

No More One or the Other

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Translated by Gitta Honegger

Yes, Ernst Jandl: *Humanityyyyyyy*, we certainly could use a little bit of it. Since the attack of Hamas, I no longer know what this is supposed to be. It becomes a piece of paper on which many beautiful things have been written and then set on fire. And then the ashes, as perhaps in the case of Arthur Schnitzler's divorce from his wife Olga before a Munich Rabbinic Court, the ashes were ground above the heads of the participants. Now it rains forever on the heads of the [de]parted. An ash rain—that is humanity for you, when the wish to live and to care about and take care of this life depends on something that is not founded on life itself, but on a paradoxical dependence on the existence of others, however, as dominance in this dependence, since, in order to kill, others must be there, who can be defeated. Life a lack that wants to be filled. And then it is not even real lack which determine this life. This lack then consists of having to drift along, without finally killing others, called enemies. This sort of lack we can remedy, with weapons, of course. When fanatics rage, to whom life means nothing and death is something to aspire to, that makes you a martyr, allowed to repair to the virgins, then there are no more agreements about what life depends on and what it needs to maintain itself. So life was given to you, but now it is supposed to take care of it on its own? Why not just take it and throw it away, it will be much nicer and much more fun, like jumping jacks you throw on streets, where they leave no impression, the streets continue just lying there, gray and smooth. Well, then we rather move on to some kind of fun and sports vehicles (hang gliders!, motor cycles with stuff on them, pick-ups with still more on them, as if it were all about a gathering of fun athletes, and now let's start shooting, and then we drink something guaranteed non-alcoholic, shoot a few more rounds and then we take our bloody booty home with us, maybe like a homerun in baseball, into cheerful everydayness, a leisure activity that gets you to casually jump over fences, because killing and dying which they don't fear but desire, have become sports once and for all, if sports can't be murder. The Christian: Oh death, where is your victory, oh death where is your sting, that's what it says in 1 Corinthians, here it is answered, but not by Christians. Death as the opposite of desire. For the ones it is terror, loss of dear people or relatives, a draining of everything cherished; for the others this death is glorious fullness, reward, satisfaction, happy dependence on nothing but the final bullet and all other bullets, too. This team always wins, because in the end death comes anyway. So let it come sooner, we don't have to always go the full distance. If you kill or if you die—this must be equated here, you can fill the emptiness with yourself, rectify the sucking lack and fill it with your own death, for which you were looking and longing, to your own eternalization, your own apotheosis. This is the sting now, we kill and we die, This is our joy. We are the champions.

Basically, all one can do is write around this blank of the unspeakable. The Thirty Years' war that almost depopulated Europe started with clearly drawn lines, a religious war and a defenestration [plus a soft landing on a dung heap] in Prague until, in the end only

marauders roamed across the devastated lands. The population was squeezed dry and gotten rid of by the warlords, as far as possible. Farther would have been preferred by the lords. Then killing would be less work. I beg your pardon, historians, the comparison limps, as they say in the poet's mother tongue, like Mother Courage and her cart that got stuck in the mud. But what can one say but not this way, so then what other way or not at all? The great did not stay great and small not the small, my favorite line in the song of the Moldau (Brecht), and not one stone will be left on another, and most people were gone in the end. Those not born anymore and those born, no longer extend their hands to each other to this day. The chain has been cut apart with bolts and side-cutting pliers that separate sides irrevocably. The slaughtering, even in this 17th century war still knew the battle lines, agreements (even if no one keeps to them, there still are agreements, isn't that reassuring), rigorously trained mercenary armies, new combat tactics, but there were agreements, that's at least something. Now they still have to die again, on all sides, everywhere. In the smallest countries. Dying always works, even when there is no place for it.

But if there is only one goal that is the annihilation of the other as planned by the terror organization Hamas and it has always been planned—and there is no place in their heads for any other thoughts but this one, then the one no longer exists either. And if there is neither the one or the other, then civilization is at its end. It is a breach of everything that can still be negotiated. The same and the other cannot enter into a cognition that encompasses both," writes the Jewish philosopher Emmanuel Lévinas. And furthermore: "The relations that the separated being maintains with what transcends it, are not produced on the ground of totality, do not crystallize into a system. Yet do we not name them together?"

No more together. Now it's just shooting. And as the Nazis said about their invasion of Poland, Hamas say about their shooting, massacring, raping, torturing, they say, they are shooting back (and, of course, promptly) at something, that hasn't even shot yet (at least not at that time). This other which has now irrevocably, since one never had anything else on one's mind, this other then, who actually wants to say that there exists some sort of fellow human relationship between the attacker in his destructive rage and the attacked who does not have this destructive rage against that other one (and this is the fundamental difference between the two) this unconditional destructive rage of a terror gang against an Other—the only democratic state in the region does not annihilate this attacked state, but its attackers. With this crime, Hamas has destroyed itself once and for all. The hostage taking, also of the innocent Palestinians in their overcrowded strip of land, whom the terrorists claim to liberate (at the expense of the destruction of an entire country), takes everything away from them they could have ever attained. The more they affirm the legitimacy and righteousness of their actions, screaming and hurling insult everywhere, here, too, in Vienna, in front of St. Stephen's Cathedral (yes, it makes you think right away of the thirty years' war) backed up by the shouts of Austrian dollies, whose mummies might still be cleaning up their nurseries, or by young soccer fans who otherwise march and holler against something else, there are always grounds for marching, as well as opponents, what did I want to say, oh, yes, where did it start it has always started already, that's a line I hope I still can nail: So then, the more they yell out the legality of their goal, out of totality into totality, this quasi State-terroristic pleasure of murdering these innocent, mostly dancing and celebrating people (State-terrorism? No corresponding state in sight!, no state emerges from

such deeds, never ever) all the more emptiness emerges, a sucking vacuum and all the more quickly all efforts for the entrance exams to civilization expire. Hamas does not belong to it. Failed, even before the exam took place. A terrorist organization is not a member of civilization. Lévinas' *de novo* and face to face, the I's reception *from* the other, according to the philosopher. You can connect the other and the one with a simple "and", but no religion, no ideology makes a face to face of both. The bow of religion is drawn, the arrow can fly any time, it always hits the target. But religion is not even cement, no, not even a partition wall. Religion is a phantom which, like clouds, can take on any formation. But clouds cannot shoot, They are what is left, smoke, dust, rubble. Religion now is not even something that separates, and even less something connective, of course. Now anyone opposite you has deteriorated into ash which has been ground between both hands of a god who does not exist, refer to him as much as you like (he is referred to most intensely, if you want nothing but destroy the other, ash, scattered over all of us, until the wind blows it apart. Blowing away above our heads. We only see the black smoke getting blown away and horror is all that is left.

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