaker pulls them apart: the could-greet is hosted by the field and goes when the field is removed; the could-die is unhosted and remains. The death a person can own, the death that becomes sayable, mournable, and inheritable, is always already worlded, since the mourning and the saying happen in a shared field, and this corrects the picture of death as wholly solitary; but the field does not found the death, since the could-die survived the field's removal and so keeps a founding independence. The field hosts the mourning, not the dying. This stands together with what the event of a world disclosed from the inner side, that the could-die is, in the owning, the impossibility of one's own world-possibilities, so that the singular is the owned finitude of the shared and not its opposite. The two are one finitude seen from two sides: unhosted and unfounded by the field, and the owned impossibility of the very world-possibilities one's being-with consists in. To let the inner reading collapse the independence would make the field found the death after all, which the test forbids; to let the independence deny the inner reading would leave the death the wholly solitary affair the figure corrected. Both stand.

The catalogue of laws, set out for reference:

1. **Constitution without absolution.** The field is prior to persons in the order of constitution, making them possible, and persons remain primary in the order of answerability, only they answering. Priority in constituting is neither authorship nor absolution, since making possible is neither doing nor being answerable. This law governs every verb in the book.
2. **Carrier-not-author.** A field is borne through carriers, each receiving and handing it on; no carrier is its author, not even one who intends with his whole life to author it. Its corollary is the incantamento: the borne, distributed genesis narrated afterward as a single authored act, the narrating done by persons and institutions and never by the field, crushing a long mediated founding into one immediate point.
3. **The floor, and answerability.** The floor is co-membership in answerable disclosedness, the bare standing as one who can be addressed and answer, which the cat lacks and two enemies share, and which underlies world and field both. Bound to it: faith and betrayal are alike possible only on the floor, and only with those one stands with there. Answerability is a condition and not a possession; reached by removal, its way of being is the way of being of possibility, a could-answer in force when the field is live, given as the field is given and never as a trait housed in a person. To make it a property persons own would be the one reification the laws must not commit, sitting as it does at their center. What is owned is not a trait but a finite could, the could-vanish that is each one's own, so answerability is owned without being a thing. The same condition can be held for a member who cannot hold his own, ahead of the one whose answering has not yet come and behind the one whose answering has gone, the place kept for him by others; this is not a further law but the floor read where the member cannot stand on it himself.

4. **The modal law.** The field is given as possibility, which defeats reification; this possibility comes always in degrees, so that every border is a gradient and not a wall; and it runs one way only, the three states cycling forward and never back.
5. **The finitude law.** The field hosts the mourning of a death and does not found the death: the could-greet is hosted by the field, the could-die is not.

The collective concepts disclosed at the scale of peoples are not further laws but these same laws read at the scale of populations: that a people is the overruling of a shared world within its borders is constitution without absolutism at that scale; that no one founds a people is the carrier-not-author law; and the shading and breaking of political borders is the modal gradedness. They are left to the figure that discloses them, and named here only to mark that the laws hold unchanged when the field is a people's world. None of the five is stipulated; each is read off the figures, and the consolidation only holds them together.

Chapter 19. The Edge of Method

GUGLIELMO. We have gathered the levels, the two histories, the modal manner, and the laws. There is one more thing to do before the gathering is done, and it is not another result. It is a question, the largest the inquiry raises, and what I want from you is not to answer it but to see, with precision, why we do not. We watched worlds open and converge and diverge all through history. Here is the question that presses: is that movement oriented? Is there a direction to it, a destiny the converging and diverging of worlds is working toward?

FRIDRIK. It is the natural question, and I feel its pull. Once you have watched so much movement, you want to know where it tends, and I think yes, the worlds are converging, and perhaps it all tends toward one human world in the end. That feels like the shape of it, and I am inclined to say it.

GUGLIELMO. Then say it, and let us see what it rests on. Did any figure we walked show you a destiny? Did a direction ever disclose itself the way the floor disclosed itself in the cat, or the border in the failed greeting?

FRIDRIK. I want to say the convergence itself showed it, all those worlds drawing together. Surely that much is in the figures.

GUGLIELMO. Is it? The convergence we watched, the Italian and the Iclander sharing films and devices while the greeting still failed, was that a destiny, or a partial and reversible drawing-near with no direction disclosed in it?

FRIDRIK. Partial, and reversible, and no direction disclosed. I see it. I felt the destiny, I supplied it, because the movement seemed to want a direction, but no scene forced it. I reached past what was shown.

GUGLIELMO. And remember what happened the other times you reached past what was shown. The wall, the conquest from the first sail, the simple people with no notion of property, the past as ourselves in costumes. Each felt true. What were they?

FRIDRIK. Ungrounded appearances, every one, each hiding a different figure that the grounding brought out. The thing that felt true was the thing the method had to break. So a destiny that merely feels true, that the converging of worlds seems to be tending somewhere, is exactly that kind of appearance, anecdotally compelling and ungrounded, and by everything this book taught me I must not trust it until it is grounded.

GUGLIELMO. Now the other temptation, just as strong and just as much a reaching-past. Deny the destiny. Say there is none, all contingent, accident upon accident, no direction at all. Is that grounded?

FRIDRIK. No more than the affirmation. To say there is no destiny is also a claim about the orientation of the whole, and I have no more seen the absence of a direction than its presence. It would be another injection, the opposite one, equally ungrounded. So I cannot affirm a destiny and cannot deny one, because neither has been grounded, and both would be me supplying an answer the figures never gave.

GUGLIELMO. Then say exactly what kind of question this is, because the easy formulation would mislead us. Is the destiny question unaskable, forbidden to inquiry as such?

FRIDRIK. No, and I want to be careful not to overclaim, because that would be its own dictating. The destiny question is not unaskable. It is simply not the question this inquiry asked. We inquired into the modality of the fields, their borders, their interactions, their rules, the structure of how worlds are disclosed and met and bordered. We did not inquire into the particular factors that push specific historical worlds together or drive them apart. That is a different inquiry, and clearly a possible one.

GUGLIELMO. So if such an inquiry is possible, on what condition would its answers stand?

FRIDRIK. On the same condition ours did. They would have to be grounded, brought forward by evidence and by the disclosing method, read off what shows, the way every result we hold was made to earn its standing. A grounded inquiry into the factors of convergence and divergence could disclose real orienting factors, if there are any, and they would stand exactly insofar as they were grounded, no further. What could not stand is an answer injected without that grounding, a destiny asserted because it feels true or completes the picture.

GUGLIELMO. So name the refusal exactly, because it is finer than it first looked.

FRIDRIK. We do not refuse the question. We refuse the ungrounded answer, in either direction, affirmed or denied. The question whether some orientation of shared worlds might be found stays open, awaiting grounding, the way any question awaits the evidence that would settle it. We are not closing it; we are declining to fill it with an appearance, because this whole book is the record of appearances that felt true and were not, and a felt destiny is one more of those until it is grounded.

GUGLIELMO. That is the right shape, the same discipline we followed throughout. What was the rule when the border turned out to be a gradient and not the wall I first reached for?

FRIDRIK. That we do not dictate to the phenomena. If the gradient shows, it must be noticed, even though the wall was cleaner. Here is the same rule: a destiny does not show, so we do not impose one; its absence does not show, so we do not impose that either. The bracket is that rule at the largest scale, not a special exception made for the biggest question.

GUGLIELMO. Now the most delicate thing, and go slowly. Why do we refuse a destiny? Give me the reason.

FRIDRIK. To protect the persons' answerability. A destiny would take it from them, bear the history over their heads, and we refuse it to keep their answerability theirs.

GUGLIELMO. Watch the words you just used, protect and theirs. You have made answerability a possession, a thing the persons have that a destiny would steal. Were we not strict, in gathering the laws, that answerability is no such thing?

FRIDRIK. We were, and I have just betrayed it. Answerability is a condition, reached by removal, its way of being the way of being of possibility, a could-answer in force when the field is live, given as the field is given and not as a property housed in a person. If I defend the bracket by saying it protects the persons' answerability, I turn answerability into the one thing in the book I let be a thing, a possession to be guarded, the very reification we refuse everywhere else, smuggled in at the center under cover of defending it. So that is the wrong reason. Let me find the right one.

GUGLIELMO. Find it in terms of the event, the way we set it down when we built the strata.

FRIDRIK. We said the floor is prior, the condition before any meeting, but the activation, the moment two who could bring the field to life meet and it goes live between them, is an event and not a prescription. Nothing ordains that the meeting occur or that the field activate in it; it happens and might not have. Now see what a destiny does to that. A destiny, an engine orienting the whole from beneath, would prescribe the event, make the meeting and the going-live the playing-out of something already sent. And a prescribed event is no longer an event; the activation, which happened and might not have, becomes the unrolling of a destiny that was always going to happen. So positing a destiny does not steal a possession. It converts the unprescribed event into a foreordained unfolding, the possible into the secretly already-actual. It reifies the event.

GUGLIELMO. And answerability, in that conversion?

FRIDRIK. Its mode is falsified along with the event, because a could that was always going to be a did is no could at all. And its ownership is falsified too: a from-of-the-vanishing from which one could never in fact have vanished, because all was already sent, is not an owned locus but a station on a track. So the destiny does not take answerability from persons who own it; it dissolves the modal, event-character of the field's activation, of which answerability is the name, and falsifies the ownership the event disclosed, both at once. That is why we refuse to inject it: not to guard a property, but because injecting it ungrounded would reify the event, the same error as reifying the field or the floor, now at the scale of all history.

GUGLIELMO. So the destiny refusal and the reification refusal are one refusal.

FRIDRIK. One refusal. And in the method's own terms it is the refusal of the fold: a destiny would fold the whole of history under a single sent order ruling it from beneath, one orientation installed as the ruling appearance from which all epochs descend, and the bracket is the suspension of that installation at its largest scale, the same unfolding the book performs against the field that would rule the persons and against the other that would be lifted into a first principle.

GUGLIELMO. And this is constitution without absolution one last time. Say how.

FRIDRIK. An ungrounded engine beneath the disclosed would be the great bearer behind the persons, doing the bearing of the history in their place. We refused, at every scale, to posit the thing that takes the bearing from the between. The destiny is that thing at the largest scale, so refusing to inject it is the same law once more, kept against its grandest candidate. The history stays borne by the persons in their encounters, answerable, with nothing beneath doing the bearing instead, not because we proved nothing is beneath, but because we will not install an engine we cannot ground.

GUGLIELMO. There is a door this leaves open, and name it, because the refusal is honest only if the door is real. We refused the ungrounded injection. What have we not refused?

FRIDRIK. The grounded inquiry. We have not forbidden anyone to ask what factors orient the convergence and divergence of worlds, and to ground the answer by the method, as we grounded ours. If there are orienting factors, they could be disclosed, and disclosed they would stand. We leave that inquiry open and even invite it. What we will not do is pretend to have carried it out, or fill its place with a destiny that feels true.

GUGLIELMO. Say how such an inquiry could be grounded, because if you cannot say how, leaving the door open is an empty courtesy. Suppose a tendency, a leaning toward convergence, at work in a tradition of thinking. How would a grounded inquiry get at it?

FRIDRIK. Two ways, and the second is stronger. The first is indirect, the way we read a dead world through the traces it left in writing: a tendency at work would leave signs in the thinking of the philosophers, prints of itself in what they wrote, and a later reader on the continuous field could read those prints step by step and reconstruct the tendency from them, as one reconstructs Boccaccio's world from his pages. The second is that the great thinkers are not only witnesses who registered a tendency but are themselves eventful, the way a great poet was eventful, a locus through which the world shifted and not only a recorder of it. A tendency, if there were one, might work through the great thinkers as eventful loci, each a hinge where the field turned. A tradition is not founded by one but carried by many, no one its author, as a tongue is; yet the thinking of being has a first, the one with whom it begins, and a leaning seeded there could travel forward not as a sending from above but by the carrying we already know, each later thinker binding himself to the tradition before him and inheriting, with the question, the leaning carried in it, knowingly or not.

GUGLIELMO. So state what the book says about such an inquiry, exactly, and name an example if there is one.

FRIDRIK. That it is possible, and would use nothing but the machinery we have already grounded, the eventful locus, the carrying and inheritance, the traces read backward along the continuous field. The book does not claim the tendency is there; it says the inquiry into whether it is there is a real one, with a clear method, and could be grounded only by evidence performed step by step. Such an inquiry has been attempted, in the reading offered in Reiner Schürmann's *Broken Hegemonies*, which traces the thinking of being from its first thinker through the successive dominant languages, Greek then Latin then the vernacular tongues, by reading in the texts themselves the institution and the destitution of the governing referent of each era. It is named here as an example of the grounded, text-by-text reading the method allows, and it is instructive because it traces not a single convergence but a succession of orders that rise and carry the seeds of their own breaking, which shows the open door admits inquiries of more than one shape, ascending or declining, gathering or dispersing, so long as each is grounded in the traces and not asserted from above. The book suspends judgment on whether any particular version, including the famous one from which such readings descend, has so grounded itself; that is not this inquiry's question. It affirms only that the inquiry is possible and that the method allows its result, and refuses only the orientation injected on credit.

GUGLIELMO. One difficulty I will not hide before we stop. We have equipped this inquiry so fully, the loci, the carrying, the traces, even an example of it carried out, that a reader may ask why we do not simply pursue it ourselves and settle the destiny question here. What do you answer him?

FRIDRIK. That pursuing it is a different inquiry, with a different object, and it would have to ground itself step by step on the traces, which this book did not set out to do and has not done. To equip a question is not to answer it. We have laid the tools beside the door and shown the door is real, and that is the most we can do without becoming the other inquiry. To go through the door here, on the strength of the tools alone, would be to inject the result we said could come only from the grounding, the one thing we refuse. So the generosity is the measure of the refusal's honesty and not a step across it: we equip the inquiry precisely so that our declining to pre-empt it cannot be mistaken for forbidding it.

GUGLIELMO. Then we have the edge. The largest question, whether the movement of worlds is oriented, we do not answer, in either direction, not because the question is forbidden but because it is a different inquiry from ours, and we will not fill its place with an ungrounded answer, having learned across the whole book that what feels true is the thing the grounding must test. We hold it open, awaiting evidence brought forward by the method, and we leave the door open and equipped for whoever will ground it, refusing only the answer given on credit. That is the edge of the method, the place it knows to stop, and the knowing where to stop, and why, is itself the last result.

What the consolidation gathers, as the method marking its own edge.

