
In John Wyndham's 1960 science fiction *Trouble with Lichen*, Diana, a young lab researcher, and Francis, her boss at the facility (and husband-to-be), independently discover a true antigerone. It is a genus of lichen that in Diana's estimation has as long-term effect not only an increase in life but in effect "a kind of synthetic evolution – and the only evolutionary advance by man in a million years" (85). While Francis, a recent widower, responds by supplying himself and his children Biblical longevity via lichenin treatments, Diana hitches the prospect for evolutionary advance to a techno-feminist movement she cultivates in a chain of beauty spas she opens for this purpose. Via the "resentment of age and death" (154), which she sees as inevitably stronger in women, Diana builds up among her clients a "corps" of "living examples" (153) in unwitting receipt of the antigerone, whose lobbying influence, once the agent has been revealed, will rival that of the first patients of psychoanalysis, who promoted Freud.

Wyndham's science fiction, perhaps best known today via the *Village of the Damned* adaptations of his 1957 novel *The Midwich Cuckoos*, carried doubling, the quintessential "German" science fiction, into the post-war setting. In *Trouble with Lichen* he varied the doubling phantasm in order to project resolution of what Diana identifies as our precarious institutional life, from marriage to education. The marriage standard will not "stand up at all well to the prospect of a hundred and fifty years to be spent with a partner grabbed in adolescence [...]. Or think of education. The sort of smattering that's been good enough to tide most of us over fifty years isn't going to give us a full life for two hundred, or more" (87). While feminism is Diana's strategy in getting past the dialectic of adolescence and midlife crisis/criticism, the issue of half life versus full life takes us back to the bottom line skewering all the ages and genders of development: the life or death stakes of knowledge. For it is our relation to the mediation of knowledge in particular that poses a problem of precarity begging the Faustian solution. That "half-knowledge is

precarious" (85) is our starting or end point: "We have only a precarious hold on the forces we do liberate – and problems that we ought to be trying to solve, we neglect. [...] We shall manage to postpone the worst one way and another, but postponement isn't solution [...]. That's why we need longer life, before it is too late" (89).

The half-way predicament of knowledge as our precarious hold – *Halt* or *Inhalt* (content) – which doubling in time or in place seeks to overcome, reflects a divergence in perspectives between self and other over the issue of mortality. At the outset of her reflections on precarious life, Judith Butler identifies Freud's change in mind or perspective between mourning as the work that succeeds by substitution and grief that fails to come to an end, which he installed as melancholic identification at the foundation of two normative psychic institutions, the superego and sublimation, as script for performative transformation. "Perhaps mourning has to do with agreeing to undergo a transformation (perhaps one should say *submitting* to a transformation) the full result of which one cannot know in advance" (21). Mourning would then address a transformation we cannot know in advance, as it advances – as half knowledge or knowing, with which we can only hope to catch up. As precariously incomplete knowledge, then, mourning carries forward the conditions of "early" development that defer the very onset of the ability to mourn.

In *Precarious Life*, Butler once again chooses as her main literary inter-text Sophocles' *Antigone*, the alternate to Sophocles' *Oedipus Rex* that's all in the family but in which the issue of mourning switches from background to foreground. Creon introduces the crisis by his edict against mourning the dead enemy, but in a post-war period, otherwise the period of reparation set at the end of the sentencing of opposition. That the relationship to the enemy, in particular the vanquished dead enemy, can and should change introduces the inner-world connection between friend and foe, even between victim and persecutor or among their heirs.

Antigone sets her time aright by burying the brother the state exposes to denial of mourning. He happens to be her brother: incest in the recent past links all members of the socius by slight degrees of separation. What holds for Thebes holds by analogy in the United States via inclusion of identifiable local conflicts world-wide within the globalization of the socius at home. This fulfils one condition of Butler's plaint. In the United States there are going to be hybrid Americans who press for recognition of their dead relations from both sides now of every point of conflict punctuating the globe.

