CRACKPOTS ON PARADE

The Nether Side of Genius

& TRANSGRESSIVE DECONSTRUCTIONS

For four years, as editor of The Faculty Forum, a campus wide monthly publication at Duke University, I filled empty space in my pages with the following items of scholarly research. To liven the tone, I invented a co-editor called Ferret, who is credited with many of the following portraits. For convenience in reading and revising, I have changed the printed format to Microsoft Word.

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Sigmund Freud, 1856-1939

Ur-phallocrat, cigar addict (cause of death), befuddled about his sexual identity (he spoke of "having overcome my homosexuality"*), and paranoid about one-time followers like Jung and Adler who went their own way, Sigmund Freud was a man desperately in need of having his head examined. Not for any of the above reasons, but because of the brutal misogyny that attended his role in deconstructing the noses of hapless young women, all of whom suffered horrible pain and at least one of whom nearly died of a hemorrhage.

Naturally, he and his accomplice, Wilhelm Fliess--the man toward whom Freud felt those homosexual yearnings--rationalized their sadism as necessary therapy for their victims, mostly well-to-do young women whose "hysteria," they claimed, arose from something gone awry in the genital region, and whose cure could be effected by taking apart their nose. The fact that any half-wit plucked off the street would have known better was of no help to these poor females, whose ordeal was vividly described by Freud
himself in his correspondence with Fliess. Consider the following specimen dated August 4, 1895, regarding the aftermath of one such nose operation:

". . . Eckstein's condition is still unsatisfactory: persistent swelling, going up and down 'like an avalanche'; pain, so that the morphine cannot be dispensed with; bad nights. The purulent secretion has been decreasing since yesterday; the day before yesterday (Saturday) she had a massive hemorrhage, probably as a result of expelling a bone chip the size of a heller [a coin]; there were two bowls full of pus. Today... since the pain and the visible edema had increased, I let myself be persuaded to call in Gersuny... He explained that the access was considerably narrowed and insufficient for drainage, inserted a drainage tube, and threatened to break it [the bone?] open if that did not stay in. To judge by the smell, all this is most likely correct."

Two days later, Freud says,

"... profuse bleeding had started again...; the fetid odor was very bad. Rosanes... removed some sticky blood clots, and suddenly pulled at something like a thread, kept on pulling. Before either of us had time to think, at least half a meter of gauze had been removed from the cavity. The next moment came a flood of blood. The patient turned white, her eyes bulged, and she had no pulse... After she had been packed, I fled to the next room..."

I suppose anyone can make a mistake, but one would think that after such a horror Freud would at least renounce this dangerous quackery. Quite the contrary, a year later Freud was proposing to Fliess that they write "a full-fledged pamphlet on 'The Nose and Female Sexuality.'" It is worth noting
that although Freud conceded the existence of "male hysteria," he and his friend never considered perpetrating a nosectomy on any male patients.

By the following year (1896), the father of psychoanalysis had it all figured out: the wretched young woman had willed the whole thing:

"I know only that she bled out of longing [emphasis Freud's]. . . . When she saw how affected I was by her first hemorrhage. . . , she experienced this as the realization of an old wish to be loved in her illness. . . . Then. . . since I did not come in the night, she renewed the bleedings, as an unfailing means of rearousing my affection."

A comforting certitude settles upon Freud's subsequent references to the case: "Her story is becoming even clearer; there is no doubt that her hemorrhages were due to wishes." Not at all incidentally, Fliess is repeatedly assured of his share in the exculpation: "As far as the blood is concerned, you are completely without blame!"

No doubt, like the future inhabitants of this column, Sigmund Freud was a genius, but the near-homicidal nature of the foregoing episode gives him pride of place as the leader of our parade. Some of his other absurdities, such as his vagina dentata or castration complex fantasy, would have surely merited a place in the procession, but not as Crackpot Number One. Soon--diversity be damned--he will be joined in his march to Valhalla by another Dead White Male.

*Ferret-Source: The Complete Letters of Sigmund Freud to Wilhelm Fliess 1887-1904 (Translated and edited by Jeffrey Moussaieff Masson,
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Carl Gustav Jung (1875-1961)

Parricidal offspring of Freud the Father, who on three occasions fainted in Jung's presence; cruel exploiter of his mistress, whom he would neither marry nor let go despite her threat of suicide when he refused to divorce his wife; inventor, or some would say discoverer, of universal archetypes in the collective unconscious, Carl Gustav Jung earns his place in the parade by virtue of the vision that called him, at the age of twelve, to his lifelong mission of reconceptualizing Christian theology for the twentieth century.

It is true that the ancient Hebrews risked a touch of anthropomorphism at times, by endowing their Creator with enormous feet, for example, in *Isaiah* 66:1 ("the earth is my footstool"), but Jung's extension of the idea is uniquely grotesque. Here is Jung's reminiscence of the event that transformed his life while he stood outside his father's church in Basel, as he described it in his memoir, *Memories, Dreams, Reflections* (New York: 1963, 36, 39-40):
"One fine summer day that same year [1887] I came out of school at noon and went to the cathedral square. The sky was gloriously blue, the day one of radiant sunshine. The roof of the cathedral glittered, the sun sparkling from the new, brightly glazed tiles. I was overwhelmed by the beauty of the sight, and thought: 'The world is beautiful and the church is beautiful and God made all this and sits above it far away in the blue sky on his golden throne. . . .'

I saw before me the cathedral, the blue sky. God sits on his golden throne, high above the world and from under the throne an enormous turd falls upon the sparkling new roof, shatters it, and breaks the wall of the cathedral asunder.

So that was it! I felt an enormous, an indescribable relief. . . and an unutterable bliss such as I had never known. I wept for happiness and gratitude. The wisdom and goodness of God had been revealed to me. . . . I had experienced an illumination. From that moment on, when I experienced grace, my true responsibility began."

An extraordinary experience, to be sure, which might well have a considerable effect on the soul of a puberty-stressed adolescent. But let's have a look at the long-term aftermath of this epiphany of "grace," "illumination," and "true responsibility." I instance the testimony of two of Jung's patients, Americans whose pilgrimage to Zurich occurred during the full maturity of the maestro's 50th year. The question they brought before him was how they should conduct their love life while remaining married to other people:

"In the summer of 1923, Harry wrote to Jung and arranged for a visit to Zurich in 1925. Once Harry started telling Jung about Christiana, Jung
himself opened up, in 'earthy, concrete language,' with his own stories of Anima captivation: his affair with twenty-three year old Toni Wolff. Harry was impressed that Jung 'and his young co-worker and lover had entered a permanent relationship with the consent, and even the approval, of Emma Jung [Jung's wife]. Harry was overwhelmed, of course, not merely with what to an American sensibility appeared outrageous in their triadic relationship, but also with what it suggested--however shockingly at first--might be possible in his own life.'

And even after Harry came back, . . . Jung would write him things like, 'Your life is yourself. Nothing matters but the completion of the self.' . . . Now it was her [Christiana's] turn to go to Zurich and consult with the Old Man. . . . Jung opened, she wrote, 'the possibility of a truly great advance, an advance equal in magnitude to that of Christianity.'

Meanwhile Harry arranged for Jo [his wife] to meet with Jung. Jung took her for a twenty minute walk along the lake, in which Jung told her that Harry was not to be thought of as a model of purity, and was, like all men, 'part animal.' While he assured her that her husband still loved her and would continue to do so, the 'ideal' of marriage had passed for him as it had for many men throughout the centuries. Men are animals, he assured her, and that's women's problem.

Well, maybe not only women's problem. Doubtless, like his compeer Freud, Carl Gustav Jung was a genius, but one little detail may have gone askew in that vision of grace he received beside his father's church. Can it be that in unloading His bomb on the cathedral, the Unnameable One narrowly missed His true target, that adolescent spectator standing on the sidelines?
(Ferret's source is an essay called "Dirty Harry," by a Jungian scholar named Sheila Grimaldi-Craig, in the June, 1993 number of *Spring 94* (152-154).)
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The nether side of Genius...

Ernest Miller Hemingway (1899-1961)

To begin, perhaps a plea in mitigation would be appropriate, excusing our subject's perversity by reason of the family romance. His mother, who kicked him out of the family at his 21st birthday party, routinely vilified his fiction, thereby evoking such undying hatred from her son that he chose to boycott her funeral. Worse yet, he reckoned that the domineering force of that great "bitch"--his lifelong term of endearment--was to blame for the pathetic weakness of his father, whose suicide at age 61 evoked more contempt than pity from Ernest. ("He was a coward," was the son's assessment of the deed.)

It would be unworthy of us to exploit Hemingway's crazy last years, which ended like his father's in suicide at age 61. We go instead to two episodes from Hemingway's middle years, a time of high artistic success, abundant physical vigor, and apparently strong sanity. The first instance dates from
October, 1949, when Averell Harriman, chairman of the FDR Birthday Memorial Committee, solicited a memorial tribute for the deceased President from the famous writer. Hemingway's eulogy follows:

"Today we are gathered together to honor a rich and spoiled paralytic who changed our world. As a person I thought he was a bore with endless ill-told anecdotes. . . . But this man that we are gathered together to honor today, while he delegated almost all of his work, reserved for himself so many tasks that he was incapable of performing correctly, that he is dead and our country is as we find it now. I do not find it well, gentlemen, and I suggest that, instead of honoring this person who never wrote a speech he made. . . , we should all rise quietly now and leave this room out of respect for the dead." --Ernest Hemingway: Selected Letters 1917-1961, edited by Carlos Baker (674)

Well, it is original thinking, in any case, and the Hemingway style is characteristically effective. (Come to think of it, originality is a common feature of Crackpot thinking, as our earlier examples--Freud's nosectomies and Jung's excremental vision--testify.) And since the Presidential butt of humor was safely ensconced in the next world, Hemingway's verbal fun threatened little harm beyond the extent of some wounded sensibilities among friends, family, and admirers. (The eulogy was of course never delivered, and it is not known whether it was actually sent to Harriman.)