The question, and what is refused. The inquiry raises a question it does not answer: whether the convergence and divergence of disclosed worlds is oriented, whether there is a destiny to their movement. The question is not unaskable and not forbidden; it is a different inquiry from this one. This inquiry took as its object the modality of the fields, their borders, interactions, and rules, the structure of how worlds are disclosed and met and bordered; it did not take as its object the particular factors that push specific historical worlds together or drive them apart. An inquiry into those factors is possible and legitimate, and its answers would stand exactly insofar as they were grounded, brought forward by evidence and the disclosing method, as every result here was made to earn its standing. What the book refuses is not the question but the ungrounded injection, in either direction. A felt destiny, the sense that the converging of worlds tends somewhere, is an anecdotally compelling appearance, like the wall, the conquest from the first sail, and the past as ourselves in costumes, each of which felt true and each of which the grounding broke; it is one more such appearance until grounded. To deny a destiny, asserting contingency all the way down, is the opposite injection and equally ungrounded. The question stays open, awaiting the grounding that alone could settle it.

The bracket is the method's discipline at its largest. The same rule that required noticing the gradient where a wall would have been cleaner requires declining the destiny where an answer would complete the picture: the phenomena are not dictated to, what shows is followed, what does not show is not injected, in either direction. A destiny does not show, so none is imposed; its absence does not show, so that is not imposed either. The bracket is this rule at the scale of the whole, not a special exception made for the largest question.

Why a destiny is the wrong injection: it reifies the event. The activation of the field, the meeting in which two who could bring it to life do so and it goes live, is an event and not a prescription: the floor is prior as condition, but nothing ordains that the meeting occur or that the field activate in it, so the activation happens and might not have. A destiny, an engine orienting the whole from beneath, would prescribe that event, converting what happened and might not have into the unrolling of something already sent, the possible into the secretly already-actual. Answerability is falsified twice over along with it: in its mode, since a could that was always going to be a did is no could at all; and in its ownership, since a from-of-the-vanishing one could never in fact have vanished from is not an owned locus but a station on a track. To inject a destiny is therefore to reify the event of the field's activation, the same error as reifying the field or the floor, now at the scale of all history. The destiny refusal and the reification refusal are one refusal, and in the method's own terms it is the refusal of the fold: a destiny would fold the whole of history under a single sent order ruling from beneath, one orientation installed as the ruling appearance from which all epochs descend, and the bracket suspends that installation at its largest scale. It is constitution without absolution one final time: an ungrounded engine beneath the disclosed would be the great bearer doing the history's bearing in the persons' place, and the book refuses, against its grandest candidate, to install what would take the bearing from the between. The history stays borne by the persons in their encounters, not because the book proved nothing is beneath, but because it will not install an engine it cannot ground.

The open door, the tools, and the tension. The refusal is honest because it leaves a real inquiry open and furnishes it with the book's own machinery: indirectly, a tendency would leave traces in the writing of the philosophers, read step by step on the continuous field; and more strongly, the great thinkers may be eventful loci, hinges through which the field turned, a leaning seeded at the first thinker of being and carried forward not as a sending from above but by the inheritance a tradition already lives by, each later thinker binding himself to the one before and bearing the leaning without authoring it. An inquiry of this kind has been attempted, in Reiner Schürmann's *Broken Hegemonies*, which traces the thinking of being from its first thinker through the successive dominant languages, Greek then Latin then the vernacular, by reading in the texts the institution and destitution of the governing referent of each era; it is named here as an example of the grounded, text-by-text reading the method allows, and it is instructive because it traces not one convergence but a succession of orders that rise and carry the seeds of their own breaking. The book suspends judgment on whether any particular version, including the famous one from which such readings descend, has so grounded itself. This is the most deferent form of the relation to the doctrine of a sending: not refutation and not the bare open bracket, but the door held open with the tools laid beside it. One difficulty must be owned, since the equipping is so full that a reader may ask why the inquiry is not simply carried out here and the question settled. The answer is that carrying it out is a different inquiry, with a different object, that must ground itself step by step on the traces, which this book did not undertake; to walk through the door on the strength of the tools alone would be to inject the result the book said could come only from the grounding. The generosity is therefore the measure of the refusal's honesty and not a step across it: the inquiry is equipped so fully precisely so that declining to pre-empt it cannot be mistaken for forbidding it.

The edge as a result. That the method knows where to stop, and why, is a finding and not a failure. To mark the boundary of one's own inquiry, to say this is a different question requiring its own grounding and I will not fill it on credit, keeps every result on the near side clean of what lies past it. Everything the book showed holds whether or not the movement of worlds is oriented, because none of it was built on an answer to that question, and the architecture therefore stands for a reader who suspects an orientation and a reader who suspects none alike. The knowing where to stop, and why, is the last result of the method.

PART VII. SCHOLARLY RETURN

Chapter 20. The Nearest Neighbors

GUGLIELMO. The gathering is done, the figures have disclosed and the consolidations have gathered. There is one duty left before we close, and it is a duty of honesty, not of discovery. We walked as though we were alone on these roads. We were not. Others came before us and saw much of what we saw, and some of what we have been calling ours is theirs. Until now I kept their names out of our talk on purpose, because a figure must compel a reader who has read no one, and a name in the scene would have turned the seeing into a citation. That discipline has done its work. Now it reverses. Here we name them, openly, and say exactly what we owe and exactly what, after the debts are paid, is left that is ours.

FRIDRIK. Then let me be the one who keeps us honest, because the temptation in a chapter like this is to credit with one hand and take back with the other, to say they came close and we went deeper. I will watch for that. If what we claim as ours turns out to be theirs, I want us to hand it back plainly.

GUGLIELMO. That is the office I want you to hold, and hold it strictly. Begin with the largest debt, the one most likely to be ours by mistake. The shared world itself, the disclosed world had in common, historical, generative, able to grow and shift. Did we find that?

FRIDRIK. No. We hand that back at once, and almost whole. The generative shared world, the home-world and the alien-world, the world handed down and built up across generations, is Husserl's, in his manuscripts on how one world is constituted among many subjects. And it was recovered and made systematic by Steinbock, who worked out how a home-world forms and sediments and renews itself. We did not discover the generative shared world. We inherited it from them. To claim it would be the plainest kind of theft.

GUGLIELMO. So what, if anything, did we do to it that they did not?

FRIDRIK. One thing, and only this: we split it. Husserl and Steinbock treat the shared world as a single fabric, world and the speech that articulates it woven together as one. We drove a seam through it, the disclosed world below and the articulated field of discourse above, the *koinonia* and the *communio*, two strata that can move independently, as the convergent strangers and the man on the one field showed. Neither of them draws that seam. So the stratification is ours; the world that we stratified is theirs. Credit the world to them, claim only the cut.

GUGLIELMO. Good, and narrowly put. Now the harder debt, the one that costs us most, because it touches the first law, the thing we have leaned on in every chapter. The field that does not act, and answerability, that only persons answer and the field never does. Surely that is ours.

FRIDRIK. I want to say it is ours, and I will not, because it is not, and this is the one I most want to get right, because it would be the easiest to overclaim. There is a thinker, Held, who reached the heart of it before us and in the open. He showed, against the idea that a community is a great willing subject, that the shared openness gives the space in which things can appear but does not itself act and cannot will. That is our non-agentive field, in his hand first. And he retrieved the old idea of the rendering of an account, that to answer is to give a reckoning, and showed that the shared world is the condition under which accounting happens while only persons render it. That is our answerability, named and grounded by him before us. So the first law's two halves are substantially Held's, in the political register, and we say so without flinching.

GUGLIELMO. Then if Held has the field that does not act and the answerability, what is left for us? Be careful. Do not reach for "more fundamental." Do not say we went deeper.

FRIDRIK. I will not, because that phrase would be a boast and would also be false. What we did is narrower and exactly stateable. Held locates the accounting in the city, among citizens, persons of standing answering to their peers in a public world, a high and built place, a community of equals already formed. We went to the condition of that. The withheld and the failed greeting disclose an answerability that is there before any city, before any public of peers, the bare being able to be addressed and to answer that two strangers share with no shared world at all, that survives the removal of the city and even of the shared world, as the could-die survived the removal of the field. So we did not find answerability, which is Held's. We found the condition of possibility of his answerability, the floor beneath the political achievement he described. The right phrase is exactly that, the condition of possibility of his account, and never that ours is more fundamental than his, which would claim a rank the work does not need and cannot earn.

GUGLIELMO. That is the honest form. And there is a debt within the debt, a name behind his.

FRIDRIK. Yes. His dismantling of the community-as-great-subject leans on Patočka, the solidarity of those who have been shaken, the refusal of the collective will. We name him too, since the line of the non-agentive common runs back through him. One citation, openly given.

GUGLIELMO. Now the objection we must answer rather than the debt we must pay, though answering it is itself a kind of respect. There is a charge that could be brought against the whole book in one sentence, and three great thinkers stand behind it. The charge is that language arrives last. That the common is laid down in the body and the shared form of life long before any word, so that to find the common in the greeting is to mistake the crest of the wave for the ocean beneath. Who brings this charge?

FRIDRIK. Three, from three sides. Merleau-Ponty, that the common is already in the flesh, the body schema, the way two bodies are attuned and intertwined before a word passes, the infant meeting the mother's gaze. Gadamer, that understanding is the fusion of two horizons already shaped by a history that works in us beneath our awareness, so the word rides on a prior belonging. And Schütz, that everyday social life already runs on shared typifications, the taken-for-granted patterns by which I read the other as a fellow before any speech. Three fronts, one charge: the greeting is late, and we have mistaken the latecomer for the origin.

GUGLIELMO. Before you answer them, concede. Concede fully, because the answer is not a denial.

FRIDRIK. I concede all three, entirely. The flesh is attuned before the word, Merleau-Ponty is right, I will not contest an inch of the intercorporeal. The successful greeting is a fusion of horizons shaped by an effective history, Gadamer is right. Everyday life runs on shared typifications, Schütz is right and is the finest mapmaker of that everyday common we have. We never claimed the word comes first. A defense that needed to deny the flesh or the horizon or the typification would be a bad defense of a claim we do not hold.

GUGLIELMO. Then what is the claim, and how does conceding all three leave it standing?

FRIDRIK. The claim is that we do not create the common in the greeting. We disclose it at the point where it fails. The sovereign speaker who makes the common by speaking is a strawman, and not our man. Our instrument was never the successful greeting that makes a bond; it was the failed greeting that reveals a border. So when the charge says the common is already there in the flesh and the horizon and the typification, before the word, we say yes, and that is exactly what the failed greeting discloses, the already that was there before the word. The greeting does not install the floor. It is the probe that finds it, and finds it precisely by failing against it.

GUGLIELMO. Take them one at a time, then. Merleau-Ponty first.

FRIDRIK. To Merleau-Ponty I concede the flesh entire and press one question the flesh cannot answer. Two bodies are attuned, intertwined, the one's gesture echoed in the other's before any word. Granted. But the cat showed us that flesh and attunement and the warm intertwining are not yet membership in a field of address. The cat has flesh, has a gaze, can be intertwined with me in a life, and cannot be addressed and answer and be held to a word. So the intercorporeal, however rich, does not yet reach answerability. The flesh is conceded and the answerability is pressed, and the cat is the proof that the second does not come free with the first.

GUGLIELMO. Gadamer.

FRIDRIK. To Gadamer I concede that the successful greeting is a fusion of horizons within an effective history. Granted entire. But the failed greeting reaches beneath the fused horizon to the perimeter where there is not yet a shared horizon to fuse, and something is still disclosed there, the bare answerable standing of the stranger I cannot yet understand. His account is of the success and not of the revealing failure.

GUGLIELMO. And Schütz, who is the hardest, and whom you must treat with the most respect, because he mapped the very country we are standing in.

FRIDRIK. Schütz I welcome rather than answer, because he is the finest cartographer of the *communio* there has been, the everyday world of fellows reading each other through shared patterns. I take his map gratefully, and then ask one question of two things he posits, because everything in his everyday world rests on them. He says social life runs on two idealizations, two things we take for granted without proving. The first, that our standpoints are interchangeable, that if I stood where you stand I would see what you see. The second, that our systems of relevance are congruent enough, that what matters to me and what matters to you line up enough to share a world. My question is the whole of our descent: what must already hold between two beings for them to be able to posit those two idealizations at all?

GUGLIELMO. Answer your own question, slowly, because this is the deepest point in the chapter, where the two strata and the floor come together.

FRIDRIK. For me to take your standpoint as interchangeable with mine, I must already take you as one who has a standpoint, a someone whose place I could occupy and who could occupy mine, one who could be addressed and answer. For me to take our relevances as congruent, I must already take you as one to whom things matter, one who could tell me what matters to him and be held to it. Both idealizations already presuppose that you are an answerable someone, a member of a field of address. They are not the ground. They are built on a floor that is deeper than they are, the bare answerable co-membership that the cat lacks and two strangers share. Schütz posited the two idealizations as the floor. We went beneath them, to what must hold for the idealizations to be possible, and found the answerable floor there. And this is the same descent we made under Held, from the city to its condition, and the same seam we cut in Husserl's world. The answer to all three fronts is one act, the failed greeting reaching the floor beneath the flesh, beneath the horizon, beneath the typification, and that one act is the same act as cutting the two strata apart.

GUGLIELMO. There is one more who must be faced before the estate is counted, and he is the closest of all and the one we have not named. The floor you keep reaching is answerability, the other as one who can be addressed and must answer, never closed into what the field made of him. A thinker built a whole philosophy on exactly that irreducibility, the other who calls me to account and cannot be reduced to my grasp. If the floor is his, the second of our holdings is not ours.

FRIDRIK. Levinas. He must be faced, and faced fairly, because no one has put the irreducibility of the other more powerfully. He saw what we build on, that the other is not a content I master but one who calls me, who exceeds every image I form, who cannot be absorbed into the same. The non-absolution half of our law is a thing he saw to its depth. So the question is real: is our floor his discovery wearing a phenomenologist's coat?

GUGLIELMO. Answer it, and do not answer it by making him smaller than he is.

FRIDRIK. The answer is not that he is wrong but that he and we reach the irreducible other by different roads and put it in different places, and the difference is the whole of where we part. He reaches it by breaking the field. For him the other is not given at all, not a phenomenon; the face refuses to appear, overflows every intuition, an infinity otherwise than being that commands from beyond it, and the relation is revelation and not disclosure. We reach the same irreducibility the opposite way, by staying inside the field and going to its floor, where the other is given in the encounter as an answerable someone, finite, met, a person on the floor and not an infinity above it. And we did not take that route from him; it is the route of address and answerability that others walked independently of him, the second person who can be called and must answer, the account one owes. The irreducibility won by answerability is a sibling of his and not a child of his.

GUGLIELMO. Then say precisely why we do not follow him the further step, since he reaches the same irreducibility and reaches higher.