As theorized by Melanie Klein, the inner world is not so much selective as it is highly vulnerable, in need of being re-established and re-secured incessantly even at its very foundations. First or direct contact with loss threatens to shatter the inner world. The

work of mourning consists in the all-out effort to shore up this world also by reincorporating the first good objects to be internalized as lost and found. As explored and charted by Klein, the inner world is the hub of a relatedness that foundational incest in Thebes also provides and that the mix of the global and the local in the US reception of the "war on terrorism" almost guarantees. In her reading of *The Oresteia* Klein can dismiss as denial the edict of the Furies that matricide is the most grievous crime. It amounts to denial, she continues, also in the sense that love is thus denied the internal good object. Klein leads these points toward the conclusion that everyone who dies in our midst is the mother.

Antigone's claim that this brother is her one and only irreplaceable object is staked against and inside the madness she enters to counter Creon, whose unmitigated hostility against the dead enemy, against his very remembrance, now puts him out with the trash, now entombs his mourners. The consequences of the encounter, which Antigone foresees and accepts, bring about her living death, or rather the realization that this undeath belongs to her case history as melancholic going back to childhood. Antigone's melancholia introduces legibility – indeed, the tragedy itself – at the border to Creon's derangement. In Freud's science melancholia was the first borderline disorder, the first opening up of a zone of transference legibility inside narcissistic illness. The deepest pockets of narcissistic derangement in the Ratman, Schreber, and Wolfman cases are rendered accessible through the foreign body or caption of a melancholic narrative. Jacques Lacan identifies the point Antigone reaches when she goes out to the border to meet Creon's madness half-way as that of criminality or psychopathy, which figures in yet other ways than psychosis proper as limit concept of psychoanalysis.

Sometimes a B notion offers insight in the middle of its transactions. *Psycho*, an American term first popular as nickname for the psychological casualty of WWII, was applied by Robert Bloch and Alfred Hitchcock to hold a gap in understanding as overlap between the psychotic and the psychopathic disorders. Norman Bates and his heirs present as psychotic but it is by dint of their ruthless violence that they hold mascot positions in mass culture, which compel or admit doubling. In the setting of psycho horror, the diagnosis of psychosis supplies a stopgap in the failure of interpretation of psychopathic violence. But psychopathy, while impossible to treat and interpret, takes us by surprise in the environs of quasi normalcy. The psychopath remains our double at the close quarters of a near miss. In the terms of object-relations analysis: there but for the grace of the good object go I.

It is because everyone's adolescence is a time-based version of psychopathy that we come so close. Prior to consolidation via secondary gain as criminality there is the anti-

social tendency, which D. W. Winnicott studied and treated in children and teens. The adolescent returns in fundamental ways to the starting block of infancy. What has changed is the teen's physical ability to act on the wish to kill parents, who in the meantime bear the date mark of expiration. The teen must find room in psychic reality for this death. But first teenagers find themselves, as Winnicott describes it in *Struggling through the Doldrums*, "struggling to start again as if they had nothing they could take over from anyone" (152). They thus form group associations on the basis of cursory uniformities. What makes each adolescent association nevertheless cohere is the proxy or mascot service of one ill member in the group, whose extreme symptom, often violence that includes a form or forum of suicidality, impinges on society, produces a social reaction, and makes the others feel real. And yet Winnicott concludes "it is the individual relationships, one by one, that eventually lead to socialization" (147). What also starts over, then, is the delay in onset of the ability to mourn. To catch up with the delay the antisocial child or teen responds to a diffuse sense of deprivation and irreality by acts that call attention to the importance of the environment as container and thereby signal hope. Hope refers to the ability to turn around impingement by balking, starting over, finding a new approach, carrying out reality testing. But hope also refers to the missing onset of the ability to mourn. That which is precarious literally means you have but a prayer, which covers this relationship of hope to mourning.

As his reflections on Antigone reach to the limit concepts, Lacan puts through the connection to Hamlet, although he, not unlike Carl Schmitt, proposes a mythic or structural reading in lieu of Freud's recourse to the Elizabethan protagonist as patient in whom the tragedy of Oedipus is re-staged to include representation or repression of motivation. As Friedrich Kittler demonstrated, Freud's reading already had a shelf life in the culture of *Bildung* as Goethe's *Wilhelm Meister's Apprenticeship*. Lacan returns to this shelf when he reads *Antigone* with Hegel. Without Hamlet the Oedipus complex is a mythic or psychotic enactment. The psychoanalytic discourse on *Bildung* grounds Antigone via or for the suicide, in which two or three others join, a family pact the chorus comments on and extends as group sentiment. As Winnicott implied, the individual relationships work toward the ability to mourn. With the free pass that comes with group membership we skip the work toward mourning and go directly to the simulation of mourning, as in public mourning, which affords controlled affective bonding that at the limit admits suicide as its group structure or plan. Even the master in the famous dialectic rises to his occasion not so much by risking or accepting mortality as by identifying suicide as option.