Regrettably, the same disclaimer cannot be applied to our second instance of Hemingway's nuttiness on parade. As though he had not seen enough carnage during his stint as an ambulance driver in World War I, which included a nearly fatal wound to himself, Hemingway emerged from the war craving more blood. Thanks to his own testimony, as seen below, we may
witness a little trap door suddenly drop open in the maestro's forehead to release a thirsty little vampire:

"A great killer must love to kill; unless he feels it is the best thing he can do, unless he is conscious of its dignity and feels that it is his own reward, he will be incapable of the abnegation that is necessary in real killing. The truly great killer must have a sense of honor and a sense of glory far beyond that of the ordinary bullfighter. In other words he must be a simpler man. Also he must take pleasure in it, not simply as a trick of wrist, eye, and managing of his left hand that he does better than other men, . . . but he must have a spiritual enjoyment of the moment of killing. Killing cleanly and in a way which gives you aesthetic pleasure and pride has always been one of the greatest enjoyments of a part of the human race.

Because the other part, which does not enjoy killing, has always been the more articulate and has furnished most of the good writers, we have only very few statements of the true enjoyment of killing. One of its greatest pleasures, aside from the purely aesthetic ones, such as wing shooting, and the ones of pride, such as difficult game stalking, . . . is the feeling of rebellion against death which comes from its administering. Once you accept the rule of death, thou shalt not kill is an easily and a naturally obeyed commandment. But when a man is still in rebellion against death, he has pleasure in taking to himself one of the Godlike attributes: that of giving it. This is one of the most profound feelings in those men who enjoy killing." --Death in the Afternoon, Chapter 19

I suppose my readers may include some folk who share Hemingway's "spiritual enjoyment of the moment of killing." In that case, get thee to a
slaughterhouse, I am tempted to say. But let's say instead that this column is open to contrary definitions of Crackpot--Saint Francis? Gandhi? Albert Schweitzer? It's your call, truly great killers of the world. But as for our call, we proudly add to our display another genius-crackpot on parade in the white male mode [diversity be damned].
Ferret: Crackpots on Parade

Paul de Man (1919-1983)

Runaway father, inveterate sponge and deadbeat, Nazi collaborator, and chief perpetrator of "deconstruction"--both in his own right and as the high guru who foisted Jacques Derrida upon America--Paul de Man spent his last dozen years basking in the adulation of the Yale humanities faculty and thereby of the academic elite everywhere. The world-famous critic Frank Kermode called him "the most celebrated member of the world's most celebrated literature school," and de Man's eminent Yale colleague J. Hillis Miller, after ascending to the presidency of the Modern Languages Association (with 30,000 members), used his presidential address to proclaim both the "almost universal triumph of [de Man's] theory" and its transcendent value: "I affirm that the future of literary studies depends on maintaining and developing that rhetorical reading which today is most commonly called 'deconstruction.'"

Miller obliges us with the following example, among many, of what that means:

"But for de Man the resistance to theory is more seriously an intrinsic, perennial aspect of theory itself. If the resistance to theory is the resistance
to reading, theory is itself the resistance to theory, therefore a resistance to the reading it advocates." (PMLA, May 1987, 286)

Got that? Remember, the future of literary studies depends on it.

MLA President Miller delivered these thoughts in 1986, the year before the Fall of de Man, as David Lehman's splendid book on the subject phrased it, and hence a year before de Man's corps of high-placed admirers were to hear about the 170 articles he wrote for Nazi-front newspapers in Belgium during the Third Reich's most triumphant years, 1941-1942. (After Stalingrad, and the murder of a fellow journalist-collaborator by the Resistance, the young de Man lapsed into a prudent silence.) His admirers could not have known about his essay in Belgium's leading newspaper, Le Soir (March 4, 1941), which welcomed "a solution to the Jewish problem that would lead to the creation of a Jewish colony isolated from Europe," inasmuch as the Jews "had played an important role in the phony and disordered existence of Europe since 1920." It is true that de Man was quite young--in his early twenties--when he wrote these pieces, but he was no younger than millions of soldiers who fought bravely on both sides, and no younger than the White Rose group of German students who during these same years distributed pamphlets in Munich, Hamburg, and other cities condemning the Nazis and their Fuhrer and were executed by the Gestapo for their courageous action.

No, his circle of eminent admirers could not have known about de Man's wartime journalism, nor could they have known that, after the war, he sent his wife and three small children to Argentina to await his arrival while he instead contrived an academic career in America and married one of his students, sending virtually no money or even information to his
impoverished and desperate family. Even so, there were clues that might have raised some healthy skepticism in an academic elite less prone to gullibility, guru-worship, and the herd instinct. A little elementary investigation might have informed his Ivy League sponsors (at Harvard, Yale, and Cornell) that in 1951 he had been fired from his first teaching job, at Bard College, by reason of his "unscrupulous behavior," including habitual bad debts, welched-on agreements, chronic lying, and apparent bigamy. (His abandoned wife had written de Man's department chair about her "utter despair" regarding her situation.) His last public lecture at Bard, entitled "Morality of Literature," included the following comments, as recorded in the school paper:

"Moral systems are by their very nature destructive. They are unserious in that they are liable to change. . . . Upon arriving at their limit moral systems decay and become stagnant. Therefore, history is not continuous, but a discrete system in that there must be a rejection of the past in order to invent the validity of the different present." (New York Times Magazine, May 24, 1992, 19)

The non-sequitur disguised by that "Therefore" allowed a decoupling of past and present that was to prove useful in the great thinker's future career. But even if we consider the foregoing episodes to belong to the man's private life, having no relevance to his professional status, and even if we agree that his admirers could not have known about his unsavory past, those admirers have yet to explain their inability to discern the transparent falsity of his later argumentation. In de Man's major manifesto of "deconstruction," Allegories of Reading (1979), for example, where the idea that truth is "undecidable" is a central precept, we find the following formulation:
"It is always possible to face up to any experience (to excuse any guilt) because the experience always exists simultaneously as fictional discourse and as empirical event and it is never possible to decide which of the two possibilities is the right one. The indecision makes it possible to excuse the bleakest of crimes because, as a fiction, it escapes from the constraints of guilt and innocence."

It is easy to see how a man with de Man's past would be pleased to find an audience dimwitted enough to believe this stupefying statement, but was there no one among de Man's crowd of big-name intellectuals--at Yale, Harvard, Cornell, Johns Hopkins--capable of recognizing obvious sophistry on display? Certainly de Man was a figure of impressive erudition, intelligence, and professorial charisma, and he was capable of producing first-rate scholarship, but does that excuse the failure of rational thought on the part of de Man's disciples? Even after his past was exposed, many of these same leading intellectuals, including Miller and Derrida, used their "deconstructive" method, including the claim that de Man's writings were "undecidable," to defend de Man's reputation (and, to be sure, their stake in it).

The writer Gore Vidal claimed to have enjoyed the great good fortune to have never so much as glimpsed a contemporary of his named Alfred Chester. That was a cruel thing to say about another writer's physical appearance, but the comment is fair enough concerning someone's moral character. Those of you who have never so much as glimpsed Paul de Man's life and work may feel grateful for your privileged condition, but you may have been affected unawares, if only to the extent that American universities have lavished major resources on the cultural enterprise represented by his life and work, which Miller's MLA speech rightly described as
"an immense proliferation of activities associated with [theory]. . . courses, essays, books, . . . new journals, old journals transfigured, handbooks, guides, critical-theory groups, . . . conferences, symposia, new positions designated for theory, new publishing programs, and so on."

One might say that the value of these investments is undecidable; but one fact is definitely not undecidable: a whole lot of hard cash went to feed this fat little birdie.

For charity's sake, those of us who are guilty of resistance to theory will try to put the best light on the de Man affair--that is, to allow the possibility that this man actually believed his own malarkey instead of being the crassest of opportunists. If so--if he really believed the stuff we have cited here--it may be possible to elevate his status from that of a loathesome creep to a Crackpot on Parade. And if there are any academics around who still adhere to the foregoing precepts of de Man's "deconstruction," he won't have to walk alone.

In the foregoing essay, Ferret cited David Lehman's book, *Signs of the Times: Deconstruction and the Fall of Paul de Man* (New York: 1991, pages 144, 156, 269-271). Lehman notes that though its devotees have difficulty defining "deconstruction," its critics have less difficulty:

"*Asked to characterize the deconstructionists he has known, an exasperated professor who specializes in modern British literature delivered this tirade: ‘Arrogant, smug, snotty, meretricious, addicted to straw-man arguments, horrible writers who demand to be considered of the company of Jane Austen and Chaucer, appallingly ingrown and*
cliquish at the same time that they talk about expansiveness and new frontiers of discourse, unbelievably wooden and mechanical at the same time that they make their wooden and mechanical obeisances to jouissance* and free-play, like all perpetual adolescents contemptuous of the past and convinced that by great good fortune the truth happened to be discovered just as they were hitting puberty, a daisy-chain of brown-nosers declaring their high-flown independence from the normal irksome constraints of community and continuity, who without the peculiar heads-I-win-tails-you-lose rationale of their argument--if evidence and logic bear me out, fine, if not, we can always deconstruct them--would almost none of them have written an essay that could stand up in a decent senior seminar.""