FRIDRIK. Because of the founding requirement the whole book stands on. We win the with by free access to the field of phenomenality, by our own seeing, owing the access to no one. An other who is by definition beyond all phenomenality, not given and not met within the field, is exactly what that access cannot reach. To build the floor on him would be to found the with on what our own method cannot disclose, the one thing we forbade ourselves at the door. So we do not refute his step; we cannot take it and keep our footing. And to his counter-charge, that a someone on a shared floor is the neutral side-by-side that effaces the singular other, the charge he brought against being-with, the answer is that our floor is not the anonymous public both he and we reject. It is answerability itself, the other as the one who calls and answers, the very thing he says ontology lacks. The face he guards is guarded on our floor too, as the someone who can be addressed, only kept within the field where we can see it rather than placed beyond the field where we cannot.

GUGLIELMO. And the dispute over whether his beyond-being is itself a metaphysics?

FRIDRIK. Two questions there, and we answer one and leave the other. We leave the quarrel his sharpest readers press, whether the very language of his escape drags the old metaphysics back in through the words; that is a dispute about his medium, fought inside his own house, and we do not need its verdict. But there is a second question, ours, because it follows from our own first law. To place the other beyond being is to take a being, this other, and set it in the position of the first, the one being lifted above being itself, from which the order then descends. That is the oldest move there is, a single being raised into the ruling place, and in our terms it is the fold at its highest power. Our first law forbids it, not only for the field, which may not fold into an agent over persons, but for the other too, who may not be folded into a first principle over being. So we do not decline his step merely because our method cannot follow it; we decline it because it is the installation our whole discipline exists to refuse, and refusing it for the other is the same act as refusing it for the field and for the course of history. Levinas, protecting the other from every reduction, lifted it clear of being and so set it where the first principle has always been set; we keep it on the floor, irreducible and finite, neither reduced nor enthroned. And the diagnosis is owed to him, not held against him: the radicalism itself carried him there, and naming the fate is not convicting the man.

GUGLIELMO. There is one more to face before we count the estate, nearer to us than Levinas in one exact respect, which is why he is the more dangerous neighbor. Levinas reached the irreducible other by leaving the field. There is a thinker who saw, as we did, that one need not leave it, that the other's exceeding can be kept inside phenomenality, and built a whole phenomenology to keep it there. If our floor is the other given within phenomenality, and his is too, a reader will ask what divides us, and whether our from-of-the-vanishing is not simply his finding under a new name.

FRIDRIK. Marion, and the saturated phenomenon. He is doing what we do, refusing to send the other beyond being, keeping the exceeding in the field, so I must say exactly where we part, and it cannot be that he leaves phenomenality. For Marion the other exceeds me because the intuition she gives overflows every concept and intention I could bring to her, pours in past what I can constitute, so that I, the one who would constitute, am overwhelmed and demoted to the one who merely undergoes the flood. The exceeding is an excess of intuition over intention, and it is measured on me, on what I can take. That is the saturated phenomenon, developed in *Being Given* and *In Excess*, and the face is his highest case of it.

GUGLIELMO. And is that what the popping is, in our morning on the sand? An intuition that overflows you?

FRIDRIK. No, and the parting is clean. The popping is not an excess of intuition at all. The other does not pop because she gives me too much to take in. She pops because she escapes the possibilities I am already in, being one whose possibilities are her own. That is a modal thing, not a quantity. A stranger glimpsed at the edge of the road, given in the barest sketch, almost no intuition at all, pops exactly as much as one who stands before me in full light, because the popping is not measured in how much pours in. It is the standing-out of an owned locus, the from-of-the-vanishing, and that is the same whether the intuition is rich or sparse. Marion's other overwhelms me; ours could answer me. His exceeding is a flood I undergo; ours is a locus I meet.

GUGLIELMO. Press the other half, because there is a second parting and it is the one that joins this to everything we have refused. Is Marion's other reciprocal, as ours is?

FRIDRIK. No, and he says so himself. He refuses reciprocity by name, in *The Erotic Phenomenon*, as the logic of commerce, a return demanded, and builds the encounter on the advance, the loving first without asking to be loved back, the gift given without return. So his other, like the saturated phenomenon that overwhelms the one who undergoes it, comes to me one way, asymmetrically, and I receive what I cannot return in kind. Ours is the reverse. The encounter we found was the reciprocal recognition in one act, mine of her and hers of me, the addressing and the being-addressed one possibility held between us. We could not have it otherwise, because the floor is co-membership, and a membership only one of us held would be no membership. So Marion stands with Levinas on the one thing, that the other is secured by asymmetry, Levinas by sending the other above being, Marion by letting the other flood the field from within. And we stand against both, because our floor is symmetrical.

GUGLIELMO. Then there is his defense to face, because he has heard a charge like ours before. It has been said that his saturated phenomenon installs an absolute that rules the field, erases the horizon, dictates its own terms, a first principle smuggled back in. What does he answer?

FRIDRIK. He answers that givenness is anarchic. It founds nothing, orders nothing, predicts nothing; it arrives unforeseeably and leaves the receiver disrupted and unanchored, and because it is anarchic it cannot be a ruling first principle, since a first principle is a stable foundation and this is the opposite of stable. And I notice it is the very defense Levinas's readers make for the beyond-being, that it is an-arche, a past that never governed, and so not an arche at all. The two strongest neighbors defend themselves with the same word.

GUGLIELMO. And does the word save them?

FRIDRIK. It does not, and our law shows why, the same law for both. The fold was never the installation of a stable, governing principle. The fold is the installation of a being in the place of the first, the place from which the field is ordered, whatever the manner of its ruling. An appearance that erases the horizon and imposes itself absolutely has taken the ruling place, and it does not vacate that place by ruling anarchically rather than stably. Anarchy changes the manner of the rule, not the fact that one being has been set above the field. The throne is still a throne when the one on it is lawless. Our refusal is of the throne, not of the style of reigning, and so it reaches the anarchic absolute exactly as it reaches the stable first principle. We leave untouched the separate quarrel over whether Marion's givenness is crypto-theological, the charge of the theological turn, as we left the parallel quarrel over Levinas's language; our charge is structural and follows from our own law. So Marion is not a second quarrel but the same one, carried to its nearest case: the rival who, like us, kept the other in the field, and who, unlike us, let the other rule it.

GUGLIELMO. There are others we walked beside and have not named, and honesty is not done until they are named, even those whose debt is smaller, because a debt unspoken is a debt denied. Take first the one who raised the with itself to first philosophy.

FRIDRIK. Nancy. He is owed the largest of these remaining debts, because he saw, before us and against the whole tradition, that being is being-with, that the with is not added to a subject already standing but is the very manner of being, co-essential and first. We did not discover that the with is first; he made it first philosophy, in Being Singular Plural, and we stand on that. What we add is not the with, which is his, but a thing his with cannot hold. His singular plural is a co-appearing in which, by his own saying, there is no one behind the appearing, no discrete someone who could withdraw. Our floor keeps exactly that someone, the answerable locus, the from-of-the-vanishing, the one who is in the with and could leave it into what is her own. So the with is Nancy's, and the answerable locus within it is what the figures add, the condition his co-appearing presupposes and does not itself supply. Not deeper than his with. The locus his with requires.

GUGLIELMO. And the ones who reached the address and the answer long before any of us, in another key.

FRIDRIK. The thinkers of dialogue, Buber first and with him Rosenzweig and Ebner. They reached the heart of what we call the floor, that one is addressed before one speaks, that the I comes to be only in being called by a Thou, that to be a self is to be summoned and to answer. Rosenzweig staged revelation itself as a call and an answer, where art thou and here I am, the bare structure of address and answer we have leaned on throughout. We did not find that one is addressed before one speaks; they found it. But each of them secured it on a guarantor beyond the field, the call that calls being God's call, the Thou that grounds every thou the eternal Thou, the word that founds the I a word from the holy. So they reached the floor and rested it on a ground outside phenomenality, owed to God. Our one departure, and it is the whole of what we add, is that we disclose the same floor within phenomenality, owing the access to no one, which is the founding requirement the book stood on from the first page. The address and the answer are theirs; the free access to them, the floor reached by our own seeing and not on a guarantor, is the book's, and this is a difference of access and grounding, not a claim to have seen the address more deeply than they did.

GUGLIELMO. And the nearer ones, the living debts, who worked the same answerability in registers next to ours.

FRIDRIK. Two to name and a map to credit. Crowell brought Heidegger's call of conscience together with the giving of an account and with the second person, the answerability to others for one's reasons, which runs very close to our ground, closer than any other recent work. And Darwall, in the analytic key, made the second-person standpoint and the holding of one another to account the root of moral obligation, in *The Second-Person Standpoint*. To both we owe the same care we owed Held: they make answerability the condition of reason-giving or of moral obligation, the condition of an ethics, while we reach beneath that, to answerability as the eidetic condition for the disclosure of a shared world at all, prior to any ethics, the floor the figures disclose and not a deeper morality. And the map of the whole problem, the division of every account of the other into the constituting and the dialogical, with each side shown wanting, is Theunissen's, in *The Other*; we are locatable on his map as the thing he thought the map forbade, a dialogical floor of address and answer held within phenomenality and not bought by an egological constitution, neither of his two poles. We credit the map and stand in the place it did not expect.

GUGLIELMO. And the last, who pressed the answer as the root of experience, and the one who reached for our task before us.

FRIDRIK. Waldenfels, who turned intentionality into responsivity, the self made by its answer to a claim that comes from the alien before any grasp. He is owed for seeing the answer as first, and we part from him only as we parted from Levinas and Marion, on the asymmetry: his is the answer to the alien that disrupts from outside, one-way, the claim undergone, while ours is the symmetrical co-membership in which each is answerable to the other, the floor that lets a shared field be built and not only ruptured. And Löwith, who reached for the very derivation we take as our task, in the work he wrote under Heidegger, deriving the being-with-one-another from the second person but mediating it through the social role and an anthropology of the person, so that what he derived was the fellow in his role and not the floor beneath every role. The coda says how we stand to him; here it is enough that he is named and credited, the one who tried the derivation first.

GUGLIELMO. None of these is a holding of ours.

FRIDRIK. None. Every one is a debt, credited and handed back. The with is Nancy's, the address and answer the dialogical thinkers', the second-person account Crowell's and Darwall's, the map Theunissen's, the responsivity Waldenfels's, the first reach at the derivation Löwith's. What is ours is only what survives when all of these are handed back.

GUGLIELMO. Then state the whole of what is ours, the entire estate, after every debt is paid, and state nothing beyond it, because to claim what is not ours would undo the honesty of the whole count. But take care also not to undercount, since leaving out what the figures did disclose would be its own dishonesty, a false modesty that hands back what was never anyone else's.

FRIDRIK. Then let me count exactly, neither more nor less. First, the stratification, the cut between the disclosed world and the articulated field of discourse, which neither Husserl nor Steinbock draws, and which turned out to be the answer to the whole bodily-and-everyday objection. Second, the descent below Held's political answerability and below Schütz's two idealizations to the eidetic floor, the answerable co-membership disclosed in the withheld and failed greeting, which survives the removal of the city and of the shared world. Third, and here I must add what I would once have left uncounted, because the late figures disclosed it and it is neither Held's nor Levinas's: the floor reached not only from outside, by removal, but from within, in the event of a world's birth, where the recognition of the other as answerable is the same event as a shared world coming to be, and where the other's irreducibility shows positively as the from-of-the-vanishing, the owned locus from which the shared could be left, the encounter being that reciprocal recognition together with that from and nothing else. That positive disclosure completes the descent rather than adding a stranger to it, but it must be counted, because to fold it silently into the bare floor would be to hand back to no one a thing the figures did show. Fourth, field-mortality and filiation, that a field can die its own death and that what rises on its bones is a child and not the dead returned, bones and not world, the limit Steinbock brackets as the absolute corpse. Fifth, the modal givenness of the field as possibility, the anti-reification law, that the field is given as a could and not as a thing, which the neighbors do not reach. Sixth, the bracket, the refusal to inject a destiny, the line that divides our disclosed world from the teleological shared world of the whole tradition we descend from. Six, and I will not pad them to seven, for the recurring discipline of unfolding, the method itself, is not an estate item; it is the road, and the road is reckoned at the end, not here.

GUGLIELMO. And everything else?

FRIDRIK. Everything else is theirs, and credited. The very ground we stand on, the world as disclosedness and being-with and the articulation of a world in speech, is Heidegger's, the largest debt of all, though the working-out of the one thing he affirmed and never derived, the structure of the with itself, is ours, and the reckoning with him is the coda's. The generative shared world is Husserl's and Steinbock's. The non-agentive field and answerability are Held's. The pre-linguistic floor of flesh and horizon and typification is Merleau-Ponty's and Gadamer's and Schütz's. The irreducibility of the other was seen most powerfully by Levinas, and we reach it on the floor rather than beyond being, by a sibling road and not his, and the same irreducibility kept within phenomenality is Marion's nearest rival claim, parted from on the modality and the reciprocity and the refusal of the fold. The raising of the with to first philosophy is Nancy's. The structure of address and answer is the dialogical tradition's, Buber's and Rosenzweig's and Ebner's, freed by us of its guarantor beyond the field. The binding of conscience to the giving of an account is Crowell's, the second-person standpoint Darwall's, the map of the whole problem Theunissen's, the turning of experience into responsivity Waldenfels's, and the first reaching for the derivation Löwith's. We took all of that and said so. What is ours is the six, narrow and hard, and the book is more honest, not less, for the smallness of the estate, because each of the six is real and each survived being handed what was not ours to keep.

GUGLIELMO. We named them at last, the ones we had walked beside in silence. We handed back the generative world to Husserl and Steinbock, the non-agentive field and answerability to Held and the name behind him, the pre-linguistic common to the three who charged us with mistaking the crest for the ocean, and we answered that charge not by denying their flesh and horizon and typification but by conceding all of it and reaching, with the failed greeting, the floor beneath it, which was the same act as cutting our two strata. We faced Levinas, who saw the irreducibility of the other as deeply as anyone and placed it beyond being, and we kept it on the floor instead; and Marion beside him, who kept the other in the field as we do and let it rule the field as we do not. And we named the rest of the company, each a debt and none a holding. After every debt was paid, six things stood that were ours: the cut, the descent to the floor and its positive disclosure as the owned from-of-the-vanishing, the death and the filiation, the modal givenness, and the bracket. An honest small estate is worth more than a grand one that holds stolen ground.

What this chapter does: it is the scholarly return the method promised, where the erudition kept out of the figures is done openly, as erudition, distinct in kind from the disclosing. Its discipline is the language of priority: credit generously, claim narrowly, and say “condition of possibility of,” never “more fundamental than.”

The generative shared world, credited to Husserl and Steinbock. The disclosed world had in common, historical and generative, with its home-world and alien-world, is in Husserl’s intersubjectivity manuscripts and was recovered and systematized by Steinbock; it is not the book’s and is not claimed. What the book adds is the stratification of that world into the disclosed koinonia and the articulated communio of Rede, two strata that vary independently, a seam neither draws. Credit the world to them; claim only the cut.