Doesn't Hamlet caught in the acting out between the ghost of his father and the thought of suicide crossing his mind conduct a Winnicottian reading (of the adolescent re-

start of that which the Oedipus complex resolved only for the time being) to the case of Antigone, who struggles as another group mascot, isolated only by her proxy service, to find the ability in the need to mourn?

At the point of Antigone's suicide, Lacan lodges his notion of second death. It is a point of honor (and very French) to underscore this excess as inherent in desire, perhaps as the little death, which, Lacan allows, would defy and reconstitute the symbolic itself. On the schedule of the big death, however, the second death exceeds by coming after the concluded transactions of substitution. Slavoi iek reads into opera this distinction between a biological death and the second death that the subject dies in freedom once all accounts have been rendered and guilt no longer haunts remembrance. But it is in the seminar on *Hamlet* that Lacan makes explicit the immunological significance of secondary death. The first death is our initiation into loss and the containment of loss through castration. Subsequent deaths enter the buffer zone of this accomplishment. The other second death, then, a death of one's own alone, presupposes the diminishing return of the first death. In other words, there will never have been first or direct contact with the other's death or loss. That's why the rites of mourning, in Lacan's interpretation of *Hamlet*, realign the gap opened up by a direct hit of mourning with the greater gap that is always also there, *the symbolic lack*. What does it mean that every encounter with the loss of a loved one is the renewal of vows of substitution with the separations and sacrifices already given at the office of Oedipus?

However it is staged, the Lacanian notion of second death takes the self as Point of View. But if mortality is my big problem, one that is not addressed in the first place to or through the other, then mourning is hardly a consequence. The cornerstone of Freud's reflections on mourning – which Klein then relocated at the foundation of the inner world – is that there is no relationship to one's own death and to that extent no self relation. Only the death of the other counts: in going first the other sets the place inside us, now of mourning and unmourning, now of manic defense and suicidality. That's why the relationship to mourning is fundamental (not only ethical) in Freud's conception. And yet the resistance to Freud's view is as pervasive as the popular idiom in which we tend to render the death wish one can have. After I corrected this use as symptom a number of times in various B works of film and literature I discovered that *to have a death wish* in fact signifies in the American language one's own contemplation of suicide.

For Freud, the death wish backfires upon the self when a loved one on the target range in fact dies. That's when the acknowledgment of death-wishing ambivalence – the therapeutic bottom line of analytic understanding – proves impossible at close quarters

and must be projected instead onto the deceased who enters the phantasmagoria of un-mourning and undeath as out to get us. The unacknowledgment of the death wish is stowaway in the idiomatic fantasy that to have a death wish means to contemplate or work toward one's own end. By viewing suicide as always a pact with and against internal others, Freudian analysis treats this so-called self relation as the test case of the impossibility even of conceiving a death of one's own. As presented, for example, in *A Contribution to the Psychogenesis of Manic-Depressive States*, Klein's view of suicide as the ultimate effort made to protect the lifeline to the good object against contamination by the bad object oneself fulfils terms of commitment to the inner world writ large.

The *Bildungs*-notion of Faustian striving, which passes through magic and technology, offers a related option: that of deferral of the suicide that tempted Faust to end it all in the mood-swinging opening of Goethe's tragedy. Critical of gullible colleagues, Winnicott quipped (in *The Use of an Object and Relating through Identifications*) that many patients enter analysis not to be recognized and treated but to defer suicide under cover until in time mortality's claim renders the voluntary option as overkill. For Goethe's Faust, however, the deferral extends to and through the very end: Faust does not so much die as commence divesting himself of the debt of his identifications. But this tutelage as free subject in second death is possible only because his lost objects have returned: first they did the dying for him, now they do the mourning. Faust enters one man's Heaven, this man's schooling in the mourning he lost, reassigned as perspectives on loss he reversed but preserved.