*Jouissance--sexual ecstasy--is the term used by Roland Barthes to describe the reader's orgasmic "pleasure of the text." (Lehman's Note) --Signs of the Times (27)
FERRET: Crackpots on Parade

Martin Heidegger (1889-1976)

He must have been a genius. The Duke On-Line Catalogue lists 286 titles about him and 33 titles by him, and his collected writings number around 70 volumes. And just look at the man's Renaissance range of interests. Besides his major opus, *Being and Time*, there are separate volumes on Ontology, Truth, Ethics, Aesthetics, Technology, Subjectivity, Poetry, Historicism, Femininity, Humanism, Religion, Asian Thought, Philosophy, Logic, Language, Iconography, Epistemology, Pragmatism, Science, Theology, Political Science, History, Anthropology, Metaphysics, Hermeneutics, the Finite, Literary Criticism. Yes sir, an all-around genius. But there is a little problem. Given his avid enthusiasm for the idea of National Socialism, which enlisted Heidegger into Nazi Party membership for the full twelve years of the Third Reich's existence, we in the Ferret camp are not too sure we'd be interested in his ruminations about Truth, Ethics, Humanism, Religion, Logic, Pragmatism, Theology, or even Literary Criticism. (The regime he supported fed books to the bonfire.)
On Heidegger's behalf, let us grant that there are gradations of degradation. The German soldier fighting for his Fuhrer might have been a Nazi but he showed exemplary courage in the battles of Berlin and Stalingrad. So too the common farmer or factory worker, traumatized by the Great Depression and further handicapped by having little education to pit against an infernally effective propaganda machine, might understandably be seduced by a political party that could raise his country from prostration to absolute mastery of Europe in eight years. And yet, in the early thirties, those unsophisticated masses outshone a certain eminent Herr Professor Doktor of Philosophy by way of political/moral wisdom: the majority of German voters never elected Hitler their leader. In the last free election for President, in 1932, Paul von Hindenburg defeated Hitler by the landslide margin of five and a half million votes, and the Nazi Party maxed out at 44 percent of the votes in the March, 1933 election, after Hitler had been appointed Chancellor by backroom maneuvering.

Which raises an interesting question: If the average German voter in 1932 was capable of resisting the lure of the Nazi party, in what deep freeze locker did the great philosopher stash his brains, to say nothing of his moral character, for the 1933-1945 duration? Or is it possible that he wasn't such a great philosopher? Granted, the ability to write seventy-odd volumes of print indicates an uncommon verbal fluency, which no doubt figured into the man's irresistible charisma in the classroom and bedroom. His seduction of Hannah Arendt, a formidably strong-minded pupil (even if she was just eighteen), indicates the overpowering intellectual authority and self-assurance that also served to enhance Heidegger's growing popularity among academics around the world. In 1957, Arendt recalled for her confidante Mary McCarthy that Heidegger possessed "a talent so compelling that it will
overrule everything else," But as Richard Rorty has remarked about Wittgenstein, perhaps Heidegger's enduring currency derives in no small measure from the fact that nobody knows what he is talking about. When he lectured at Marburg in the 1920s, he "struggled for clarity," his students recalled, but "they would often convene after class to see whether anyone had understood a word of his lectures."

Now that scene does seem to verify Heidegger's position as the most influential philosopher of the century: unintelligibility has become a conspicuous hallmark, in many cases a precondition, of academic stardom in these latter decades. Regarding that question of intelligibility, do terms like Being and Time emerge from Heidegger's seventy volumes any better defined than in Saint Augustine's brief outcry in the *Confessions* (XI, 23): "I thirst to know the power and nature of Time"? So far as "Dasein" or "Authentic Being" or "Blood and Soil" are concerned, one might find more meaningful discourse reading T. S. Eliot's *Four Quartets* or Faulkner's *The Sound and the Fury* or even *Scientific American*. And why should Heidegger's affinity for the rural *Volk*, living close to the soil, represent anything more than idiosyncratic crankery, in no wise more reasonable than Ayn Rand's tribute to the New York skyline as "the will of man made visible"? This is not to question the taste of anyone who might happen to agree with Heidegger; it is only to reject any appeal to authority based on Heidegger's fame or his vapidly undefined terms of discourse.

Despite these doubts, we will concede the vast extent of Heidegger's influence, earlier in this century on Existentialist philosophy via Sartre, and more recently--we say it joyously--on Deconstruction via Jacques Derrida and Paul de Man. In fact, these latter gentlemen, we are told, derived the term Deconstruction from Heidegger's projected "Destruction" of the whole
tradition of Ontology. But we digress. It is a more literal Destruction that claims our attention here--the destruction of the thousand-year old Jewish communities of Europe in particular, to which Paul de Man made his own precocious contribution as a journalist and concerning which our philosopher of seventy volumes lapsed into a most uncharacteristic reticence during the thirty years of his postwar *Dasein*. The Heidegger scholar Martin Zimmerman was able to find only one reference to the Holocaust in all of Heidegger's oeuvre, and this occurred in an unpublished lecture on technology given in 1949. That one reference, however, is quite a mind-boggler, as follows:

"*Agriculture is now a motorized food industry, essentially the same thing as the fabrication of cadavers in the gas chambers of the extermination camps, the same thing as the blockades and the reduction of countries to famine, the same thing as the fabrication of hydrogen bombs.*"

It is a neat bit of thinking, if you want to put on an equal footing the blameworthy modernization of agriculture (he loved the simple farm folk, remember), the Berlin blockade (blame to Russia), the newly invented hydrogen bomb (blame to USA), and the mass cremation of hapless Jewish civilians (blame the technology: it was those gas ovens that did it).

One could, perhaps, argue that Heidegger's love affair with a Jewish girl, Hannah Arendt, shows his lack of antiSemitism, but we have to consider that even Joseph Goebbels had a Jewish fiancee before he joined the Party. And as the sky darkened over German Jewry in 1933, Heidegger seemed notably uninterested in the fate of his *Liebchen* Hannah, who slipped quietly out of Germany in August of that year--about the same time that Doktor Heidegger completed his purge of Jews from the faculty of Freiburg University, whose
rectorship he had recently inherited from a predecessor who had been fired for refusing to enact the Nazis' anti-Jewish prohibitions.

Ironically, it was that cast-off Jewish mistress who provided the crucial help he needed after the war, using her substantial influence as a New York intellectual to resurrect and, it now appears, to launder his career. Concerning that career, we in the Ferret camp have just one modest request to make. For all we know, Martin Heidegger may have been the most important philosopher of the twentieth century, a major force in the Existentialist movement and in--for what it is worth--its Deconstruction/Critical Theory successor. All we ask with respect to this man is one thing: that he get out of our life and stay out. We want the name of Heidegger to never cross our line of vision again. Chances are, we long for this boon in vain, so we will settle for a more realistic alternative: we'll place him in our Crackpot Parade. Perhaps it will comfort him with memories of similar parades he has seen, cheered, or maybe even marched in, with flaming torch held high--in Munich, Berlin, Nuremberg, wherever. Dasein, we call it--**Authentic Being**.

MARTIN LUTHER

Ich kann nicht anders: Yes, we can do no other than haul this great religious leader before our seat of judgment. At least, he is one of ours, the founder of our own Protestant heritage, instead of a Pope, Rabbi, or other Other who might allege religious prejudice. And we do have to sympathize with his medical condition. You might be a crank, too, if--as his wife Katherine von Bara has recorded--you were continuously afflicted by "gout, insomnia, catarrh, hemorrhoids, constipation, stone, and dizziness," not to mention being constantly crazed by "ringing in the ears like all the bells of Halle, Leipzig, Erfurt, and Wittenberg." No wonder he called himself "utterly weary of life. . . . Rather than live forty years more, I would give up my chance of paradise."

In the face of all that, it must have taken great fortitude to become a Great Reformer, composer of hymns, and translator of the Bible. Furthermore, we must concede, for our own benefit with regard to future judgment, that the limitations of his historical environment -- the late Middle Ages striving to birth the Renaissance -- exculpate the man from anachronistic charges of ignorance and superstition that might arise from actions such as throwing an
inkpot at the devil. Yet, pity to say, the Great Reformer still earns a place in our parade not by virtue of either of the following citations in isolation, but by dint of being the author of both of them, in a chronological sequence that dishearteningly reverses the arrow of spiritual evolution.

The subject of both citations is Luther's co-inhabitants of Christian Europe, the Jews, towards whom, despite the widespread prejudice of his age, he initially expressed the admirable sentiments that follow:

"Dear God, what a people those were! . . . The New Testament was written by real Jews, for the apostles were Jews. . . . We Gentile Christian have no book that has such authority in the church. . . . Accordingly, we Gentiles are in no way equal to the Jews."

And there is more. In his pamphlet Jesus Was Born A Jew, Luther called for "Christian love" towards Jews, who are "blood-relations of our Lord; therefore, . . . the Jews belong to Christ more than we. Therefore, it is my advice that we treat them kindly."

So far, so good -- nothing crackpot here. But late in his life a fruitcake pamphlet emerged called The Jews and Their Lies. The unforgivable offense of the Chosen People in Luther's later years lay in their failure to fulfill his egomaniac dream of converting the whole lot of them to Christianity, thereby outdoing in his one lifetime a full fifteen centuries of unavailing Popery. His vitriolic head of steam had already risen to major proportions the year before his pamphlet was written, as in his Table Talk entry of Volume 54, No. 5462:

"I intend to write against the Jews once again because I hear that some of our lords are befriending them. I'll advise them to chase all the Jews out
of their land. . . . They're wretched people. I know of no stronger argument against them than to ask them why they've been in exile so long."