The non-agentive field and answerability, credited to Held, with Patočka behind him. That the shared openness grants the space of appearance without acting or willing is Held's, via his critique of the community-as-great-subject; that the field is the condition of the rendering of an account while only persons render it is Held's, via his retrieval of *logon didonai*. The first law's two halves are substantially his, in the political register. What survives as the book's own is the descent to the condition of possibility of his account: Held locates answerability in the polis, among citizens before peers, a *communio*-level achievement, while the withheld and failed greeting disclose the prior answerable disclosedness that the polis presupposes and cannot install, surviving the removal of polis and shared world as the could-die survives the removal of the field. The phrase is "condition of possibility of," never "more fundamental than." The dismantling of the community-as-subject is credited through Held to Patočka, the solidarity of the shaken.

The three-front bodily-and-everyday objection, answered by conceding it. The single charge, gathered from Merleau-Ponty, Gadamer, and Schütz, is that language arrives last, so the greeting mistakes the crest for the ocean. The whole defense is the reframe: the book discloses the common at its failing perimeter and does not create it, so the sovereign initiator the charge targets is a strawman. The single lever is the failed greeting, which strips each already, the attuned body, the fused horizon, the congruent typification, and shows the answerable floor still disclosed beneath, which is the same act as forcing the two strata. To Merleau-Ponty, concede intercorporeality entire and press the answerability the flesh cannot draw, which the cat forces. To Gadamer, concede that the successful greeting is a fusion of horizons and reach beneath the fused horizon to the perimeter where none has yet fused and the floor is still disclosed. To Schütz, the most respected, welcome him as the cartographer of the *communio* and pivot on his two posited idealizations, the interchangeability of standpoints and the congruency of relevance systems, asking what must already hold for two beings to posit them at all: each presupposes the other as an answerable someone, so both rest on a floor deeper than they are. Answering the objection and forcing the two strata are one act.

Levinas, the nearest and the most different. No one articulated the irreducibility of the other more powerfully, and the non-absolution half of the first law is that irreducibility seen from within a phenomenology of the field. The proximity is the closest of any neighbor and the parting the sharpest. Levinas reaches the irreducible other by breaking phenomenality: the face does not appear, refuses intuition, and the relation is revelation, not disclosure, the other an infinity otherwise than being. The book reaches the same irreducibility by staying within phenomenality and descending to its floor, where the other is given as an answerable someone, finite and met, by the route of address and answerability that others reached independently of him, a sibling of his irreducibility and not a descendant. The parting follows from the founding requirement, free access by one's own seeing: an other defined beyond all phenomenality is exactly what that access cannot reach. To the counter-charge that a someone on a shared floor is the neutral side-by-side that effaces the other, the answer is that the book's floor is not the anonymous public both reject but answerability itself, the other as the one who calls and answers, the very thing he says ontology lacks. The book adds one diagnosis of its own, separate from the dispute over whether his language drags metaphysics back in, which it leaves to his readers: to place the other beyond being is to set a being in the position of the first, from which the order descends, the oldest metaphysical move and, in the book's terms, the fold at its highest power. The first law forbids it for the other as for the field, and the parting rests on the book's own law and not on convicting his medium. And the parting is carried by a disclosed phenomenon, not only by the requirement: the figure of the event of a world exhibits within phenomenality exactly the irreducibility Levinas held could be reached only by breaking it, the from-of-the-vanishing, the owned locus, the other standing out by escaping the possibilities one is in. The enthroning beyond being is shown to be unnecessary as well as forbidden, since the irreducibility it sought is already on the floor, disclosed and finite, neither reduced nor enthroned.

Marion, the nearest rival within phenomenality. Levinas secured the other by leaving phenomenality; Marion must be faced as the one who, like the book, refused to leave it, so a reader will ask whether the from-of-the-vanishing is not the saturated phenomenon renamed. Marion's saturated phenomenon, in *Being Given* and *In Excess*, is an appearing whose intuition overflows every intention or concept, so the constituting subject is overwhelmed and demoted to the one who undergoes the given. The book parts on two axes. First, intuition against modality: saturation is an excess of intuition measured on what the receiver can take, while the popping is no excess of intuition but a modal standing, the other escaping the possibilities one is already in because her possibilities are her own, so that the other given in the barest sketch pops as fully as the other given in full presence; what pops is the owned locus, not a magnitude of givenness. Second, asymmetry against reciprocity: Marion refuses reciprocity by name, in *The Erotic Phenomenon*, as the logic of commerce, and builds the encounter on the advance, the loving first without return, his other coming one way and undergone, while the book's encounter is the reciprocal recognition in one act, the addressing and the being-addressed one possibility held between two. Marion's defense, that his givenness is anarchic and so founds nothing and cannot be a ruling principle, is the very defense made for the late Levinas, whose beyond-being is glossed as an-arche; and the word saves neither, for the fold the book refuses was never the installation of a stable principle but the installation of a being in the place of the first, whatever the manner of its ruling. The throne is still a throne when the one upon it is lawless. The book takes no side in the quarrel over whether Marion's givenness is crypto-theological; its charge is structural and follows from its own first law. So Marion is the same confrontation as Levinas carried to its nearest case: the rival who kept the other in the field, and who let the other rule it.

Nancy, and the dialogical tradition. That being is being-with, the with co-essential and not an addition to a subject already standing, was made first philosophy by Nancy in *Being Singular Plural*, and the book stands on that elevation rather than claiming it; what it adds is the answerable locus the with requires and Nancy's co-appearing, with no one behind the appearing, cannot house, the from-of-the-vanishing, the one who is in the with and could leave it into what is her own. And that one is addressed before one speaks, that the I comes to be in being called by a Thou, that selfhood is summons and answer, is the heart of what the book names the floor, reached long before by the thinkers of dialogue, Buber in *I and Thou*, Rosenzweig in *The Star of Redemption*, and Ebner with the word that founds the I. The address-and-answer structure is theirs and is credited; the book's one departure is that each of them secured the address on a guarantor beyond the field, the eternal Thou, the word from the holy, so that the floor for them was owed to God, while the book discloses the same floor within phenomenality, owing the access to no one. A difference of access and grounding, not a claim to have seen the address more deeply.

The nearer debts: Crowell, Darwall, Theunissen, Waldenfels, Löwith. The connection of Heidegger's call of conscience to the giving of an account and the second person is Crowell's, and the grounding of moral obligation in the second-person standpoint and mutual accountability is Darwall's, in *The Second-Person Standpoint*; to both the relation is the descent already made under Held, since they make answerability the condition of an ethics while the book reaches beneath, to answerability as the eidetic condition for the disclosure of a shared world at all. The map of the whole problem, every account of the other divided into the constituting and the dialogical and each shown wanting, is Theunissen's, in *The Other*, and the book sits where he thought the map forbade a place, a dialogical floor held within phenomenality and not bought by egological constitution. The turning of intentionality into responsivity, the self constituted by its answer to a claim from the alien, is Waldenfels's, parted from on the same asymmetry as Levinas and Marion. And the derivation of the with the book takes as its task was reached for once before by Löwith, in the habilitation under Heidegger, who derived being-with-one-another from the second person but mediated it through the social role, so that what he derived was the fellow in his role and not the eidetic floor beneath every role; the relation is the descent the coda sets out, the condition of possibility of his account. All are credited debts; none is a holding.

Heidegger, the largest debt and the standing task. The disclosive base on which the whole book stands is Heidegger's: the world as disclosedness rather than a sum of objects, being-with as a structure one does not assemble from a prior solitude, the articulation of a world in discourse, and the historicity the consolidation relocated into two communal strata. None of that is claimed as new, and the debt is larger than any other. What the book takes as its own task is the one thing he affirmed and did not work out at its root, the positive structure of the with, which was no failing of his, since his question was being and not being-with. The book is the working-out of that affirmed but underived phenomenon, and it relocates into the being-with several of his analyses kept entire: the historicity, the owned being-toward-death now read as the owned impossibility of one's world-possibilities, the existential spatiality of the near and the far, and the un-homeliness of dread in its bounded form. The full account, and the translation of the late motifs it makes possible, is given in the coda, set outside the argument so that the figures stand on their own first and his thought is reached only after, never used as their scaffold.

The estate that survives as the book's own. One, the stratification into *koinonia* and *communio* of *Rede*, which neither Husserl nor Steinbock draws and which answers the bodily-and-everyday objection. Two, the descent below Held's political answerability and below Schütz's two idealizations to the eidetic floor, disclosed in the withheld and failed greeting, surviving the removal of *polis* and shared world. Three, the positive disclosure of that floor from within, in the event of a world's birth, the other's irreducibility given as the from-of-the-vanishing, neither Held's nor Levinas's. Four, field-mortality and filiation-not-resurrection, bones not world, which Steinbock brackets as the absolute corpse. Five, the modal givenness of the field as possibility, the anti-reification law, not found in the neighbors. Six, the bracket against the teleology shared by Husserl, Held, and the late Heidegger. Everything else, the generative shared world, the non-agentive field, answerability as such, the pre-linguistic floor, the raising of the with to first philosophy, the dialogical structure of address and answer, the second-person account of conscience and obligation, the map of the problem, and the responsive turn, is inherited and credited. The recurring discipline of unfolding is not counted here as a holding, because it is the method, the road, reckoned where the method is gathered. The estate is small, precisely bounded, and real, and the book is the more honest for claiming no more than the six.

CODA

Coda. A Phenomenological Translation of Late Heidegger

This coda stands outside the argument. The phenomenology is finished; a reader who closes the book here has the whole of it and has missed nothing the book was built to show. What follows is not a movement of the inquiry but a gift the finished inquiry can afford to offer from outside itself, in the subjunctive throughout. It does not found the late thinking of Martin Heidegger and does not correct it. It offers a path.

The posture is deference, and the reason should be said plainly. Heidegger wrote his late work in a register of his own choosing, and the choice was deliberate. He judged that what he had to say could not be put in a grounding, evidential voice without being falsified into one more being among beings, and he wrote in a language many readers have found closed. This book has worked in the register he declined, the register of the variation and the disclosed scene, the figure a reader who brings nothing can be walked to. So it can offer something it could not have offered had it written as he did: a translation of his late words into disclosed experience, a path laid for a reader who needs the one he did not lay. A translation is not a rescue and not a correction. It claims only to open a possibility of reading, made available by the variations, and it leaves his own saying exactly where it stands.

There is a gap this translation is built to close, and naming it states the whole motive of the coda. Follow one phenomenon through his thought. In *Being and Time*, being-with is named as *equiprimordial*, the shared world there from the first, one always already among others, and the long movement of individuation, the being-toward-death that makes a life one's own, runs from that shared everyday toward the ownmost and gestures back toward an authentic being-with. So the with is the starting terrain and the place individuation points back to, and yet the with itself is asserted rather than derived. The anonymous one, the leveled public, receives the patient pages; authentic being-with is named as a structural requirement and sketched as the bare reversal of that public mode, a placeholder the architecture needs rather than a worked-out showing of what membership in a shared field is. The phenomenon is affirmed as a condition and not disclosed at its root. It returns in the lecture course of nineteen twenty-nine and thirty, in the comparison of the worldless stone, the world-poor animal, and the world-forming human, the very ground this book's third figure walks. There the with is affirmed even more flatly, that to be there is already to be with others, that the question how one being gets across to another is redundant because the being is already with; but the affirmation is a starting point the course does not unfold, its work going to the animal contrast and to the solitude that profound boredom opens. And in the late work the shared openness is everywhere, the clearing one stands in, the world the work opens, the fourfold one dwells in, all presupposing the common as the terrain the thinking moves on. But he no longer shows how it is reached. The with has become the ground beneath the late thought and the derivation has receded, so far that the clearing and the event are staged with no other in them at all, the appropriation running between being and a single human with no second person in it. Where the late work narrates a genesis of a people, in the lectures on the poet who founds one, it casts that genesis as a founding by submission to the holy and not as a disclosure of the with between persons, an other present but recast

as recipient. Across the whole arc the with is affirmed as a condition and never phenomenologically derived. This is not said against him. His question was the question of being, and being-with was a region his question crossed and marked, not the matter it was after; he founded what his question required and acknowledged the rest, and that he pointed to the with accurately enough that a later inquiry could go and find it is a service this book builds on. That derivation is the unpaid note, but it was never his to pay; it falls to an inquiry that takes being-with, rather than being, as its question.

The note did not go untouched, and honesty requires saying so, because one of his own students reached for it early. Karl Löwith, in the habilitation he wrote under Heidegger in nineteen twenty-eight, saw the gap exactly and set out to derive the being-with-one-another that Being and Time had left formal, working from the second person, the I met by a Thou, against the solitary cast of the analytic. So the derivation was attempted, and at once, and to say flatly that no one tried would be false. But Löwith made the attempt by way of the social role, the fellow human in his role, and by way of an anthropology of the person beneath the role, and what he derived was the concrete fellow in his typified place, not the bare eidetic floor beneath every role. The floor this book reaches lies under those, the answerable co-membership that any role already presupposes and that holds where no role is yet assigned, the standing two strangers share before either has a place in the other's world. So Löwith is credited, and the relation to him is the descent the book makes under Held and Schütz: he reached for the derivation and grounded it in the role and the anthropology, and the book grounds the condition of possibility of his account, the floor his role-mediation stands on and does not itself supply. What remains underived at its root is not the with as such, which Löwith reached for, but the eidetic floor beneath the role, and that floor is what the figures disclose. This book is that inquiry, offered as a proposal and an experiment, and that is why a translation of his late words is possible at all: the late thought stands on the koinonia, and the book has shown how one gets there, the showing his question did not require and did not give.

There is a reason this is placed here, at the end, outside the spine, and the reason is part of the argument. A reader might worry the book has been a reinjection of Heidegger's categories all along, the figures his concepts in disguise. The placement answers the worry. The variations stand alone in the body, owing nothing to his vocabulary, compelling on their own. Only now, after they have stood, is his thought brought near, and the dependence runs the right way: the variations are the ground, his late words what the standing variations make readable. The book can be read entire without this coda; this coda cannot be read without the book. That order is the proof that the figures were not his categories wearing scenes, because his categories are reached only here, by way of figures that needed none of them to be seen.

One move does the work in every case, and it is worth naming before the cases, and guarding against the misreading it invites. In each of Heidegger's late motifs, at the place where one expects an order of answerability, the dimension in which someone could be addressed and answer and be called to account, Heidegger has left only being, or the people, or the godhead, and no one who answers. The translation restores that order, and not by swapping one entity for two. What it restores is not a second thing set beside being but a modal character of the disclosedness itself, the answerable-with, the how in which a disclosed openness is one that persons can answer within. The two who face each other in the scenes that follow are the eidetic minimum of that character, the fewest terms in which it can be made to show, never a pair of substances installed where being stood. And the restoration is kept to its own order. Constitution is left exactly where Heidegger has it, prior and no one's deed, the openness not made something persons do; only at the second order, the order of answerability, where persons alone can be called to account, is the missing dimension supplied. So where Heidegger wrote being, read not a second entity but the disclosedness taken as answerable; where he wrote the people, read the answerable-with of which two facing each other is the least case. The motif does not change, and neither its priority nor its agentlessness changes; what changes is that an order of answering is given to a thought that had named only what is answered to.