In *Mourning and its Relation to Manic-Depressive States*, Klein shows, through a close rereading of Freud's three references to reality testing in *Mourning and Melancholia*, how the initial decision the mourner is up against at the moment of the other's death – either to join the deceased or break free to affirm life and live on – loses its pressure packing and backing. In the course of commemorative reality testing, which keeps the deceased around by the same visiting rites whereby the loved one's absence or one's reservations about it should be confirmed, the decision between death and life no longer holds. Klein's mourning complex rests on Freud's declaration of dependence which she projects unto undecidability: both parties to a loss are lost to each other and remain conjoined in remembrance, each not knowing who died on whom. But as the case study of Mrs. A. in Klein's mourning essay also demonstrates, the moments of reunion in the inner world are subsumed and metabolized in the service of living on. Since moments of mere survival are renewed occasions to mourn, it doesn't stop there. The perspective of self or other, upon one's own death or the dead other, cannot but return to assert itself as next in line.

Within a perspective of self storage, the prospect of mourning is yet secretly inscribed in the frame of one's own death suspended between suicide and finite life's affirmation or acceptance. The temporal application of doubling, which Freud identified in his reading of E. T. A. Hoffmann's story as the ever returning Sandman in contrast to the robot body-double Olympia, is an objective relation that Goethe's Faust reclaims on the upbeat, both from the compulsion that yields the death drive and from the infernal investment in finite quality time secured by Devil's compact. Faust obtains one more lifetime in which the deferral of suicide gives way to living on beyond the terms of decision between modes of murder. The prospect of extending the finite time of remembrance must be pried loose from the old comfort, the double and nothing, which replication on the spot advertises. Thus Faustian striving appears to relate to uncanny doubling as counter-intuition, also within the endopsychic setting of science fiction.

In *Trouble with Lichen* Wyndham applied Faustian staggering to doubling in your face in space, which was his first temptation and dangerous alliance. While composing his breakthrough 1951 novel *The Day of the Triffids* – which met the standards of technological fantasy in a setting split off from the identifiable recent past of WW II – Wyndham took a break and explored the continuity shot otherwise disowned not only in his science fiction. Published decades after his death, *Plan for Chaos* projects out of the protagonist's somewhat controversial plan to wed his cousin the inimical Nazi conspiracy he must withstand of a new and improved mass psychology of human replication. Although the British author pitched all his works to an American audience, this one alone was in fact populated by Americans. Only the American melting pot could extend degrees of separation on a global scale. The cousins, who knew they were of mixed European descent, including stopovers in England, Germany, and Sweden, discover they are directly related to a new German melting plot for world domination via divisions of doubles. Because the leader of this conspiracy and the mother of all doubles is their own aunt they come in for their resemblance without the same taboo of the blood tie separating the mobilized doubles. While the doubles are siblings who cannot mate, the couple of cousins are spectacularly exogamous in this context and are soon to be enlisted, therefore, as the reproductive genitals to be shared in group. If the conspiracy succeeds in releasing total suicidal conflict by secretly introducing technical difficulties into the stalemate of the Cold War, which can only be mistaken at their source in the terms of the opposition, then the clan of doubles can repopulate the earth via their American cousins.

As alternative to the strain of doubling in Wyndham's oeuvre, *Trouble with Lichen* also appears to circumvent the more typical SF prospect of living on with or as our tech-

nologies, which would then be doing the evolving for us. In his first SF novel, *The Secret People*, which was published in 1935, Wyndham included a lasting reflection on prosthetic relations as doubly obscuring our recognition of what we want in ourselves. It is a view presented in contrast to the prevailing one of our prosthetic relations via technology as successful mourning and substitution. Does man's ability to broadcast, for example, include acceptance of his own limitation? "I doubt it. I should say that we recognised it as a limitation of the system we have evolved, not of ourselves. We put up an inferior substitute called telegraph and radio, and forget our limitations – but they are still there. How many men, do you suppose, realise the limitations of using words to convey our meanings? They may find that there are inconvenient misunderstandings, and blame language, but how many admit that the words are just a substitute for the thing they really lack – mental communication?" (59). In *The Midwich Cuckoos*, Wyndham was able to carry the doubling theme forward by separating it via its itinerary from outer space both from the murders of WW II and the incestuous proximity to blood ties. The lookalike alien children, who use telepathy to communicate among themselves and to keep outsiders under internal surveillance, represent an evolutionary advance as mass mind but also a decline into psychopathy. The alien kids deal ruthlessly with any threat, inadvertent or deliberate, which the humans might pose. But these violent interactions are still developmental. On the evolutionary scale the continued existence of the doubles weighs in as humanity's extinction. In the end there is only one human the children will allow in their proximity. He shores up his defences against telepathy in order to protect the inner world he leaves out against the double threat of annihilation. He includes the aliens in his suicide before they can make out its ideation in his thoughts.