There follows the actual pamphlet The Jews and Their Lies in 1543, which was reissued by the Nazi government in 1935. Translated into English, it was also published in America in 1948 by an outfit who called themselves the Christian Nationalist Crusade and contributed a Preface bearing the ecumenical promise to publish "the edicts of more than 20 popes who dealt with the Jewish problem." We repeat that this phrase was used in 1948.

Although we refrain from blaming Dr. Luther for these latter day admirers, who are fully responsible for their own fruitcake actions, we must deplore the crackpot madness of The Jews and Their Lies. Even the brutal harshness of the age, which routinely practiced public heretic-burning and vivisection of criminals, does not relieve the great theologian of monumental malice as he denounces the Jews for usury, for poisoning wells, for drinking the blood of Christian children, and most of all for killing Christ.

Culminating this diatribe is a call for apocalyptic revenge:

"So we are even at fault for not avenging all this innocent blood of our Lord and of the Christians which they shed. . . . We are at fault for not slaying them."

In 1983, the 500th anniversary of Martin Luther's birth, Pope John Paul II made a historic visit to a Lutheran church in Rome, thereby paying homage to the concept of freedom of conscience that the Great Reformer instituted as the quintessential Protestant principle. That civilization-changing moment
can never be taken away from Doctor Luther, but neither can the stain of *The Jews and Their Lies* be laundered away. The end of Luther's life thus carries to posterity a final admonitory lesson: The Protestant Reformation was an admirable achievement, but it is no substitute for trying to be a Christian, at all times to all people. We say that (with due thanks to James Joyce) in the Name of the Former, and of the Latter, and of the Holocaust: Allmen.

Ferret's sources include Roland H. Bainton's *Here I Stand: A Life of Martin Luther*, 292; William James, *The Varieties of Religious Experience*, 119; Martin Luther, *Table Talk in Luther's Works, Volume 54.*
For a bill of particulars, we can do no better than to cite Deems Taylor's classic essay, "The Monster":

"He was a monster of conceit. Never for one minute did he look at the world or at people, except in relation to himself. . . . To hear him talk, he was Shakespeare, and Beethoven, and Plato, rolled into one. And you would have had no difficulty in hearing him talk. . . [about his] one sole topic of conversation: himself. . . .

He had a mania for being in the right. The slightest hint of disagreement, from anyone, on the most trivial point, was enough to set him off on a
harangue that might last for hours. . . [so that] in the end his hearer, stunned and defeated, would agree with him, for the sake of peace.

He had a composer's voice. And he would invite eminent vocalists to his house, and sing them his operas, taking all the parts.

He was convinced that the world owed him a living. In support of this belief, he borrowed money from everybody who was good for a loan—men, women, friends, or strangers. . . . [There is] no record of his ever paying or repaying money to anyone who did not have a legal claim upon it.

What money he could lay his hands on he spent like an Indian rajah. On an income that would reduce a more scrupulous man to doing his own laundry, he kept two servants. Without enough money in his pocket to pay the rent, he would have the walls and ceiling of his study lined with pink silk. . . .

An endless procession of women marches through his life. His first wife spent twenty years enduring and forgiving his infidelities. His second wife had been the wife of his most devoted friend and admirer, from whom he stole her. . . .

He was completely selfish in his other personal relationships. . . . At the end of his life he had exactly one friend left whom he had known even in middle age."

Other scholars add confirmatory details. Ernest Newman's Wagner as Man and Artist (1937) divines the rationale for Wagner's imperial self-indulgence as follows: "The secret apparently was that he had to indulge himself liberally in order to [thereafter] put into practice his doctrine of
renunciation" (134). And Julius Kapp, in *The Women in Wagner's Life* (1931), cites Wagner's own words to profile an effrontery of superhuman proportions toward the husband he cuckolded during his long dalliance with Mathilde Wesendonk:

"Thus, while he [the husband] was consumed with jealousy, she [the wife, Wagner's lover] was still able to interest him in me to the extent of frequently subsidizing me. When at last it was a question of my wish to have a little house and garden, it was she who, by the most incredible battles, persuaded him to buy for me the fine piece of ground beside his own. Most marvelous of all, I had practically never a suspicion of all this fighting. Her husband had to maintain a perfectly friendly, natural manner with me on her account. There must be no gloomy looks to reveal the situation to me, no ruffling of a single hair of my head." (120)

If these traits do not suffice to merit crackpot status, there is the familiar theme of anti-Semitism to put in the hopper. Published in 1937 (in *Of Men and Music*), Taylor's essay appeared before events like Kristallnacht and the Holocaust would retroactively and perhaps unfairly sully the image of Hitler's favorite composer, but even in the context of his own era Wagner's anti-Jewish ranting had a nutty ring to it. According to Jacob Katz's *The Darker Side of Genius: Richard Wagner's Anti-Semitism* (1986), Wagner's defamatory *Judaism in Music*, published anonymously in 1850 and under his name in 1869, arose from purely personal pique over Felix Mendelssohn's and Giacomo Meyerbeer's popularity as contrasted to his own frustrations at the time.

There had to be a Jewish conspiracy against his career to explain this discrepancy, Wagner believed -- a conspiracy of global proportions,
according to his autobiography *My Life* (1935 p. 565): *"The unparalleled animosity with which... I have been pursued by the entire press of Europe can only be understood by... [considering] that almost all the newspapers of Europe are in the hands of Jews."* Yet this was a man who had solicited -- and received -- major help from this same Meyerbeer with appeals like the following: *"My head and my heart no longer belong to me... , my master... I have to be your slave in body and soul... for I openly confess that I have a slavish nature"* (29).

Perhaps it was to compensate for his slavish nature that Wagner revealed a malicious streak to a different audience, as when he observed that Rothschild, instead of "wishing to be the king of the Jews, preferred to remain the Jew of the kings" (34). To his chief sponsor, King Ludwig of Bavaria, Wagner wrote, *"I hold the Jewish race to be the born enemy of pure humanity and everything noble in it"* (115). And when Wagner at last did reach the pinnacle of acclaim, he had no compunction about demanding that the greatly distinguished conductor, Hermann Levi, be baptized before he would be permitted to perform *Parsifal*. Moreover, since he did not believe in the clergy, Wagner proposed that he himself would perform the baptism. And yet he had to admit that "*on all of my trips Shem and Hebron supply the most receptive and the most generous concert-goers, and what is more, the participation of the non-Semites is completely dependent on theirs*" (111-112).

When added to Deems Taylor's list of characteristics, these schizoid attitudes suffice to place Richard Wagner within our loosely framed crackpot category. But in the end, even with his extreme egomania and fruitcake anti-Semitism, it does not matter if Richard Wagner was a crackpot. Hugely overtowering all the other members of our parade, which now
includes eminences like Freud, Jung, and Heidegger, Wagner remains an immortal giant of creativity. As Deems Taylor explains, there was compelling reason why it finally did not matter that Wagner was a monster.

"Because this . . . disagreeable, fascinating little man was right all the time. The joke was on us. He was one of the world's great dramatists; he was a great thinker; he was one of the most stupendous musical geniuses that, up to now, the world has ever seen. The world did owe him a living. . .

When you listen to what he wrote, the debts and heartaches that people had to endure from him don't seem much of a price. . . . The women whose hearts he broke are long since dead; and the man who could never love anyone but himself has made them deathless atonement. . . with Tristan und Isolde. . . . [And] a few thousand dollars worth of debts were not too heavy a price to pay for the Ring trilogy.

There is not a line of his music that could have been conceived by a little mind. . . . There is a greatness about his worst mistakes. Listening to his music, one is . . . [struck] dumb with wonder that his poor brain and body didn't burst under the torment of the demon of creative energy that lived inside him. . . tearing, shrieking at him to write the music that was in him. The miracle is that what he did in the little space of seventy years could have been done at all, even by a great genius."

Given this expert testimony, we in the Ferret camp are moved to declare Richard Wagner the greatest crackpot who ever lived--emphasis on greatest. What a genius! What a crackpot! We are proud and thrilled to admit so sublime a figure into our grand parade. Indeed, we cannot imagine a more suitable composer to supply the marching music we need -- Die Meistersinger von Nurnberg strikes us perfect for the occasion. Until our
next edition, when another white male will join their number (*diversity be damned* is our motto), we will leave our septet of marchers to work out their harmony in a Wagnerian chorus of crackpot voices. Freud, Jung, Hemingway, de Man, Heidegger, and Luther, meet your *kapellmeister*: Richard Wagner, in talent and ego simply the greatest.
Ferret: Crackpots on Parade

The nether side of Genius...

KARL MARX (1818-1883)

"While the world was going full blast on the Darwinian metaphors of evolution, survival values and the Devil take the hindmost, a polemical Jew in exile was working up the metaphor of the State's being like a family. . . . From each according to his ability, to each according to his need."

--Robert Frost, Letters to Louis Untermeyer (285)

"We are all toadies to the fashionable metaphor of the hour," Frost went on to say, and though the word of choice today would be paradigm rather than metaphor, he had the right idea. But between the idea and reality, as T. S. Eliot so memorably put it, "Falls the Shadow": the Shadow, in this respect, of Mao and Stalin and all the Little Stalins -- Ulbricht, Ceasescu, Kim Il Sung, Pol Pot, Hoxha -- who collectively proved willing to annihilate millions of actual families in the name of that ideal global family.
In the Ukraine alone, in 1933-34, Stalin ordained deliberate death by starvation for eight million peasants who resisted collectivization, according to Robert Conquest's *Harvest of Sorrow*. (Stalin's men simply removed every scrap of food from entire districts and sealed their borders, piling grain outdoors to rot under guard in many instances.) Some of the families thus victimized were reduced to cannibalizing their own dead children, giving a particularly grisly twist to the Theorist's familiar creed: from each according to his ability, to each according to his need. Recent scholarship indicates that around 1960-61 Mao condemned 20 million of his countrymen to needless death by starvation in a similar act of ideological fanaticism.