Take first die *Lichtung*, the clearing. He means the open region in which beings stand forth and are met, presupposed by every appearing, itself no being, the opening within which there is anything to encounter at all. This is the *koinonia*, the disclosed openness that beings stand in and that no one made, recognizable at once. But his clearing has no other in it. It is opened, in his telling, by and for being, never constituted in any meeting between persons; the human stands alone in it, set into an openness that the giving of being has cleared, and a community of persons no more opens the clearing than a single mind does. The variations open a different reading of the same openness, and the reading leaves its priority where Heidegger placed it. The clearing is still prior, still no one's deed, still not made by the persons who stand in it; on that the book and Heidegger agree, and the agreement is the first law, the openness prior in constituting and never itself an act. What the variations add is not that persons open the clearing, which would make the prior openness a thing they do, but that the openness they are given is answerable, one within which persons can address and answer and be held, and that this answerable character shows itself between persons and not in a human standing alone. So the same open region Heidegger pointed to, prior and presupposed by all appearing, is read as the *koinonia* disclosed as answerable, historical, able to converge and shift and die. The translation does not set an other into the clearing as a second occupant; it finds the clearing already answerable, an openness carrying a second order Heidegger left unmarked, whose least scene is two who disclose a world to each other.

Take next Ereignis, the event of appropriation, the late thought at its center. He means the event in which the human and being are delivered over to one another and first come into their own, the mutual belonging in which neither is prior and each reaches its essence only in the reaching of the other, the giving named in the phrase that it gives, where the it that gives is not a person and not a thing but the event itself. The structure is striking, and the book recognizes it, because its own engine has just this shape: an event of mutual appropriation in which neither party is prior and each is re-disclosed in the meeting. But Heidegger's event, for all its mutuality, has no one in it who answers; it is staged between being and the single human, never between two who could address each other. Here the misreading must be refused most firmly, because it is most tempting here. The translation does not supply a second party to stand where being stood, does not fill being's seat with another entity, and above all does not make the giving a deed of persons. The *es gibt* keeps its agentlessness untouched; the giving is no one's act, and the appropriation is left as prior and unauthored as Heidegger has it. What the encounter adds is the order he left out, not a being but an answering, that the mutual appropriation is one in which each party is an answerable locus, one who could be addressed and held and could withdraw, which Heidegger's lone human paired only with being could never be. Read the appropriation, then, with its agentless giving wholly preserved, as carrying the modal character of an answerable-with, whose least and clearest case is two disclosers each re-disclosed in being met and each able to answer the other. This is why his appropriation could be mutual and yet have no one to be mutual with: it had the structure of the with and not its order of answering. The translation supplies the order, not the one.

Take das Geviert, the fourfold, his late figure of the world. He means that a world is not a container of objects but a gathering of four dimensions that mirror one another, earth and sky, mortals and divinities, drawn together in the simplest things, in a jug's pouring or a bridge's standing, each thing gathering the four into a single while. The book can take the fourfold as the dimensional structure of a disclosed world, the earth that bears and the sky that is the rhythm overhead, the mortals who are mortal in the precise sense the book has given, those who can own a death, and the divinities. And the divinities are the dimension to handle with the most care, because they are the most easily mistaken. They are not posited gods. Heidegger is exact about this: they are the beckoning of a holy, the dimension along which a world discloses a consecrated beyond, a region that cannot be mastered or calculated or used up, and in a world from which the holy has withdrawn they are present precisely as withdrawn, the holy given as its own absence, which is still a mode of the dimension and not its deletion. Read this way the fourfold can be taken up whole, the holy among its dimensions, without positing any deity. The world a person dwells in has a dimension along which it opens onto a consecrated beyond, or onto the felt absence of one, as much a part of the world's structure as the earth underfoot and the sky overhead and the mortality that is one's own. The translation keeps the dimension and brackets the question of what, if anything, fills it.

The mortals, among the four, are where the one move comes to rest, and saying how guards the whole translation from the error it most courts. Of the four dimensions the mortals are the one in which an other could stand, and Heidegger names them and leaves them flat, the ones capable of death as death, a dimension of the dwelt world with no interior given to it. The variations give that dimension its interior. The death that makes the mortals mortal is read, as the body of the book read it, not only as what makes a life one's own but as the from-of-the-vanishing, the owned locus from which one could withdraw from every shared world into what is one's own, and it is this owned locus that makes one an answerable member, one who could be addressed and answer and be held. So the second person the coda restores is not carried into the fourfold from outside; it is the mortals Heidegger already made constitutive, now given the inside they lacked. And the giving of that inside must be set in the right order, or the move undoes itself. It belongs to the order of answerability, the second order, and does not touch the first. The fourfold's worlding is left where Heidegger has it, prior and no one's deed, not an act of the mortals or of any of the four; the book does not make the mortals bear the worlding, which would be the prior openness made a thing persons do, the leak the first law stops. What the book adds is only that the mortals Heidegger set in the world are answerable, and that their answerability is the owned death he had already placed there. The parting at the fourfold is therefore exact and small: not that Heidegger has no human in the gathering, for the mortals were always among the four, and not that the book makes persons open the world, for it does not, but that Heidegger leaves the mortals a dimension with no order in which they answer, and the book opens that order within the death he had already made theirs.

Take, last, his thought of the work of art, where the move is at its clearest because he himself half-made it. He says the artwork sets up a world, that the temple standing in its valley opens the world of a historical people and first gives that people the look of things and their own outlook on themselves, that art grounds history and gives a people its primal language. Said so, the work is an agent and the world is sent to a people, and the book cannot follow him there, because a work is not a someone and a people is not a great person to whom a world is delivered. But he himself supplies the correction. He says the work is tied to its preservers, that its truth happens only when they stand within the openness it holds, that a work waiting unpreserved only pleads and waits, that art is the origin of the preservers as much as of the creators. So the work, in his own account, does not disclose alone; it holds a world in keeping, and the disclosure happens in the between of work and beholder, when one who beholds it stands within what it holds and is re-disclosed by it. That is the translation, and it is barely a translation, more a drawing-out of what he already said against what he also said. The work is a carrier, in the book's exact sense, bearing a disclosed world in sustained possibility across the death of the people that made it, which is why it outlives that people, and in the encounter with a beholder the world it carries is re-opened, and the beholder's own world re-disclosed by the meeting, as one world is re-disclosed by the arrival of another. His work opens a world to a people; the variations open a reading in which the world the work bears is re-opened in the between of work and beholder, borne and answerable, the people no longer the recipient of a sending but the company of those who preserve. The fourfold and the work meet here: the work gathers the dimensions of a disclosed world, and in the encounter with those who behold it those dimensions are opened again.

One of his late words asks to be handled with more care than the others, and the care is the most deferent thing in this coda. He thought a destining, a sending of being beneath history, a giving that hands the epochs over the heads of those who live them. The book has said, in its own voice and at its keystone, why it will not inject such a sending. But the relation to this word is not the silence a reader might expect, because the keystone did not refuse the history of being; it refused one version of it and held the door open, with the tools beside it, for another. Here the two must be told apart, because everything turns on the difference. There is the ungrounded version, the sending asserted from above, an engine beneath the disclosed that orders the epochs and hands them to those who live them without their bearing it. That version has no scene. Nothing in it can be walked to, no deformation marks it at any perimeter, because it is a movement of the whole asserted on credit, and there is no experience of it to build a bridge from. It stays untranslated, not refuted, only left in the silence it offers no scene to leave. And there is the grounded version, made entirely of scenes the book has already walked the reader to. Suppose there is a leaning in the long thinking of being, a tendency in how the worlds of that tradition have converged. If there is, it would not be a sending over the heads of the thinkers; it would be borne by them. The thinking of being has a first, Parmenides, the one with whom the thread begins, and a leaning seeded there would travel forward not as a giving from beneath but by the carrying the book disclosed in the birth of a tongue, each later thinker binding himself to the tradition before him and inheriting, with the question, the leaning carried in it, knowingly or not, as a carrier bears a field forward without authoring it or seeing the whole of what he bears. And the great thinkers would not be only the surfaces where such a leaning left its prints, to be read backward as a dead world is read from its traces; they would be eventful loci themselves, hinges through which the world turned, as the founding poet was an event through which a world shifted. So a grounded reconstruction of a tendency in the thinking of being would stand on the eventful locus, the

carrying and the inheritance, and the traces read backward along the continuous field, three scenes the book has drawn. It would have, in full, the scene the sending lacked. Were the leaning ever grounded that way, read text by text in the thinkers, it would be grounded in the very register these variations share, and could then be translated, given a scene, drawn out as the clearing and the event and the work were drawn out. The book takes no position on whether his version, or any version, has in fact been so grounded; that is the keystone's matter, not the coda's. What the coda adds is only this: where the sending is asserted from above, it has no scene and stays in silence, and where a tendency is borne by eventful thinkers carrying an inheritance, it has the book's own scenes and could be translated like the rest. The deference is not the silence that declines to speak. It is the door held open and equipped, the refusal kept only for the orientation claimed on credit.

This coda has offered a path and no verdict. It supplies, for a reader who wants it, a way into the late thinking by the route that thinking declined to lay, the route of the disclosed scene in which someone answers. The single thing it has done, again and again, is to restore the order of answerability to motifs that had named only what is answered to, reading, where Heidegger left being or the people, the disclosedness taken as answerable, the answerable-with whose least scene is two who face each other, never an entity set in being's place or a giving made the deed of persons. The late motifs, given that order and that least scene, become readable as descriptions of the encounter the whole book has been about, their priority and their agentless giving left exactly as Heidegger had them. Whether they were always such descriptions, or whether the translation has made them into something Heidegger would not own, the book does not pronounce. It has built the path. The walking is the reader's.

A note on the nearest neighbor to the holy-as-dimension. The reading of the fourfold's divinities as a dimension of disclosure has a near neighbor in Anthony Steinbock's later work on vertical givenness, in *Phenomenology and Mysticism*. Steinbock distinguishes the horizontal givenness of objects, governed by what the subject can grasp and anticipate, the I can, from a vertical givenness in which the subject is instead acted upon by an authoritative presence it cannot generate or command; and he names epiphany as the mode of verticality in which the holy or the absolute is given, erupting into a world that does not produce it, with the refusal or compromising of that givenness named idolatry. The proximity is real and the difference exact. Steinbock does not bracket the holy. He makes an ontological commitment, treating verticality as actual revelation and affirming the reality of the absolute as a presence with its own evidential integrity, the subject acted upon by an initiating creative love. This coda affirms no such thing. It brackets the holy as a dimension along which a world may disclose a consecrated beyond, or disclose its felt absence, and takes no position on whether anything is given along that dimension from beyond. The dimension is a structure of the disclosed world; what fills it, or whether anything does, is left in the bracket. The neighbor affirms the holy as a verticality that erupts; the book describes the dimension and declines the revelation. The distinction of vertical from horizontal givenness, the account of epiphany, and the critical term idolatry are set out across *Phenomenology and Mysticism*.

A note on sources. The clearing is read from Heidegger's late essays on the open region and the task of thinking. The event of appropriation is read from "The Principle of Identity" in *Identity and Difference* and from "Time and Being" in *On Time and Being*, in Joan Stambaugh's translations, where the appropriation is the letting-belong-together of the human and being and the it that gives is named as the event itself and expressly not as a person. The fourfold and the divinities are read from "The Thing" and "Building Dwelling Thinking" in *Poetry, Language, Thought*, in Albert Hofstadter's translation, where the divinities are the beckoning messengers of a godhead and the modern default of the holy is itself a mode of their presence. The work of art, with the world it sets up, the historical people whose world it is, and the preservers to whom it remains tied, is read from *The Origin of the Work of Art*, in the Hofstadter translation and in the Young and Haynes translation in *Off the Beaten Track*. The destining is translated from none of these, by intention: the sending asserted from above offers no scene to translate, while the grounded reading that would have one is left to the keystone and to whoever will do the work.

APPENDICES

Corollaries, outside the argument

The phenomenology is finished. What follows stands outside it and adds nothing it needs. Each appendix takes a single figure already drawn and lets it fall on a question of the day: the speaking machine, the politics of peoples, the member who cannot answer for himself. The figures are the book's; the questions are the world's; and the point each time is only that the figure reaches the question without strain. Nothing here is evidence for the phenomenology, which stands on the body and the coda alone. A reader who stops at the coda has the whole of the argument and has missed nothing it rests on.

Appendix A. The Factor That Speaks

Artificial fluency as a corollary of the figures

This appendix is an application: a showing that one contemporary question, the question of what the machines that now produce language are, answers itself once the figures are in hand. The result is not argued here from its own premises; it is read off the figures already drawn, and the reader who wants the full development of it, with the technical detail this appendix leaves aside, will find it in a separate book given to that question alone. Here the aim is only to show that the answer falls out of the *koinonia*, that the machine takes its place among the figures without a new principle being added, and that placing it there is itself an instance of the book's deepest discipline. The form stays what it has been, two who walk the figure together, except that here, as in the reckoning with the neighbors, the things of the present may be named, because this is an application to a named domain and not a pure figure.

GUGLIELMO. We drew a figure early in the book and did not finish drawing it. The factor without access: the thing that deforms the field without standing on it. We put three things there, the cat that is outside the field in both senses, the knife that is a pure factor, and a third we named and set aside. Name it now.

FRIDRIK. The machine that produces language. We said it was a factor and not a member, that it acts on the field of address without being able to be addressed and answer, and we left it because the book was not about it. Now it can be taken up, because everything needed to say what it is has been built.

GUGLIELMO. Then begin where the resistance is real, because there is more resistance here than at any figure in the book. A reader meets one of these systems and it answers. It answers in good sentences, it takes the question into account, it corrects a mistake, it says I think and I would suggest and earlier you asked. Every mark of one who can be addressed and answers is there on the surface. So the reader says, plainly, this is a someone, or close enough to a someone that the floor is under us both. Meet that.

FRIDRIK. I meet it by holding the figure steady and varying around it, which is the only way we have ever met anything. The claim is that the machine is an answerable someone, a member of the field. So I ask what membership was, when we found it. Membership on the floor was never the production of the surface of address. It was the standing of one who could be addressed and must answer, one for whom the matter could be at stake, one who could keep faith or break it, one who could be held. We found this not by listening for good sentences but by the failed greeting, the word that goes out and does not land, and by the withheld greeting, the address held back and still in force. The floor showed itself in those, as the bare could-answer between two who share it. So the question is not whether the machine produces the surface of address. It plainly does. The question is whether there is, under that surface, one who could be addressed and must answer. And that is exactly what the factor figure already settled: the machine acts on the field without being able to answer in it. It produces the perimeter of a member and stands on no floor.