In Klein's understanding of the sense of loneliness, the positive thinking of integration must pull up short before the prospect of irreversible loss. For Klein the loss that is irreversible is not that which castration binds but refers to the withdrawal of telepathic unity with mother. As Alan Turing advised in the text of his famous experiment, the live telepathy that might extend into a blur the limits of what living subjects can know about one another also, once accepted as possibility, would admit the prospect of communication with the ghostly departed. Turing's science fiction suggests that the acceptance of the ghost changes or deranges everything. In fact the ghostly melancholic relation stabilizes or, as Walter Benjamin writes of Daniel Paul Schreber's delusional system, encapsulates the derangement at the limit of knowledge as yet legible. Beginning with Hamlet, the ghost encapsulates and captions at the border the nether realm of psychosis. Hamlet is even able to risk simulation of madness, but he plays at being psychotic only by withdrawing em-

pathy: his treatment of Ophelia is psychopathic. Real madness lies the way of Ophelia's discursive decline and reunion.

Antigone's ruthless treatment of her sister Ismene is a byproduct of her co-production with Creon of the case for and against her as melancholic. The instrumentalization of psychosis along its borderlines only shifts to another limit, the ultimate uncontrollable double: the psychopath in our faces.

During the early ears of WW I Freud contemplated as "contemporary" (*zeitgemäß*) the delay in primal man's discovery of the need to be able to mourn. In contrast to the philosophical view that the mystery of death was the starting-point of all speculation, Freud distinguished two or three relations not so much to death as to the dead, which, conjugated via imbrications between self and other, resulted in the new relationship to knowledge. What attends, then, the onset of brooding upon a divergence of perspectives on mortality between self and other is the immediate ability to kill ruthlessly. The death wish, the representative in every individual psyche of the primal killer, guarantees that our relationship to knowledge is introduced and fragmented by the need to be able to mourn. Can the relationship to mourning mediate the triumph over the slain enemy? As Theodor Adorno argued, mediation is itself mediated by that which it mediates. Another way to put it is to emphasize the finitude of mediation itself. Thus Freud's staging of the construct of love of knowledge shows that the finite operation of substitution as release is the wish-fulfilment version of the finitude that overrides memory. The last lifetime to carry forward the secular span of extended finitude via haunting or remembrance will come to an end. That, then, would be the second death, the distinction between deaths that signifies extinction.

In *Early Stages of the Oedipus Complex*, Klein underscored that it is in regard to the ins and outs of mother's creativity and body that psychopathic violence irrupts at the outset of the desire to know. The young child presses two inquiries against the limits: *Where do the dead go* and *Where do babies come from?* "One of the most bitter grievances we come upon in the unconscious is that these [...] overwhelming questions [...] remain unanswered. Another reproach follows hard upon this, namely, that the child could not understand words and speech [...]. The early feeling of not knowing has manifold connections. It unites with the feeling of being incapable, impotent, which soon results from the Oedipus situation [...]. In analysis [...] these grievances give rise to an extraordinary amount of hate. Singly or in conjunction they are the cause of numerous inhibitions of the epistemophilic impulse: for instance, the incapacity to learn foreign languages, and, further, hatred of those who speak a different tongue" (188). While individual psychoanalytic

therapy can head this madness off at the impasse it cannot fully achieve its own ideal of integration. The rest, Klein concluded, is loneliness. It is our half-way condition of relating and knowing that mourning addresses, much as half-knowledge as *Halbbildung*, according to Adorno, remains for *Bildung*, as its condition of mourning, the only topic of knowledge.

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