It has been a costly imposition of metaphor, we are obliged to say--a cost notably unshared by the Great Leaders who imposed it or by the armed thugocracies that in every instance have kept those leaders in power. And this is where the crackpot status of the Great Theorist comes into play. We will allow him his unproven assumption about materialism, and even his narcissistically limited application of the dialectical concept (narcissistic in its assumption that Marxism would terminate the dialectical process), but what we cannot let pass is Marx's sentimental delusion about human nature. A superscholar of history, he had countless examples under his purview of depravity wearing the mask of idealism: the Crusades, the Inquisition, the Conquistadores, the Wars of Religion, the French Revolution, the warfare state invented by Napoleon. In the light of those precedents, his childish fantasy about the dictatorship of the proletariat and the withering away of the state bespoke a criminal innocence, a naivete so contrary to experience as to make him complicit in the deadly consequences of his ideas.

There is a word for this type of personality, which applies equally to both Karl Marx and the Great Leaders that he influenced. The word is *Fanatic*, a
term that Marx (unlike the Leaders) lacked the power to enact politically but which he fulfilled psychologically to perfection. Had he been given such power, to all appearances he would have matched--thanks to his God complex--the egomaniac intolerance of any of the dictators among his subsequent admirers. Here, as evidence, is testimony from several of his visitors, as cited from David McLellan's *Karl Marx: His Life and Thought* (1973, 452-454):

"I have never seen a man whose bearing was so provoking and intolerable. To no opinion which differed from his own did he accord the honor of even condescending consideration. Everyone who contradicted him he treated with abject contempt. . . . I remember most distinctly the cutting disdain with which he pronounced the word bourgeois, and as a bourgeois -- that is, as a detestable example of the deepest mental and moral degeneracy -- he denounced everyone who dared oppose his opinions."

(--an American Senator)

"He always spoke in imperative words that would brook no contradiction and were made all the sharper by . . . the tone of everything he said. This tone expressed the firm conviction of his mission to dominate men's minds and prescribe them their laws."

(--a Russian aristocrat in Paris)

"If his heart had matched his intellect, and if he had possessed as much love as hate, I would have gone through fire for him. . . . Yet it is a matter of regret in view of our aims that this man with his fine intellect is lacking in nobility of soul. . . . He laughs at the fools who parrot his proletarian
catechism. . . . The only ones he respects are the aristocrats, the genuine ones, those who are well aware of their aristocracy. . . . Engels and all his old associates, in spite of their very real gifts, are all far behind and beneath him; and if they should dare to forget it for a moment, he puts them back in their place with a shameless impudence worthy of Napoleon."

(--a "proletarianized" Prussian lieutenant)

What emerges from these testimonies is a portrait in need of psychological rather than political analysis --a truism that holds equal merit for many of Marx's later disciples. Which is to say, we must set aside Marx's ideas as a mere superstructure -- an epiphenomenon -- and look instead to the base, or deep structure, of emotional injury that guided Marx's thinking. Behind the egomaniac, antisocial visage of this man we can discern some understandable motives for the hatred, revenge, and rip-em-up destructiveness that accompanies the Marxist Idea. His contempt for both the "bourgeois" and his disciples, his envy/resentment of the upper classes, and his thirst for absolute intellectual domination all bespeak a severe identity problem -- and with good reason. Here we have a magnificent researcher who suffered the fate of a professor unable to get tenure; a brilliant (if close-minded) economist who was unable to earn a living; and a would-be political leader who did not even have a country.

From the start, three factors shaped the young KM toward antisocial bitterness. First, he was born and remained for life not just bourgeois but, in that curiously obsessive European sense, petit-bourgeois. Having been raised in a family sufficiently well off to afford two housemaids, he could hardly be expected to endure quietly the outrage of descending into a life of
poverty in as an adult. What made it all the worse was his irresponsible high living during his college years at the University of Berlin, such that even his indulgent father wrote to complain to the boy about blowing 700 talers a year on *bon vivant* "whereas even the richest spend no more than 500" (33). Who wouldn't be embittered by the lapse from this carefree playboy life into the shame of a mid-life deadbeat for whom *"The best and most desirable thing that could happen would be that the landlady throw me out of the house. Then at least I would be quit the sum of 22 pounds. But I can scarcely trust her to be so obliging. Also baker, milkman, the man with the tea, greengrocer, old butcher's bills"* (263)? And who can blame him if his lifelong sponging off Engels drove even this wealthy benefactor into relative poverty? ("In a week or two I'll move into cheaper lodgings and take to weaker drinks," Engels wrote to KM (278)). During his writing of *Economics* (1851), KM's privation was enough to sour even the Great Theorist on his commitment to the dismal science:

"... in five weeks I will be through with the whole economic shit. And that done... I will throw myself into another science in the [British] Museum"

(283).

Of course he had every right to that expletive, which indicates the second major motive for his antisocial bitterness -- a broken career. KM's true calling all along was not toward the grubby underbrush of economics or political thought but rather toward the noble heights of philosophy. With a dissertation ranging from the Stoic, Sceptic, and Epicurean schools to figures like Hegel, Hume, and Kant, the young Marx (who got the doctorate at age 23) hoped and certainly deserved to become a university professor. But the militant fanatic in the man would not let it happen. The missionary zeal of his atheism precluded a university appointment in his German
homeland, thereby shunting him into a precarious career in vagabond journalism. Call it courage? Certainly, but call it also, perhaps, a self-destructive crackpot monomania, foreshadowing the barbarous actions of Stalin and Lenin on behalf of Marxist-atheist dogma.

Marx's intolerance of religion brings us to the third and most curious of his tortured identity problems. A petit-bourgeois who despised the bourgeoisie, he was also a Jew-hating Jew. In *A World without Jews* (D. D. Runes translation, 1959), the Great Theorist declared: "Money is the zealous one God of Israel, beside whom no other God may stand" (41). "The bill of exchange is the Jew's real God," he goes on to say; and again: "What is the object of the Jew's worship in this world? Usury. What is his worldly god? Money" (37). These Hitlerian slanders emerged -- shall we say in Crackpot fashion? -- from a pampered son reared in the bosom of a quintessentially Jewish family. "For it would be difficult to find anyone who had a more Jewish ancestry than Karl Marx," McLellan observes. "The name Marx is a shortened form of Mordechai, later changed to Markus" (2-3). Both parents were descended from a long line of greatly distinguished rabbis, and though his father converted to Protestantism for professional reasons, KM's own daughter retained enough Judaic pride to assert "I am a Jewess" at workers' meetings in London (5).

Whether or not KM's anti-Semitism reflected pathological self-hatred, most assuredly it revealed an appalling self-ignorance. Marx's enduring appeal has little to do with either the soporific arguments of *Capital* or his other theoretical formulations, many of them subsequently undermined by actual history. It springs instead from the searing hunger for social justice that blazes through his best work, including the Communist Manifesto. And what could be more Jewish than that righteous hunger, with its 4000-year
pedigree? Or, to reverse time's arrow, what could be more Marxist, as it were, than the cry of Isaiah against the capitalist expropriators of his time:

"Woe unto them that join house to house, that lay field to field, till there be no place, that they may be placed alone in the midst of the earth!" (Isaiah 5:8)?

As for proletarian protest, who says it better than the God of Israel?

"The Lord will enter into judgment with the ancients of his people, and the princes thereof: for ye have eaten up the vineyard; the spoil of the poor is in your houses. What mean ye that ye beat my people to pieces, and grind the faces of the poor? saith the Lord God of Hosts" (Isaiah 3:14-15).

For all his Jew-slander ing ways, KM was not ignorant of these antecedents. During his last three years of university study the only two courses he attended centered on the two greatest voices of social conscience in classical antiquity: Isaiah and his Greek counterpart, Euripides.

Enough has been said, we think, to establish the Great Theorist's crackpot tendencies, but justice requires a similar reckoning of his personal virtues. These cohere most vividly around his family life -- not the global family of Marxist fantasy but his bourgeois, nuclear family. Without exception, all the evidence attests to KM being a loving husband and a caring, even doting (if improvident) father to his three daughters. To his wife Jenny he admitted that his humanist abstractions were a load of grass-nourishment: "But love -- not of Feuerbachian man, . . . not of the proletariat, but love of one's darling, namely you, makes a man into a man again" (274). The one blemish on KM's family virtue was his siring of an illegitimate son, Frederick. To avoid domestic conflict as well as the scandal so fearful to the
bourgeois mind, Marx fobbed off the paternity on his long-suffering buddy Engels (a bachelor), to the disgust of Engels' housekeeper (one of the few let in on the secret), who described the situation as follows:

"For Marx separation from his wife, who was terribly jealous, was always before his eyes: he did not love the boy; he did not dare to do anything for him, the scandal would have been too great. . ." (272).