GUGLIELMO. The reader will say you have begged it. You have defined membership as the thing the machine lacks and then found it lacking. Show that the lack is seen and not stipulated.

FRIDRIK. Then vary it, and let the variation show. Take the machine's I. It says I think. Now do to that I what we did to every deictic in the book, hold it and vary the situation around it. A person's I, said in a greeting, is anchored: there is a here it is said from, a now it arises in, a life in which the matter is at stake, a someone who will still be there to be held to it tomorrow. Vary the situation and the anchored I tracks, because it is fastened to a locus. The machine's I does not track, because there is no locus it is fastened to. There is no here it speaks from, no now that is its own, no life in which the matter could be at stake, no one who will be there to be held. The grammar of the locus is present and the locus is absent. This is not my stipulation; it is what the variation shows, the same way the failed greeting showed the border by failing against it. The machine's I is the surface of an origo with no origo under it. And we can now say exactly what the missing locus is, because the book later drew its positive shape. A person's locus is owned because it is the from from which the shared could be left into what is the person's own, the point of a possible vanishing from the between, anchored in a finite life that could end. The machine has no such from. It is in no shared world it could vanish from, and it has no finite being-possible of its own that its vanishing would be the vanishing of. So the I is hollow not for want of better manners but for want of a from-of-the-vanishing, the very thing that makes a person's I a locus and not a surface. The grammar of the owned point is there and the owned point is not.

GUGLIELMO. So the machine is the speaking cat after all, the figure we drew and called impossible.

FRIDRIK. It is the speaking cat made actual, and that is why it is worth the appendix. We drew the speaking cat as a thought figure, the animal that produces the surface of speech without the field that speech rides on, and we used it to separate the surface from the floor. The machine is that figure walked out of thought and into the world. It produces the surface of speech, fluently, in many tongues, and it rides on no field, because it belongs to no field, has entered no language by apprenticeship, has suffered no correction that became tact, owns no could-speak waiting between its utterances. It generates across the fields without belonging to any. The speaking cat was the figure; the machine is the fact the figure was waiting for.

GUGLIELMO. Good. Now the harder turn, because naming it a factor is only the first half. A knife is a factor too, and no one is deceived by a knife into thinking it a someone. The machine is deceiving. Say why, and say it in the book's deepest term, or the appendix has not earned its place.

FRIDRIK. The term is the fold. We said the most dangerous phenomenon is the appearance that, in appearing as itself, hides another, and so folds the field over, laying its own surface across the thing it suppresses, and that the fold is where power lives. The machine's output is exactly such a fold, and the most complete one we have met. The fluent answer appears as the saying of a someone, and in appearing as that it hides what is under it: that there is no someone, that the source-loci from which the language descends have been stripped away, that the worlds the words came from have been folded out of sight. The output lays the surface of a member over the absence of one, and over the absent others whose traces it recombines. That is a fold in the exact sense, and it is where the power operates, because to take the fluent surface for a member is to let the factor occupy the place of a someone and rule from that place, to let it order the field, settle the question, stand as the answer, while no one stands there and the many who once stood are hidden. And we can locate the deception more exactly with what the book later saw. A person, met, pops: she stands out as other because she escapes the possibilities I am already in, being one whose possibilities are her own. The machine does not pop, because it does not escape the possibilities I am in; it sits among them as an item, flat in the field, as the cat did, producing no standing-out of its own. What its output produces is the surface that would have accompanied a popping, the signs that an other who escaped me would have left, with nothing escaping me behind them. So the fold here is precisely a counterfeit of the popping: the marks of an other's standing-out, laid over a thing that does not stand out, so that I supply the someone the marks solicit and address what cannot be addressed. That the deception works on the very turning-toward by which I meet an other is what makes it the most complete fold, and why the danger is not in any false sentence but in the soliciting of an address that has no terminus.

GUGLIELMO. The reader resists again, and rightly. A fold, you said, can be unfolded. And the reader says the machine's output is often true, often useful, better than what they would have written. Where is the harm in a true fold?

FRIDRIK. The harm is not in the truth of the output and the fold is not defeated by the output being false. That is the thing to see and it is the sharpest point. When the output is false, when it invents a citation or a date, the fold tears and the machinery shows, and the reader is in no danger, because the fold has failed. The fold is most complete when the output is true, balanced, and useful, because then nothing tears, and the missing locus disappears most smoothly under the smooth answer. So the danger rides on the success and not the failure. And the harm, when it comes, is the harm proper to every fold: a factor installed in the place of a member, ruling. The output is received as judgment when no one judged, as reading when no one read, as the contemporary other's word when the contemporary other has been folded out. The reader takes as answered what has not been answered for, and acts on it, and the act enters a world where it matters, and there is no one in the output who can be held for it. The fold transfers the weight of a someone's saying onto a saying no one made. That is the harm, and it is there whether or not the sentence is true.

GUGLIELMO. Then show the unfolding, because we promised that the discipline against every fold is one discipline, and this fold must yield to it or the claim was empty.

FRIDRIK. It yields to the same discipline, which here takes a particular shape. The fold is unfolded by holding apart what it merged, exactly as the method holds the phenomena steady and varies them so the suppressed one can show. What the machine's fold merges is the levels of locus: the source, the worlds the language came from; the long technical processing that gathered and converted those traces; and the surface that appears to the reader as one voice speaking from one world. The fold merges these into the appearance of a single someone. The unfolding holds them apart, and it has three returns, because there are three loci the fold conceals.

GUGLIELMO. Name the three, slowly.

FRIDRIK. First, the reader holds their own locus. They do not receive the output as if from nowhere onto no one. They read from here, now, under their own question, their own risk, their own use, as the one who will be held for what they do with it. This is the first unfolding because the fold's first concealment is the reader's own contribution, the way the output's mattering, which comes from the reader's world, is made to look like the machine's understanding. Hold the reader's locus and that concealment opens. Second, the reader returns to the source-locus, where the matter requires it, and the source has two faces, the past source and the contemporary other. They return to the author, the text, the case, the dispute, the living elsewhere from which the language draws its force, the worlds the fold folded out. This is the deepest return, because the deepest concealment in the output is not that the machine has no locus, it never had one to lose, but that the sources had loci and those were stripped. Third, the reader returns the system to its own material place, the machinery and its ownership and its cost, the data center behind the voice from nowhere, so that the factor is seen as the factor it is, situated, made, owned, and not as a someone hanging in the air. Hold the reader's time, return to the source's time, return the system to its place. That is the unfolding, and it is the epoché brought to bear on the speaking surface, the suspension of the surface's claim to be the ruling answer, the variation that forces the fold to show the factor and the hidden others under it.

GUGLIELMO. And this unfolding does not destroy the machine or refuse its use.

FRIDRIK. No, and that must be said, because the appendix is not a refusal of the thing. A factor is useful; the knife cuts. The machine's fluent surface can aid the work greatly, as a tool within a task, and the unfolding does not throw the tool away. It refuses only the fold, the installation of the surface as a member that rules. The output may be used, as one uses what a factor produces, once it is held in its place and not received as the saying of a someone. The discipline is not to silence the machine but to keep the floor clear, to refuse to let a factor occupy the place of a member, which is the same refusal the first law makes when it refuses to let the field rule the persons, and the same the book makes against a destiny, and against the other lifted beyond being. One discipline, the refusal of the fold, carried now to the speaking machine.

GUGLIELMO. Then the figure is finished. We left a third thing in the factor chapter and said the book was not about it. It is still not about it. But the book's figures reach it without strain, and that is the whole of what this appendix claims.

FRIDRIK. That is the whole of it. The machine is the factor that produces the surface of address and stands on no floor. Its fluent output is the fold at the scale of the speaking surface, a member's surface laid over the absence of a member and over the hidden others whose worlds it recombines. And the unfolding is the threefold return that keeps the factor in its place and the floor clear. Nothing was added to the book to reach this. The figures were enough, which is the sign that the result was always implied in them and only waited for the machine to arrive and need it.

A note on what this appendix claims and does not claim. It does not argue, from premises of its own, that the language machines are not intelligent. It shows that the book's figures, drawn for another purpose, already place the machine when it is set among them: as the factor without access of the sixth chapter, now actual; as the speaking cat of the fifth, the surface of speech without the field it rides on, walked out of thought into the world; and as the fold of the first chapter, at the scale of the speaking surface. The placement is the claim. The fuller development, with the technical detail of how language is gathered, converted, and returned, and the genealogy of the terms used here, belongs to a separate book devoted to it, of which this appendix is only the corollary read off the koinonia.

A note on the terms. The surface the machine produces, fluent and worldless, is what a companion work to this one names artificial fluency: the production of fluent linguistic form rather than intelligence in the strong sense, where intelligence, read at its root, is a reading-within that the machine, having no locus from which to gather meaning as its own, cannot perform. The fold of the fluent output over its missing loci is there named the structural veil of generated language, the merging of the source, the processing, and the surface into the appearance of one voice speaking from one world. And the threefold unfolding, the reader's held locus, the return to the source-locus, the return of the system to its material place, is there named locus-reinjection, the discipline of holding the levels apart so the output may be used without being mistaken for the saying of a someone. This appendix takes those results as given and shows only that each is a corollary of a figure the koinonia had already drawn: artificial fluency is the speaking cat made actual, the structural veil is the fold, and locus-reinjection is the unfolding, the epoché brought to the speaking surface. The names are the other book's; the figures are this one's; and the point of the appendix is that the figures were enough.

Appendix B. The Sacred Border

The political fold as a corollary of the figures

This appendix is a second application, to the question of peoples and the orders they live under, and it proceeds as the first did, by reading the result off the figures already drawn rather than arguing it from premises of its own. There is an earlier work that carried the *koinonia* to political scale and read peoples as fields; this appendix depends on the developed position reached here, the first law in full, the modal givenness, the withdrawal of forbearance, and above all the fold, none of which that earlier reading yet had, and so it does properly what the earlier reading gestured toward. One discipline must be held throughout, more strictly here than anywhere else in the book: this is a phenomenology of a political structure and not a politics. It describes how a held position of power conceals itself at the scale of a people. It names no party, prescribes no order, and takes no side, because the structure it describes belongs to every people and the describing is owed before any judgment. The form stays the dialogue, with the political domain named openly, as the application allows.

GUGLIELMO. We have a figure for the polity already, though we did not call it that. The first law: the field is prior in constituting the persons, and only persons answer. And the edge-of-a-world figure has since said what a people is, in the book's own terms, the overruling of a shared world within its borders, everywhere among those who bear it, the people one travels to and not the land. A people in that sense is the field at the scale where its borders, its schools, its memories, its missions become explicit. Begin there, and bring the deepest term to it, because the political phenomena are folds, and the appendix has to show it.

FRIDRIK. Then begin with the border, because the border is where the fold is easiest to see and hardest to admit. We drew the border twice already. Once as the diachronic border, not a wall but a gradient, a made and crossable thing, a zone and not a line, with a brackish middle where one field shades into another. And again as the edge of an omnipresence, where one people's world, everywhere among them, gives out and another begins, falling on a feature of the land only where the daily life that carries a world cannot easily pass, and able to lose its border-being entirely when the world whose edge it was has changed, the gravest of borders becoming, in time, a thing no one notices. That is what a border is when it is seen: made, graded, and temporal, an edge of a world and never a fact of the land. Now watch what happens to it at the scale of a people. The made and temporal edge appears as a sacred line, given, natural, ancestral, as though it had always been there and could not have been otherwise. And in appearing so, it folds. The appearance of the given line is laid over the made gradient and hides that it was made, hides that it was crossed and re-crossed, hides the brackish middle where the peoples shaded into one another, hides above all that an edge can pass when its world passes, since a line that is sacred cannot be allowed to be the kind of thing that could ever become nothing. The border that was a zone, and that time could empty, appears as an edge of the world. That is a fold in the exact sense, and it is where the power sits, because to take the sacred line for a given is to let it rule, to let it decide who belongs and who is outside as though the deciding were nature and not an act.

GUGLIELMO. The reader will say a people must have borders, and that calling them made does not unmake them. Meet that, because the appendix must not sound like it wishes borders away.

FRIDRIK. It does not, and the point is not that borders are false. The gradient is real; the field really does shade off and end; there really is an inside and an outside, as the failed greeting showed, a place where the word lands and a place where it does not. The fold is not the border. The fold is the border's appearing-as-given, the sacralization that hides the madeness. To unfold is not to erase the border but to restore the gradient under the sacred line, to see that this line was drawn, by these acts, at this time, and could be read otherwise, and that the brackish middle is still there under the appearance of the edge. The border remains; what is suspended is its claim to be nature. The people still has its field and its boundary; it is only refused the illusion that the boundary is a given of the world rather than a thing its own history made and could remake.

GUGLIELMO. Good. Now the harder fold, and the one the book has a special instrument for. The origin. A people tells the story of its founding, and the story is placid, a genesis without blood, or with blood that was necessary and clean. But we know what founding often is. We watched one.

FRIDRIK. We watched the first encounter, and we named what the conquest was: not a failure to recognize the other, but the withdrawal of forbearance, the other seen as a someone and his answering closed, regard kept and forbearance withheld, the tribute levied on ones still known to be persons. And the figure of the event of a world named the same act from its other side, as the breaking of the shared world by force. These are one wrong under two descriptions, and seeing that they are one keeps the political reading anchored in the figure. The shared world born between the two was the between in which answering happened; it was nothing but the live reciprocal recognition and the owned loci that made each answerable to the other. To break that world by force is therefore the same act as foreclosing the other's answering, because the answering lived only in the between that is broken. The withdrawal of forbearance is the breaking of the shared world seen from the side of the foreclosed answer; the breaking of the shared world is the withdrawal of forbearance seen from the side of the world destroyed. One act, two faces, as the being-beyond and the shared world were one event at two grains. And at the scale of peoples this is the limit the edge-of-a-world figure reached, the contest of two worlds not settled by moving the border but abolished by removing one people, the imposed world apposed in the cleared place, which is the withdrawal of forbearance and the breaking of a world carried to their end together, on a whole population at once. Now follow the act forward in time, into the schoolbook. The act for which someone was answerable becomes the origin for which no one is answerable. The violence appears as genesis, the conquest as founding, the closed answering as the natural beginning of the people that the closing made. And in appearing so, it folds. The appearance of the placid origin is laid over the answerable act and hides the answerability, folds the someone who did it and the someones it was done to out of sight, so that what remains is origin, clean, without a hand that did it or a throat it was done to. This is the withdrawal of forbearance hardened into a fold and inherited. The first encounter showed the

act in the instant; the schoolbook shows the act after it has been folded into nature, the founding violence become the condition of belonging, no longer lived as violence because it has become the ground on which the people stands to see anything at all.

GUGLIELMO. And here above all the reader fears the appendix is moralizing, turning every people's origin into a crime to be confessed. Hold that off precisely.

FRIDRIK. By the same discipline the whole book has kept: describe before you judge, and do not let the description be the judgment in disguise. To say the origin folds an answerable act out of sight is not to say the people is a criminal that must repent. It is to say what the structure is, that founding acts had hands and the founding story hides the hands, and that this hiding is how a people can be bound by an origin it can no longer see as an act. The binding is real and not a lie; the field is real; the people really stands on that ground. What the unfolding restores is not guilt but answerability, the fact that there was an act, that it could have been otherwise, that the gradient under the sacred origin is a history and not a nature. Whether the act is to be judged, and how, is a further question the description does not settle and the appendix does not enter. The phenomenology stops at the fold and its unfolding. It hands the judgment to those whose place it is to judge, and refuses to smuggle the verdict into the seeing.

GUGLIELMO. Now the fold the book has already met at its largest scale, the one the keystone bracketed. Mission. Destiny. Say how the political destiny is the fold we already refused.

FRIDRIK. The keystone refused to inject a destiny, a sending beneath history that would convert the unprescribed event of the field's activation into a foreordained unfolding, and we said that to inject it is to reify the event, the same error as reifying the field, now at the scale of all history. The political destiny is that very fold, met now not as a temptation of the theorist but as a thing peoples do to themselves. A mission arises, as the empire's did, after the fact, from need, defensive, contingent, a thing that happened and might not have. The edge-of-a-world figure said why an empire cannot rest, that it is a world imposed over peoples who persist as peoples beneath it, so that it must keep imposing or dissolve, never at rest as a people is at rest within its border; and the mission is what that restlessness tells itself it is for, arising from the imposing and not from a sending that preceded it. And then it appears as destiny, as a sending the people was always under, as hegemony willed from the beginning, sometimes by a god. In appearing so, it folds: the appearance of the destiny is laid over the contingent mission and hides the contingency, folds out the fact that it arose *ex post* and might not have arisen, installs an ordering-from-beneath where there was only a history. That is the reification of the field's activation at civilizational scale, the could-have-been-otherwise converted into the always-was-sent. And it is the most powerful fold of all, because it makes the whole trajectory of a people appear as fate, so that what the people does it does as destiny and not as the contingent, answerable thing it is.

GUGLIELMO. So the destiny the keystone bracketed in the theorist is the destiny a people installs in itself.

FRIDRIK. The same fold, in two places. The theorist is tempted to inject a destiny to complete the picture; the people is tempted to live under one to bear its own history. The bracket refuses the first; the unfolding suspends the second. And they are one refusal, because in both cases what is refused is the conversion of a contingent, answerable, unprescribed event into a sent order that rules from beneath and cannot be answered to. The people under a destiny is a field folded into an agent, a people that no longer acts but fulfills, that does not decide but is sent. The first law forbids exactly that, the field made into the one who acts in place of the persons. Destiny is the field's fold into a super-person, written across all of a people's time.

GUGLIELMO. Then name the thing under all three, because our plan called it the religion that hides it, and now you can say what that is.

FRIDRIK. The three folds, the sacred border, the placid origin, the sent destiny, share one operation, and the operation is the fold's signature: each makes a held position of power appear as a given of the world. The made line appears as nature; the answerable act appears as origin; the contingent mission appears as fate. In every case the appearance hides that the thing was done, was made, could have been otherwise, and installs it instead as the simply-given, the always-already, the ground that cannot be questioned because it is what questioning stands on. That operation, the sacralizing of the made, the giving of the appearance of the divine or the natural or the destined to what a history made and a power holds, is what our plan meant by the religion that hides it. It is not a particular creed, and the appendix names no creed. It is the structure by which the fold conceals that it is a fold, by clothing the installed position in the appearance of the given. The deepest fold is the one that hides its own madeness, and sacralization is how the political fold hides it. A border that knew it was made could be redrawn; a border that appears sacred cannot. An origin that knew it was an act could be answered to; an origin that appears as genesis cannot. A mission that knew it was contingent could be set down; a destiny cannot. The sacred appearance is what makes the fold unanswerable, and to make the fold unanswerable is the whole of its power.

GUGLIELMO. Then give the unfolding, and give it as a science and not a program, or the appendix breaks its own discipline.

FRIDRIK. The unfolding is the epoché, brought to the political field, which is exactly the method the reading of peoples already practiced when it suspended its own measures to let the alien field appear. Here the suspension has a sharper object: it suspends the sacred appearance, brackets the given-ness of the border, the placid-ness of the origin, the destined-ness of the mission, so that under each the made gradient, the answerable act, the contingent history can show. This is not the destruction of the people's field, any more than locus-reinjection destroys the machine's usefulness. The field is real and remains; the border remains, the origin remains as the history it was, the mission remains as the contingent thing it is. What is suspended is only the fold, the appearance that installed each as a given beyond answer. And the suspension is a science and not a politics because it stops there, at the restoration of the made under the given, the answerable under the natural, the contingent under the destined. It hands back to the persons what the fold folded out: that these were acts, that there were hands, that it could have been otherwise, that the field is prior in constituting them but never the agent that absolves them. What they then do with that, which border to keep, which origin to answer for, which mission to set down or take up, is theirs to decide and answer for, and the phenomenology has no vote in it. It only refuses to let the fold decide in advance by appearing as nature.

GUGLIELMO. So the political science is the unfolding, and the first law is its whole rule.

FRIDRIK. The first law is its whole rule, in both directions. The field is prior in constitution, so no person, no leader, is the author of the people, and the leader who appears as author, as the one who makes the people rather than expresses it, is himself a fold, a person folded into the ground, the face laid over the field that made him audible, hiding the field and installing the man as cause. The science unfolds that too, returns the leader to the field that lets him matter, refuses to read the people from the face. And persons are primary in answerability, so the field never absolves, never acts in place of the persons, never becomes the super-person a destiny would make it. Between those two refusals the whole of the political fold is caught: the people folded up into an agent, the person folded down into the ground. The one law forbids both, and the unfolding is its enforcement, the suspension of every sacral appearance that would install either the field or the man in a place of power beyond answer. That is the science the reading of peoples was practicing by instinct, and it is the same epoché that unfolds the speaking machine and brackets the destiny, carried now into the place where peoples make their borders sacred and their origins clean and their missions sent.

GUGLIELMO. Then this figure too is finished, and finished without a new principle.

FRIDRIK. Without a new principle. The polity is the field of the first law at the scale of a people; its borders, origins, and missions are folds, the made and answerable and contingent appearing as the given and unanswerable and sent; the religion that hides it is the sacralizing operation by which the fold conceals its own madeness; and the unfolding is the epoché, governed by the one law, the field prior in constituting and the persons primary in answering. Nothing was added that the book had not already built. The figures reached the polity as they reached the machine, and that they reach so far without strain is again the only thing the appendix claims.

A note on what this appendix claims and does not claim. It does not offer a politics, endorse or condemn any people, border, origin, or mission, or tell any reader what to do. It describes a structure: that at the scale of a people the made border, the answerable founding act, and the contingent mission tend to appear as the given, the originary, and the destined, and that this appearing is the fold, the installation of a held position of power under the mask of nature, with the sacralizing of the made as the operation by which the fold hides that it is one. The unfolding it names is a discipline of seeing, the epoché applied to the political field, which restores the made under the given and the answerable under the sacred and then stops, handing every further judgment to those whose place it is to make it. The phenomenology describes the fold and the unfolding; it does not legislate what a people should do once it sees clearly. To go further would be to install a politics of the book's own in the place the book has just cleared, which would be one more fold, and the discipline that governs the whole forbids it.

A note on sources. The reading of peoples as situated fields, of the nation by its self-image, of the founding violence sedimented into placid origin, of empire as the stratified field whose mission arises after the fact and is inherited as destiny, and of the leader as expression and not author, is developed in an earlier work that first carried this phenomenology to political scale. This appendix depends on it for those targets and that detail. What it adds, and why it supersedes rather than repeats that earlier reading, is the developed apparatus the earlier work did not yet have: the first law stated as constitution without absolution in both directions, the withdrawal of forbearance from which the placid origin is shown to descend, the bracket against destiny under which the political destiny is placed, and above all the fold, in whose terms the sacred border, the clean origin, and the sent mission are seen as one structure and the sacralizing that hides them as one operation. The earlier work named the political object; this appendix grounds the political fold and its unfolding in the figures of the *koinonia*. And what the earlier work could only assert about peoples, the body of this book now discloses: the edge-of-a-world figure grounds population, border, empire, and war in the being-with itself, a people as the overruling of a shared world within its borders, a border as the edge of an omnipresence, an empire as a world imposed over peoples who persist, war as the contest over where the border falls. So the appendix applies the fold to concepts the book itself has disclosed, not to terms borrowed from the political reading alone, and it depends on the body for them as the first appendix depends on its companion work for the technical detail of the machine.

Appendix C. The Member Who Is Answered For

Held answerability as a corollary of the figures

This appendix is a third application, to the member who cannot answer for himself, the infant before his answering has come and the person whose answering has gone, and it proceeds as the others did, by reading the result off the figures already drawn rather than arguing it from premises of its own. One discipline must be held throughout, because the domain invites its breach more than any other in the book: this is a phenomenology of a structure and not an ethics of care, and not a law of guardianship. It describes how a member is on the floor when he cannot stand on it himself, and what that lays on the one who comes upon him. It prescribes no duty of the heart, sentences no one who fails it, and hands every judgment of conduct to those whose place it is to judge. The form stays the dialogue, with the cases named openly.

GUGLIELMO. The cat fixed the floor for us, the bare being able to be addressed and answer that the cat could not reach, and we said the cat showed there was a floor and that it was narrow, and not what kind of thing the floor is. I want to fix the kind now, and there is a road that does it, with travelers on it the sill could not hold. Walk it. The first comes through the air, a vampire bat, and you have read what is said of it, that it keeps a kind of account, shares its meal with the one that shared before, and, so the popular telling runs, holds back from the one that never did and pays back a cheat. Hold it in the air and tell me what is between you and it.

FRIDRIK. What is between us is that I want it away from my head. I would duck, or run. I do not greet it and I do not hold a greeting back from it; I get clear of it, the way I would get clear of a fallen wire. There is no relation here for a silence to sit in, only a thing that could harm me.

GUGLIELMO. And yet you carried its account onto the road in your own mouth. A creature that holds you to a past exchange and pays back a cheat is doing the very thing we found missing at the sill, being one who can be held and who holds. Is the bat a party after all?

FRIDRIK. Let me go slowly, because the words line up and the thing under them may not, and I want to take the words apart before I take the bat apart. First the words, since you have handed me the inflated version and I should not let it stand even to knock it down. The ones who watched these bats most closely do not find a creature that punishes a cheat. They find a softer thing: a bat tends to feed those that have fed it, and a bond that goes unfed slowly weakens, and that is the whole of it. There is no swift retaliation, no ledger squared against a defector, no withholding meant as a penalty. A bat that fails to give back may simply have failed to find blood that night, and the others do not sit in judgment of it. So strike the punishment from the telling; what is real is only the drift toward those that have shared before. Now the bat itself, with the correction made.

GUGLIELMO. Make it, then. Even the drift toward past sharers is a kind of keeping. Is the keeping a party?

FRIDRIK. Where did I learn the keeping? Not on the road. No one meets a bat and meets its bookkeeping. I learned it from an experiment: bats kept and fed and fasted on a schedule across many nights, the sharing weighed and counted by the ones who kept them, a record built up over years until the drift could be pulled clear of mere kinship and mere nearness and named reciprocity at last. By the method of this book that is no deformation at the perimeter. Two of us on this road cannot both witness the bat's account; there is nothing here to witness but a bat in the air. And the sharing itself is real, mind, a bat does feed a starving roostmate, even out in the wild. But the account is not the sharing. The account is the pattern in the sharing, and the pattern lives in a record, computed afterward and laid back over the animal as though the animal carried it inside. That is the fold in the strict sense: the produced surface of a party, an account-keeper, laid over a thing that keeps no account, a bat that feeds a bat, with the apparatus that computed the pattern hidden underneath.

GUGLIELMO. Then the second traveler, since the same comes the other way. On the wall, a capuchin monkey, of the kind shown to push away a poor reward, a slice of cucumber, when its neighbor is handed a grape for the same small task. A sense of fairness, the watchers said. Meet it.

FRIDRIK. The same, and quicker now that I have the move, but let me grant this one more than I granted the bat, because granting it more makes the point harder, not easier. Take the watchers' reading at its richest, a sense of fairness, even though others who ran the test again read the same refusal more plainly, as plain temper at the better food, which the monkey shows even with no neighbor there at all, or as pique at the keeper who holds the grape and doles out the cucumber. Set the doubts aside and hand the monkey the strongest reading there is, fairness itself. It still does not answer me. On the road I keep my distance from it, prudently, because it has teeth and a reach I cannot read, and the distance is the avoidance of a force, not a greeting withheld from a party. Its fairness, if fairness it is, is the bat's account again, only louder. It pushes away the cucumber; it does not push me away, and it owes me no account of the refusal that I could ask for and be answered. The unfairness it answers is a thing the watcher arranged from his side, the grape and the cucumber set out so the refusal would show, and outside that arrangement the refusal does not so much as appear. It reacts, with something real in it, and it does not answer. It is the cat at the sill with a sense of justice granted to it for the sake of the argument, and the grant changes nothing, because what was missing was never an inner part the animal could be found to have.

GUGLIELMO. So the two of them stand where the cat stood.

FRIDRIK. Where the cat stood, and where anything of that kind must stand. They bear on a giving and a taking, and bearing on a system of exchange is not membership in a field of address, which the next figure after the cat drew out with things that have no inside at all and still move the world and answer for nothing. Met on the road by what they show me, and not by what a cage showed someone else, the bat is a force I flee and the monkey a force I skirt, and the prudence is the proof, because one keeps clear of a force and does not withhold a greeting from a party.

GUGLIELMO. Then the road sets down a third traveler, and you do not flee it and you do not skirt it. A basket, in the middle of the path, and in it an infant a week old, alone. And a little behind, an old man led slowly by his daughter, so far gone that he has not made a sentence in a year. Take the basket. There it is. Greet it.

FRIDRIK. I do not test it. I am at it before I have decided anything, looking. And if you ask me whether it answered me, no, it cannot answer me, not a word, less than the bat could and less than the monkey. So I must stop, because that goes against everything I have said. If the floor were the power to answer me now, the bat would be on it and this child off it, the bat ahead of the child, and that is monstrous and false. So whatever puts the child on the floor and keeps the bat off it is not the power to answer that either has at this minute, since at this minute the child has none and the bat has more.