We conclude, then, by placing another figure of genius within our Crackpot parade -- in fact, making Karl Marx the anchor man to the procession that started with our sketch of Sigmund Freud. It seems appropriate that these two leading prophets of the twentieth century bring up the front and rear of our little troupe of marchers: no other men have had so massive an influence on the passing century, or have seen it followed by so sudden and radical a decline in credibility. With pride and affection we will leave these comrades at their ease as they march to their Crackpot Zion.
Something mysterious seems to be going on in Sonnet 20, which begins: "A woman's face, by Nature's own hand painted, Hast thou, the master-mistress of my passion." Though no one knows for sure, chances are that the owner of this face is Shakespeare's teenage patron, the Earl of Southampton, to whom the poet had already dedicated his passionate love poem, *Venus and Adonis*. The eminent Shakespearean scholar A. L. Rowse describes the face as follows:

*Anyone who studies the portrait made of Southampton when he was nineteen will see how striking his beauty was. There are the familiar golden tresses, which he retained for some years more, falling over his left shoulder; the haughty aristocratic look on the face, a perfect oval; delicate features, lightly arched eyebrows, sensitive nostril, small mouth. It is a feminine appearance, yet there is . . . masculinity in the assertive stare of the eyes. . . . There is something that gives an unfavourable impression—*
touch of obstinacy and fixation, in the eyes and pouting lip, a look of self-will. [Shakespeare: A Biography (1963), 140]

To be sure, in this poem -- Sonnet 20 -- Shakespeare eschews any carnal interest, punning to the young man: "Since she [Nature] pricked thee out for women's pleasure,/Mine be thy love, and love's use their treasure." But after all, at this point the affair is barely getting under way, perhaps in an initial state of innocence. As the Sonnets proceed through their five-year span (many scholars date these poems from about 1593-1598, with Shakespeare about thirty and the youth some ten years younger), we find a tone of obsession taking deep root. The poet admits as much in Sonnet 76 (in line 1 the word "pride" meant sexual desire in Shakespeare's time):

Why is my verse so barren of new pride?

So far from variation or quick change?

0, know, sweet love, I always write of you,

And you and love are still my argument..

Sonnet 108 apologizes for this obsession even more abjectly, sustaining the inference that Sonnets 1-126 are indeed a tale of passionate love focused on this one comely figure. (The remaining Sonnets are addressed to the poet's other chief love object, the "Dark Lady"): 

What's new to speak, what now to register,

That may express my love or thy dear merit?

Nothing, sweet boy; but yet, like prayers divine,
By Sonnet 35, the Platonic view of things becomes really difficult to maintain. The poem opens with the poet offering forgiveness -- "No more be grieved at that which thou hast done" -- for a crime vaguely described as "thy sensual fault" in line 9. What sensual fault? Did the young man eat too much? Get drunk? Go wenching? Close friends might disapprove of such behavior, but it is not likely that those offenses would produce the towering bitterness of lines 2-4, which compare the young man to a beautiful surface masking rancid corruption underneath: "Roses have thorns, and silver fountains mud;/... And loathsome canker dwells in sweetest bud." (The word "rose" in these poems may be a pun on Southampton's paternal name, Wriothesley, which was pronounced "Rose-ly.")

An abyss of mortification opens in Sonnet 40, where the poet discovers that his young man and his Dark Lady have become lovers. The tone of self-pity, so unmistakable in the opening line ("Take all my loves, my love, yea, take them all"), modulates into befuddlement in Sonnet 42, where he puzzles out which grief hurts more, losing the youth or the lady:

That thou hast her, it is not all my grief,
And yet it may be said I loved her dearly;
That she hath thee is of my wailing chief,
A loss in love that touches me more nearly.
What follows in Sonnet 42 is the most powerful image of suffering that even Shakespeare could think of -- his lovers "lay me on this cross" -- followed by that Shakespearean trademark, a stupendous rationalization of the situation:

"But here's the joy: my friend and I are one;

Sweet flattery! then she loves but me alone."

Joy, he calls it; but not even Shakespeare could rationalize his jealousy when his travels -- perhaps with a players' troupe -- brought him far afield from the love nest. It was enough to give a man insomnia, and it is hard to see how anything other than sexual jealousy could explain these lines in Sonnet 61:

Is it thy will thy image should keep open

My heavy eyelids to the weary night?. . .

For thee watch I whilst thou dost wake elsewhere,

From me far off, and others all too near.

From here, it is just a short hop to the supreme bitterness of Sonnet 94, with its central metaphor of the young man as a flower. "The summer flow'r is to the summer sweet," the poet tells him, but now Shakespeare adds a powerful stench to the foregoing imagery of corruption:

But if that flow'r with base infection meet,

The basest weed outbraves his dignity:
For sweetest things turn sourest by their deeds;

Lilies that fester smell far worse than weeds.

To tell his lover that he stinks is pretty harsh talk, especially if the rich young patron has been giving material support to the writer. Even so, there is a consistency on the poet's part that, up to now, fends off the deconstructive malice of the modern critic. With the homosexual theme rendered a harmless curiosity in our time (though a potentially capital offense in Shakespeare's), the only faint hint of scandal is the fact of the poet's wife and children out in the country.

All that changes, however, in what is psychologically (not aesthetically) our favorite poem in the Sonnets, number 110. Here the tables are turned, and it is Shakespeare who has to apologize for his infidelity. "Alas, 'tis true I have gone here and there," he says, leaving no doubt about what this wandering metaphor signifies: "[I have] Made old offenses of affections new." Moreover, he has to admit telling lies to cover the deed: "Most true it is that I have looked on truth/Askance and strangely." But here is the crux of the matter: though promiscuity had made his lover a loathsome canker in the rosebud, or a festering lily that smells far worse than weeds, such behavior is perfectly justified when Shakespeare does it. The first rationale is that it made our poet feel younger -- "by all above, These blenches gave my heart another youth." And then comes perhaps the crowning rationalization in all of Shakespeare: "And worse essays proved thee my best of love." Which is to say, my promiscuity should make you happy, sweetheart: how else could I know you are the best lover!

In view of that brazen argument, we in the Ferret camp declare that this man has deconstructed himself. All we had to do was quote what he said.
Fortunately, this confession leads in the end to reconciliation, an oasis of good feeling amid the general guilt, jealousy, and fear detectable in the foregoing poems:

*Now all is done, have what shall have no end:*

*Mine appetite I never more will grind*

*On newer proof, to try an older friend,*

*A god in love, to whom I am confined.*

Alas, as Robert Frost says, Nothing Gold Can Stay. Regrettably, this little oasis of good feeling in Sonnet 110 could not last, as Shakespeare's affair with the golden boy crumbled before the dread onslaught of that bugbear of the Sonnets, Time's slow corrosion of physical beauty. Sonnet 19 offers a painful retrospect on this predicament. Here Shakespeare sought to stem Time's ravages by verbal admonition:

*.. do whate'er thou wilt, swift-footed Time,*

*To the wide world and all her fading sweets;*

*But I forbid thee one most heinous crime:*

*0, carve not with thy hours my love's fair brow.*

Ironically, Shakespeare's final trauma arose precisely from this answered prayer: Time touches the youth only to augment his beauty, while sweeping Shakespeare himself completely outside the arena of sexual competition and selection. Sonnet 68, which may be the weirdest or most puzzling sonnet of them all, gains some clarity from this perspective. Here, after looking
admiringly at an older man who refuses to use cosmetics ("bastard signs of fair"), the speaker reacts with particular vehemence against the prospect of wearing a blond wig or toupee, as his lover may have advised. (Shakespeare worked in the theater, we should remember, where these props were always at hand.)

Thus is his cheek the map of days outworn,

When beauty lived and died as flowers do now,

Before these bastard signs of fair were born,

Or durst inhabit on a living brow;

Before the golden tresses of the dead,

The right of sepulchres, were shorn away,

To live a second life on second head.

Scorning such borrowed beauty, the poet would rather let his age stand openly displayed like the older man's, "Without all ornament, itself and true,/Making no summer of another's green."

Whether or not this was Shakespeare refusing to bewig and rouge himself, there is little question that the breakup of Shakespeare's great love affair was caused primarily, in his own judgment, by his failing looks. By the late 1590's, when Shakespeare was in his mid-thirties, thinning hair, deepening ridges in his face, and -- given the primitive dentistry of the time -- teeth badly rotting or missing would be the normal instance while the golden boy (if it was Southampton) would simultaneously be just now blooming into his early twenties. Hence Shakespeare, though by no means the feeble old man
of his metaphor, depicts himself as dying of old age in the famous Sonnet 73: "That time of year thou mayst in me behold/When yellow leaves, or none, or few, do hang . . ." It was not the man but the love relationship that was dying, it appears, and with it the man's inmost soul was being extinguished in great pain.

Another much-loved poem with a bitter core is Sonnet 116, whose openings lines "Let me not to the marriage of true minds/Admit impediments" sound Platonic, since they speak of a marriage of minds. But the impediments in question turn out to be something carnal, namely the alterations for the worse in Shakespeare's physical appearance. In a desperate and pathetic attempt at moral suasion, the poet insists that real love would not consider such physical change significant: "Love is not love/Which alters when it alteration finds." But the "alteration" that the poem describes a few lines later -- the loss of "rosy lips and cheeks" to "Time's bending sickle"-- confirms that the relationship of these two men is at bottom sexual: if the love were asexual, the loss of rosy looks would in fact make no difference. As it stands, the poem is in the nature of a protest, a splendid but futile outcry as to how love should, by rights, operate:

Love's not Time's fool, though rosy lips and cheeks

Within his bending sickle's compass come;

Love alters not with his brief hours and weeks,

But bears it out even to the edge of doom.

If only it really worked that way! But Sonnet 126, the last in the golden boy series, confirms the opposite picture:
O thou, my lovely boy, who in thy power

Dost hold Time's fickle glass, his sickle, hour;

Who hast by waning grown and therein show'st

Thy lovers withering as thy sweet self grow'st.

All Shakespeare can do at this juncture is to issue the younger man a warning: you just wait until this happens to you!

Yet fear her [Nature], 0 thou minion of her pleasure!

She may detain, but still not keep, her treasure:

Her audit, though delayed, answer'd must be,

And her quietus is to [sur] render thee.