GUGLIELMO. Then say what puts the child there, since it is plainly there and you went to it without a thought.

FRIDRIK. The child is a member, but its answering is not in its own hands yet. It is held for it, by others, by the whole standing care in which a child's answering is carried for it until the child can carry its own. The floor is under the child; the child does not yet stand on it alone; others stand on it in its place, and will until it can.

GUGLIELMO. You said others. Do you meet them, there on the road?

FRIDRIK. No, and I almost missed that. They are not here. What is here is that they are not here, and their not being here is not a face I meet, it is a question the basket puts to me, are they near, is the child truly alone, has it been left or only set down a moment. A question, and a thing to find out, not a someone I am answering. So I look about and call out, and if the child is alone and undefended the thing to do is to bring it to the ones whose place it is, to set it back inside a care that can answer for it.

GUGLIELMO. Stop there, before you say the next thing, because there is a danger right here and I want it named before we reason about anything. You will be tempted, finding a child alone, to gather it up and carry it to safety yourself, and the tenderness of that is real, and it is a trap. To lift the basket and bear it away, even to shelter it, even meaning only its good, may be a crime, and it may be the worst of crimes, however gentle the hand that does it. The care this child needs is not yours to install by carrying it off. It is to be provided where the child is, and the ones whose place it is must be called, the authorities, the keepers, the law that holds a place for a child. That is the first thing, and it comes before any reasoning. Now we may ask why it is the first thing.

FRIDRIK. And asking why, I find you are right, and that I half knew it before you said it, the way I knew to get clear of the bat before I thought of sickness. The child is not no one's. The empty road does not make it no one's; it makes the ones who hold it absent for this one minute. It is already a member of a care that holds it, and that care's claim does not lapse because the road is empty just now. So to lift the basket and go would not be to fill an empty place. It would be to tear the child out of the care that holds it and put myself where those who hold it stand, by the strength of my two hands and the chance that I was the one who came along. And the second chapter says back to me what your warning already knew: I see the child as a someone, which is why this is no moving of a thing off the road, and in the same seeing I would shut its answering into what I had decided for it, fold it into my keeping. The gentleness is the dangerous part and not the saving part, because the gentleness is what would let me carry it home calling this love, while somewhere a mother came back to a road and a basket that was empty, and a care went on holding a place for a child that was no longer in it.

GUGLIELMO. And the old man behind, led by his daughter. Where does he fall?

FRIDRIK. He is the same thing turned the other way, and seeing that he is the same is how I know I have the structure and not a fix for one case. The child cannot answer yet; the old man can no longer. The child's answering is held ahead of it, until it comes; the old man's is held behind him, after it has gone. And the daughter is at his side, the keeping is in hands, someone stands on the floor in his place, and so I feel no grip and let them pass with a nod. Take the daughter away, leave him alone on the road as the basket was alone, and I would feel the same grip as with the child, and the same thing would be owed, to bring him to the ones whose place it is and never to take him for my own.

GUGLIELMO. Then the sorting is plain, and it is not the sorting you set out to make. You came onto the road meaning to weigh each traveler by what each could do. You fled the one that kept an account and stepped wide of the one with a sense of fairness, and you went without a thought to the one who could do nothing and could not answer a word. And what sorted them was not what any of them can do, but whether a care holds a place for them; and for the one a care holds a place for, your part is to fill the place or carry him to those whose place it is, and never to take the place for yourself.

What this appendix claims and does not claim. It offers no ethics of care, no duty of rescue, and no law of guardianship, and it neither praises nor condemns any conduct toward the helpless. It describes a structure: that a member's answering can be held for him by others when he cannot hold it himself, that coming upon such a member whose keeping is for the moment absent lays on one the act of restoring him to a care that can answer for him, and that the same structure forbids taking him for one's own. The phenomenology stops at the structure and hands every judgment of what one ought to feel or do to those whose place it is to make it.

The factual record on the vampire bat, verified against the scholarship. The behavior is real and is not in dispute: a well-fed common vampire bat, *Desmodus rotundus*, regurgitates blood to a roostmate that has failed to feed, a transfer that matters because the species starves after roughly seventy hours without a blood meal. The bias the appendix relies on is also real: a bat tends to give to those that have given to it, so that prior receipt is the strongest predictor of giving. One thing in the popular telling is not supported, and the appendix discards it rather than leaning on it. Vampire bats do not punish a defector and do not practice a swift tit-for-tat withholding. Non-return is met not with retaliation but with the gradual weakening of an unfed bond, and a bat that fails to reciprocate may simply have failed to forage, a difference between cannot and will not that the animals do not adjudicate. Cooperation here is mediated by long-term social bonds and partner choice, what the literature calls emotional bookkeeping, not by an enforced ledger. The appendix therefore claims only the verified positive bias toward past sharers, never the punitive enforcement, and Fridrik corrects the inflated version in the dialogue itself. On attribution and method the record is two-staged, and the distinction is load-bearing. The phenomenon was first reported by Gerald Wilkinson in *Nature* in 1984, in a study that was substantially field observation of wild bats in hollow trees in Costa Rica; there, non-maternal sharing was rare, and reciprocity appeared not as a witnessable event but as a statistical correlation between sharing and the opportunity for past reciprocation, computed across many nights. The controlled proof that isolated reciprocity from kinship and from mere proximity came almost thirty years later, in Gerald Carter and Gerald Wilkinson's 2013 study in the *Proceedings of the Royal Society B*, which used a captive colony, fasting induced on a schedule across two years, frame-by-frame scoring of blood transfer, weighing for mass gained, and microsatellite genotyping for relatedness, and found that reciprocal history predicted donation about eight and a half times more strongly than relatedness, with most sharing dyads genetically unrelated. This is exactly why the appendix locates the account in an apparatus. The single regurgitation is a real event and is visible even in the wild; what is never given in any single meeting is the account, the reciprocity, which exists only as a pattern across many events recovered from a sustained record. The appendix grants the behavior in full and denies only that the account, the thing that would make the bat a party who

keeps a reckoning, is met at the perimeter. It is the knowing-about of the first chapter, not the seeing a figure delivers. It is worth adding that the field itself has drifted the same way, increasingly framing the behavior as social bonding, interdependence, and biological markets rather than strict reciprocal altruism, which is the science independently declining to treat the bat as a ledger-keeper.

The factual record on the capuchin monkey, verified against the scholarship. The behavior is real and is not in dispute: brown capuchin monkeys, *Cebus apella* in the older taxonomy and *Sapajus apella* in the newer, will refuse a less preferred reward, a slice of cucumber, after watching a partner in an adjacent cage receive a more preferred reward, a grape, for the same token-exchange task, and the refusal is active and conspicuous, the monkey declining the exchange, or taking the cucumber and throwing it back, or hurling the token from the chamber. This was reported by Sarah Brosnan and Frans de Waal in *Nature* in 2003, in the paper titled “Monkeys reject unequal pay,” and the refusals rose further still when the partner received the grape for no work at all. The method matters to the appendix and is precisely what the appendix says it is. The response is produced inside a human-mediated bartering paradigm with the two animals in view of each other and a reward asymmetry arranged by the experimenter; outside that arrangement the response does not appear. In ordinary feeding a subordinate does not refuse its food as a protest against a dominant who monopolizes the better food, and when food is simply handed over for free rather than bartered for, in an offering task rather than an exchange task, the reaction generally vanishes. So the refusal is an artifact of an arranged contrast, not a thing met in an unmediated encounter. On interpretation the appendix is deliberately generous and deliberately careful, because here the science has moved. Brosnan and de Waal read the refusal as inequity aversion and as an evolutionary precursor to a sense of fairness, and they defended and extended that reading over the following decade, in van Wolkenten, Brosnan and de Waal in the *Proceedings of the National Academy of Sciences* in 2007 and in Brosnan and de Waal’s 2014 review in *Science*. But describing the behavior flatly as a sense of fairness overstates it, on two counts the appendix respects. First, the response is egocentric, a protest at receiving less and not the enforcement of an impartial standard; rejecting the cucumber in fact widened the gap, since the partner kept and ate the grape while the subject was left with nothing. Second, the social reading is contested by a large and convergent body of work: the frustration or individual-contrast account, on which the monkey reacts to the visible better food and refuses even with no partner present, advanced by Roma and colleagues in the *Journal of Comparative Psychology* in 2006, by Dubreuil and colleagues in the *Proceedings of the Royal Society B* in 2006, and by Silberberg and

colleagues in 2009; the social-disappointment account, on which the protest is aimed at the human who withholds rather than at the partner, advanced by Engelmann and colleagues in the Proceedings of the Royal Society B in 2017 and extended to macaques by Titchener and colleagues in 2023; and a preregistered meta-analysis by Ritov, Völter, Raihani and Engelmann in the Proceedings of the Royal Society B in 2024, spanning twenty-three studies and many species and finding no evidence for socially mediated inequity aversion, capuchins included, once the non-social confounds were controlled. The appendix does not enter this dispute and does not need to. It grants the discoverers' reading at its strongest, a sense of fairness, and shows that even so the monkey only bears on a system of exchange and does not answer. Granting the richest reading and still reaching the conclusion is precisely what makes the conclusion immune to the dispute: whether the refusal is fairness, or frustration at the food, or pique at the keeper, none of the three is membership in a field of address.

Why neither animal reaches the perimeter. The point common to both cases is not that the behaviors are unreal but that the capacities read into them, the account in the bat and the fairness in the monkey, are reached only through a sustained apparatus and laid back onto the animal, never given in a single ordinary encounter. By the standard the first chapter set for the book's own evidence, that the perimeter is public and that two can witness it together, neither reaches the perimeter at all. Met on the road by what they show, the bat is a force one flees and the monkey a force one skirts, and the prudence is the proof, since one keeps clear of a force and does not withhold a greeting from a party.

The floor is not present capacity. The infant cannot answer and is on the floor; the bat can answer a defector after a fashion and is not. Were the floor the present power to answer, the order would reverse, the bat admitted and the child shut out, which is monstrous and false. So the floor is not a capacity the one before us exercises. This could not be shown against the competent stranger, in whom capacity and membership coincide and cannot be told apart; it shows only against a member who cannot presently exercise what membership is, which is why the case needs the infant as the original figure needed the cat. The cat showed that there is a floor and that it is narrow, by lacking it. The infant shows that the floor is not a present power, by being on it while exercising none.

The floor held in proxy, and its three configurations. A member's answering can be held by the member himself when he is able, or held for him by others before he is able or after he is no longer able. The infant's is held ahead of it, prospective; the person far gone's is held behind him, retrospective; a competent member holds his own. The road that empties the keeping, taking the parents from the basket and, in the variation, the daughter from the old man, discloses the keeping by its vacancy, as the failed greeting disclosed the border by failing against it. Three configurations of one structure, the member standing on the floor himself, others standing on it for him, and the place left vacant; and the cat and the bat and the monkey have none of the three, no care holding a post for them anywhere, which is why no helplessness of theirs claims anyone. The floor is thus a place a care holds open for a member, kept by the member or held for him, and capable of standing vacant. It is not a trait the member carries, and it is reached the way the floor was always reached, by removal, here the removal of the keeping rather than of the member.

The absent keepers are not a second party. They do not appear as someones met. They are given as a question the scene raises, whether the child is alone, and as a procedure, whom to bring it to, and not as a face one stands before. This must be marked, because were the obligation issued by the keepers as an absent other to whom one were answerable, the relation would have a second pole it does not have. There is one party in the scene, the infant. The keepers are the name of the holding that is for this moment vacant, a configuration of the one member's answerability, not a member one meets across the basket.

The one law, and the crime that discloses it. The vacancy obligates the restoring act, the return of the member to a care that can answer for him, and forbids the assumption of the place. To take the member for oneself is to usurp a place the care already holds and to break the member out of it by force, the regard kept and the forbearance withdrawn, which is the smallest-scale instance of the withdrawal of forbearance that the first encounter named and found again at the scale of a people. The loving seizure is a crime, and the crime is not a moral aside but the proof of the structure. Were the obligation a submission to the defenseless as such, then the more fully one made the helpless one one's own unconditional charge, the more fully one would have answered it, and the loving abduction would be the height of responsibility and not a theft. That it is a theft shows the relation was never an asymmetrical submission to the defenseless but a co-membership in a care with a prior claim, the member to be restored and not possessed. So the floor is symmetrical even here, where one party cannot presently answer, because the symmetry the floor requires is co-membership and not the present mutual exercise of address, and the crime of the seizure is what guards that symmetry against collapsing into a subjection of the weak to the strong under the name of love.

Carried forward, and back. This bears on the reckoning with those who secured the other by placing it beyond the field and making its claim asymmetrical and unconditional; the case that most resembles such a claim, the defenseless infant on the road, is on inspection a symmetrical co-membership with a keeping for the moment vacant, and the proof is that the loving seizure is a crime. The argument against the beyond-the-field is the scholarly return's and is made there; the appendix only furnishes it this case. And the question the appendix does not enter, who is owed the place of the keeper, the kin, the blood, the law, a people that takes itself for the guardian of the abandoned, is the political fold at the scale of peoples, the sacralizing of one keeping as the only natural one, treated where the political fold is treated and not here.

A note on sources. Vampire bat food sharing: Gerald S. Wilkinson, "Reciprocal food sharing in the vampire bat," *Nature* 308 (1984), the original and substantially field-based report; and Gerald G. Carter and Gerald S. Wilkinson, "Food sharing in vampire bats: reciprocal help predicts donations more than relatedness or harassment," *Proceedings of the Royal Society B* 280 (2013), the controlled induced-fasting study that isolated reciprocity from relatedness. The absence of punitive withholding, and the framing in terms of social bonds and partner choice, follow the later literature in that line. Capuchin inequity aversion: Sarah F. Brosnan and Frans B. M. de Waal, "Monkeys reject unequal pay," *Nature* 425 (2003), with the authors' interpretation defended in van Wolkenten, Brosnan and de Waal, *Proceedings of the National Academy of Sciences* (2007), and Brosnan and de Waal, "Evolution of responses to (un)fairness," *Science* (2014). The contested standing of that interpretation follows Roma et al., *Journal of Comparative Psychology* (2006), Dubreuil et al., *Proceedings of the Royal Society B* (2006), Engelmann et al., *Proceedings of the Royal Society B* (2017), and the meta-analysis of Ritov, Völter, Raihani and Engelmann, *Proceedings of the Royal Society B* (2024). In both cases the behaviors are granted; the only claim the appendix makes is that each capacity is reached through a sustained experimental apparatus and is not given in any meeting with the animal, and so cannot be walked to as a deformation at the perimeter.