Given this foreground, there is little reason to doubt the authenticity of Shakespeare's revulsion against sex in Sonnet 129, the famous blast against "lust in action" that reveals a mind moved close to madness by desire, guilt, and frustration. Aside from a few islands of joy, the whole experience of the Sonnets has come pretty largely to fulfill the prophecy laid down at the end of Venus and Adonis, where the goddess, thwarted (by the death of Adonis) from slaking her own desire, pronounces this fierce curse on love among mortals:

. . . lo, here I prophecy,

Sorrow on love hereafter shall attend:

It shall be waited on with jealousy,
Find sweet beginning but unsavory end;

Ne'er settled equally, but high or low,

That all love's pleasure shall not match his woe.

It shall be fickle, false, and full of fraud;

Bud and be blasted, in a breathing-while;

The bottom poison, and the top o'erstraw'd

With sweets that shall the truest sight beguile.

In the aftermath, Shakespeare's master theme of Betrayal (of Love, or Trust) emerged from the Sonnets and took possession of his other greatest works through the following decade -- plays like Othello, Julius Caesar, Macbeth, King Lear. Lear's bitter sarcasm about sex ("Let copulation thrive!") IV, vi, 116) harkens back to the Sonnets, as, surely, does Hamlet's brutal misogyny toward Ophelia and his mother ("Nay, but to live/In the rank sweat of an enseamed bed,/Stew'd in corruption, honeying and making love ."-III, iv. 93-95).

In addition to his master theme of Betrayal, Shakespeare's plays gained one other major characteristic from the trauma of the Sonnets, something which Rollo May, in Love and Will (1969), described as “an element in sex and love which is almost universally repressed in our culture, namely the tragic, daimonic element” (emphasis his), Dr. May proceeds to define “daimonic” as “the natural element within an individual, such as the erotic drive, which has the power to take over the whole person.” The daimonic element, according to May, encompasses not only erotic monomania but
other master passions—”sex and eros, anger and rage, and the craving for power are examples”—that are identified with major Shakespearean characters: Othello, Hamlet, Macbeth, and Caesar.

Whether a “god in love,” as Sonnet 110 puts it, or a lily that festered as in Sonnet 94, the love object in the Sonnets galvanized the poet’s psyche into unity, provoking at the same time the emotional extremes and rationalizations that so enrich Shakespeare’s characterizations. In passing, we in the Ferret/transgressive-deconstruction camp also note with some satisfaction this confirmation of an old truism: that we learn most about the human soul not from normal, healthy folk—those who are likely to become Steinbecks or Masefields—but from the world’s weird people, those roiled in the torment of some deep and often secret trauma.
[Editor’s Note: In 1948, the dictator of Yugoslavia assumed heroic status in Western eyes when he defied Stalin's order to come to Moscow and instead took his country out of the Soviet orbit. Our fearless Ferret's deconstruction of the affair reveals its actual unheroic origin.]

COMRADE TITO IN MOSCOW (1938)

"One by one the old Comintern hands disappeared. Stalin left only those who had passed their examination in servility by betraying friends. Another who vanished was M. Corkic, head of the Yugoslav Communist Party. Josip Tito, future president of Yugoslavia, was his betrayer. In his letter to Dimitrov, Tito said that 'nobody in the country knows him, except a few intellectuals. What has happened to him [his arrest] can have no serious consequences for the Party.' When Tito visited Moscow in 1938 he found that eight hundred prominent Yugoslav Communists had been arrested. Dimitrov tested his loyalty in long discussions. On this visit Tito had to betray not only his friends but his former wife. She had been arrested as a
Gestapo agent, and Tito wrote an explanatory note to [Stalin], which is preserved in the Party Archive:

'I thought that she was reliable because she was the daughter of a poor working man, and subsequently the wife of a prominent member of the German Communist youth movement, who was sentenced to fifteen years in a German labor camp. . . . I now consider that I was not sufficiently vigilant and this is a big blot on my life. I believe that various people intent on harming our Party may use this against me, and that must be taken into account.'

Tito need not have worried. By abandoning someone so close to him without demur he had passed his exam, like Kuusinen, Togliatti, Kaganovich, Kalinin, Molotov and so many others who renounced their nearest and dearest without a murmur. Nothing now stood between Tito and a general secretaryship. And in 1939, when the legendary Yugoslav Communist P. Miletic arrived in Moscow after many years in prison, Stalin showed his preference for Miletic's tried and tested rival. The hero and martyr Miletic disappeared into the cellars of the NKVD.

A new Comintern was born. In 1939 this well-drilled and absolutely docile body would approve the Soviet pact with Hitler, and, a little later, when the Boss found it necessary, it would obediently self-destruct.

--Cited from Edvard Radzinsky's Stalin (Doubleday, 1996), 411-412
"Let me tell you about the very rich. They are different from you and me. They possess and enjoy early, and it does something to them.

--F. Scott Fitzgerald, "The Rich Boy"

1. 1957:

"Jack's reputation as a thinker and scholar soared on May 6 when he won the Pulitzer Prize [for Profiles in Courage]. Other winners included the late playwright Eugene O'Neill, historian and diplomat George F. Kennan, poet Richard Wilbur, and journalist James Reston. Media all over the nation trumpeted Kennedy's new triumph. A laudatory New York Times biography reported that Profiles 'was written during a convalescence from World War II injuries.' . . . And he took the accolade seriously. [His close friend] Sorensen would later recall, 'Of all honors [he] would receive throughout his life, none would make him more happy than his receipt in 1957 of his Pulitzer Prize for biography."

2. 1955:
"Sorensen worked almost full-time on the project during the first half of 1955, aided by Georgetown historian . . . Jules Davids; James Landis of the ambassador's [JFK's father's] staff; William R. Tansill of the Library of Congress; and a number of well-known scholars including Arthur Schlesinger, Jr., James MacGregor Burns, and Allan Nevins. Sorensen and Davids did most of the research and drafting of chapters for what became known as Profiles in Courage. Sorensen was responsible for the book's lucid and compelling style."

3. 1980:

"Almost all of the manuscript material rests in eight folders of Box 35 in the Kennedy Library. . . . [This material shows] no evidence of a Kennedy draft for the overwhelming bulk of the book; and there is evidence for concluding that much of what he did draft was simply not included in the final version. . . . The Senator served principally as an overseer or, more charitably, as a sponsor and editor. . . ."

4. 1957:

"Careful research has revealed that the judges for biography made no mention of Profiles in their recommendations to the Pulitzer Advisory Board. The board, consisting largely of journalists, ignored the two distinguished historians who lauded volumes by such well-known scholars as Alpheus T. Mason, Irving Brant, and Samuel Flagg Bemis."

4. 1957-1963:

"In the Preface to Profiles, Jack paid tribute to Sorensen ('my research associate'), Davids, Landis, and others, but he claimed unequivocally to be
the volume's author. . . . For the rest of his life, Kennedy's wrath could be roused by few things like the persistent suggestion that others had written or helped to write *Profiles*.

5. 1960:

"He had read about McNamara. . . in *Time* magazine on December 2 and met him six days later. McNamara asked the first question: 'Did you really write *Profiles in Courage*?' Kennedy insisted he did and then offered McNamara his choice of Treasury or Defense."

FERRET: *Transgressive Deconstructions*

Michel Foucault (1926-1984)

"... the most important event of thought in our century."

--Testimonial to Michel Foucault's oeuvre in *Le Monde* after his death.

In all fairness, we have to allow for circumstances beyond his control. It was not his fault that he was born to the life of a spoiled rich kid, the elder son of a family wealthy enough to afford a nurse, a cook, and even a chauffeur. Probably, too, he could not help the filial hatred that led him to drop his first name, Paul, so as to avoid honoring his father, the eminent surgeon Dr. Paul-Michel Foucault -- a hatred that may also have fueled his bitter animus against his father's profession in *The Birth of the Clinic* and similar studies. Certainly it wasn't his fault that during his teens the Germans conquered his country, producing in him a Vichy-style passivity during the war for which he compensated in the postwar period -- like so many others on the French Left -- by vilifying his bourgeois upbringing. Most
importantly, he cannot be blamed for the irruption of homosexual desire that, when acted upon, produced intense self-loathing during his crucial teen age years, leaving him "prostrate for hours, ill, overwhelmed with shame." (1) Perhaps if he had been born a half-century later, he would have been spared this needless and groundless self-flagellation.

Given the foregoing difficulties, it is not surprising that in his young manhood Foucault lapsed near the state of madness that so largely preoccupied his subsequent scholarship. During his college years, his biographer says,

"Foucault withdrew into his solitude, leaving it only to scoff at the others with a ferocity that soon became notorious. . . . He argued with everybody. He got angry. He exuded in every direction a formidable level of aggression and, in addition, a pronounced tendency toward megalomania. . . . He was soon almost universally detested. His fellows thought him half mad. . . . One day someone. . . found him lying on the floor of a room where he had just sliced up his chest with a razor. Another time he was seen in the middle of the night chasing one of the other students with a dagger. . . . In the opinion of someone who knew him very well during this period, 'all his life he verged on madness'" (MF 26).

Luckily for Foucault, he proved capable of devising the perfect answer to his dilemma: a lifelong battle against every social entity authorized to define mad, criminal, or deviant behavior. (The latter two categories affected him in so far as a pedophiliac incident got him expelled from Poland in 1959.) Thus, says his biographer, his "entire oeuvre can be read as a revolt against the powers of 'normalization'" (MF x).
Of course we can't fault the man for devoting his tremendous research energies to justifying his own existence, for who among us is free from that compulsion? As transgressive deconstructionists, however, we in the Ferret camp are obliged to sniff out the "aporias" -- that's deconstructive gobbleygook for "contradictions" -- in the Foucault oeuvre. From the scores of lush specimens that rise before us, space permits us only a few choice examples.

To begin, in the 1950s he was a Communist who tooled around town in a spanking new Jaguar de luxe: certainly this scion of wealth could not be expected to share the privations of, let us say, a lifelong worker on a Jaguar assembly line. Nor did his claim that "we totally reject the world in which we [have] had to live" (MF 52) extend so far as to renounce other luxuries extracted from the sweat of someone else's proletarian labor. Throughout his lifetime his haute bourgeois family unit continually furnished the means for outstanding educational opportunities, incessant travel abroad, plush living quarters, and the slaking of every bodily appetite. So long as it lasted, therefore, his was a Communism for other people. He had joined the Party in 1950 after flunking his agregation exam (for which he had spent four years in preparation), and he left the Party in similar personal distress when it "condemned homosexuality as a bourgeois vice and a sign of decadence" (MF 56).

Our second aporia is the Voice Unheard in Foucault's massive study of crime and punishment. Certainly no civilized society can object to humane treatment of criminals, but no civilized order can survive the failure to constrain its most serious wrongdoers. *Discipline and Punish: The Birth of the Prison* (1975), possibly Foucault's most celebrated book, would have been more convincing had he chosen to give equal time -- or any time at all --
- to the victims of rape, assault, extortion, and other major crimes committed by the prisoners whose plight inflamed his indignation. It is odd how Foucault's grand discovery -- that imprisonment constrains an inmate's physical body and subjects him to supervisory observation (otherwise known as "the gaze") -- occupies a circle of concern too small to encompass the harm inflicted upon the bodies of crime victims.

But though Foucault displayed little concern for the victims of conventional crimes, we would be mistaken to think he abjured his own impulse to Discipline and Punish his fellow humans. Au contraire, he favored savage retaliation against the bourgeois world he (falsely) claimed to have rejected totally, and he wanted this vengeance, moreover, to occur without recourse to the traditional niceties of judicial process. In *Power/Knowledge* (1980) he reproaches his radical compatriots for their insufficient zeal on this point. Whereas they are cautious enough to call for a people's court, Foucault objects to even this kangaroo process coming between "the masses" and their thirst for immediate justice. It would seem that for him Robespierre remains the ideal model:

"...the court, with its triple division into two disputing parties and the neutral institution, which comes to decisions on the basis of some concept of justice which exists in and for itself, seems to me a particularly disastrous model for...the development of popular justice. ...After the States General of 1357 there was the peasant uprising; after 1789 there was 1793. Consequently this might be a good model."


We will call this Foucauldian model of ideal justice Aporia Number Three.
Our final aporia involves the spectacular opportunism that governed his radical agenda. Having tried and failed (because of his homosexuality) to obtain high office in de Gaulle's Ministry of Education, he chose to remedy his lapse toward conformity by helping his Maoist/Trotskyite students trash the University of Vincennes. This was a new campus established by the French government to extend opportunity to its less privileged citizens -- such as children of Jaguar assembly line workers, let's say -- somewhat in the fashion of a branch campus of an American state university. In short order, the militant radicals smashed tons of brand-new equipment while fomenting "demonstrations, clashes with the police, pitched battles between Communists and leftists or among leftist cliques" (MF 206).

According to "all the witnesses, the philosophy department [which Foucault chaired] was in the front line of these constant disturbances," and Foucault was "one of the most virulent speakers" who publically vilified the police for trying to control this mayhem (MF 209, 206). Meanwhile, the philosophy department which he chaired aided the "students" in question by inventing novel ways of awarding course credits: "the professors shut themselves up in a room and the students slipped a little piece of paper, with their name written on it, under the door. They were listed as having passed" (MF 208). His Maoist colleague Judith Miller (Jacques Lacan's daughter, brought there by Foucault) explained that "the university is a piece of capitalist society" and she would strive to make it function "worse and worse" (MF 208).

Doubtless this infantile irresponsibility could be written off as just another academic French farce if our philosopher-revolutionary maintained a decent consistency in these antics. But as usual, his enmity toward the established order ceased at the point where our Noble Thinker might have something to
lose in the game. Toward the most elite, establishmentarian academic institution in his country, the College de France, absolute deference was the tune du jour as MF lined up allies and pulled every string in sight to get himself elected to this holy of holies -- a feat he accomplished in 1970. Thereafter he could preach violent hostility to the bourgeois status quo while comfortably ensconced within its most prestigious academic citadel.

To his credit, Foucault's prodigious scholarship rolled on unimpeded by his political posturing. His final years were given over to a vast project entitled *The History of Sexuality*, whose third volume was cruelly cut short by his death in the then (1984) incipient AIDS epidemic. For all its epic scale, however, the *History* seems rather narrowly focused on the pleasures and problems of non-reproductive sexuality, much in the style of his lecture series years earlier on "the concept of love in French literature from the marquis de Sade to Jean Genet" (MF 78). You've read it right: "the concept of love," he called it, from de Sade to Genet.

"Veridiction" -- Speaking the Truth -- was the mantra of Foucault's later years, an ethical imperative that, as we have seen, he applied selectively. But in excavating the archeology of Foucault's life, we do come at last to a bedrock sediment of Veridiction, literally etched in stone:

**PAUL MICHEL FOUCAULT**

**PROFESSOR AU COLLEGE DE FRANCE**

1926-1984
Simple as it appears, two facts in this epitaph on Foucault's gravestone stand out in terminal relief. First, the restoration of his full patronymic gives credit at last to the loyal bourgeois family unit that launched his academic career. And second, that grandiose title erected over his remains -- the academic equivalent of the Order of the Garter -- comprises an ultra-bourgeois final curtsy to tradition, hierarchy, and respectability. Given the other aporias we have seen, we cannot be too surprised that the radical revolutionary Professor's last word is to affirm his honorific title. It must have meant a lot to him--the College de France, that red Jaguar of academic desire. Perhaps in a way the Le Monde obituary had it right. As an index to academic radicalism at large, the contrast between Foucault's wild theories and his actual servitude to conventional bourgeois values could be "the most important event of thought in our century."

(1) Didier Eribon, Michel Foucault, transl. by Betsy Wing (Harvard Press, 1991) 27 (hereafter MF). Also consulted: David Macey, The Lives of Michel Foucault and James Miller, The Passion of Michel Foucault.
Editor’s Note: An annual Bad Writing Contest, supervised by Professor Denis Dutton of the University of Canterbury in New Zealand, produced the following winning entries for 1999. The prefatory comments below are by the Bad Writing Contest judges.

We are pleased to announce winners of the fourth Bad Writing Contest, sponsored by the scholarly journal Philosophy and Literature.

The Bad Writing Contest celebrates the most stylistically lamentable passages found in scholarly books and articles published in the last few years. Ordinary journalism, fiction, departmental memos, etc. are not eligible, nor are parodies: entries must be non-ironic, from serious, published academic journals or books. Deliberate parody cannot be allowed in a field where unintended self-parody is so widespread.

Two of the most popular and influential literary scholars in the U.S. are among those who wrote winning entries in the latest contest. Judith Butler, a Guggenheim Fellowship-winning professor of rhetoric and comparative literature at the University of California at Berkeley, admired as perhaps "one of the ten smartest people on the planet," wrote the sentence that captured the contest's first prize. Homi K. Bhabha, a leading voice in the fashionable academic field of postcolonial studies, produced the second-
prize winner.

"As usual," commented Denis Dutton, editor of *Philosophy and Literature*, "this year's winners were produced by well-known, highly-paid experts who have no doubt labored for years to write like this. That these scholars must know what they are doing is indicated by the fact that the winning entries were all published by distinguished presses and academic journals."

Professor Butler's first-prize sentence appears in "Further Reflections on the Conversations of Our Time," an article in the journal *Diacritics* (1997):

*The move from a structuralist account in which capital is understood to structure social relations in relatively homologous ways to a view of hegemony in which power relations are subject to repetition, convergence, and rearticulation brought the question of temporality into the thinking of structure, and marked a shift from a form of Althusserian theory that takes structural totalities as theoretical objects to one in which the insights into the contingent possibility of structure inaugurate a renewed conception of hegemony as bound up with the contingent sites and strategies of the rearticulation of power.*

Dutton remarked that "it's possibly the anxiety-inducing obscurity of such writing that has led Professor Warren Hedges of Southern Oregon University to praise Judith Butler as 'probably one of the ten smartest people on the planet'."
This year's second prize went to a sentence authored by Homi K. Bhabha, a professor of English then at the University of Chicago and currently at Harvard. He writes in *The Location of Culture* (Routledge, 1994):

*If, for a while, the ruse of desire is calculable for the uses of discipline soon the repetition of guilt, justification, pseudoscientific theories, superstition, spurious authorities, and classifications can be seen as the desperate effort to "normalize" formally the disturbance of a discourse of splitting that violates the rational, enlightened claims of its enunciatory modality.*

This prize-winning entry was nominated by John D. Peters of the University of Iowa, who describes it as "quite splendid: enunciatory modality, indeed!" Ed Lilley, an art historian at the University of Bristol in the U.K., supplied a sentence by Steven Z. Levine from an anthology entitled *Twelve Views of Manet's "Bar"* (Princeton University Press, 1996):

*As my story is an august tale of fathers and sons, real and imagined, the biography here will fitfully attend to the putative traces in Manet's work of "les noms du père," a Lacanian romance of the errant paternal phallus ("Les Nondupes errent"), a revised Freudian novella of the inferential dynamic of paternity which annihilates (and hence enculturates) through the deferred introduction of the third term of insemination the phenomenologically irreducible dyad of the mother and child.*

Enough said. A little bad writing is too much. This is the end.