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Hieronymous Bosch. *The Garden of Earthly Delights.* (About 1500; Prado.)
Sisters and brothers,
Brothers and sisters,
Ain't we every one?
Stephen Lawrence and Bruce Hart,
on *Free to Be . . . You and Me*
The telos of *Measure for Measure* and the informing element of its plot is the ideal taliation of a chaste, incestuous marriage. The play integrates a study of incest in the ordinary sense (we risk committing incest in any act of intercourse because no one can be certain who his father is) with a study of incest in an extraordinary sense (we are all children of the same Father, so all sex is antonomastically incest). Isabella flees from promiscuous Vienna, where any man might be her blood kin, to the convent, where all men are certainly her spiritual kin. The religious (or extraordinary) aspect of *Measure for Measure*—figured by the Catholic orders—is thus the logical telos (the place where we are driven) of the secular, or ordinary, life of the play. The religious aspect of the play is thus not in any sense foreign to it, but is rather its formal or teleological essence. The plot goes to and from a nunnery.

The Form of Marriage

To understand how the form (*eidos*) of marriage is the telos of *Measure for Measure*, we must examine the connections between teleology and plot in Western drama as a whole. From Aristotle to Kant, at least, a discussion of the precise relationship between teleology in nature and in art was crucial to considerations of art. “The plot,” writes Aristotle, “is the end [telos] of a tragedy; and the end is the chief thing of all.”¹ In the plot, he implies, an intention that informs the play is realized—³—the likely is made necessary. Telos, so understood, is not merely an end; it is also the term of a process of generation like the natural one. In Aristotle, entelechy concerns that process of development (whether artistic or natural) from potential existence to form (*eidos*) or perfect actuality (*entelechia*)—from pregnancy, say, to birth. The first part of Kant’s *Critique of Judgment* similarly presents art as purposive (it considers structural organization and the tendency to ending); the
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second part concerns the heuristic purposiveness which Kant argues that we must conceive for the organism.

Such an analogy between nature and art informs my understanding of the plot of Measure for Measure as "giving birth to a birth," which I mean both in a figurative and a literal sense. I see Measure for Measure as a play whose plot has both a kind of biological telos (for Aristotle all plays do) and a biological content. The greatness of the play lies partly in its critical, even self-critical, combination of form (telos) and content. This artful drama, with its aesthetic teleology analogical to the natural teleology we must assume, has as its content the confrontation of natural teleology with the artful requirements of human civilization. By the fiction of plotting (the Greek hupothesis) it depicts one of the grandest fictions of the political order: perfect taliation, or marriage.

In many plays of Shakespeare, especially the comedies, marriage or reunion is the end of the plot. Not only is it the last event, it is also the logical consequence of the preceding action. Yet in Measure for Measure, remarkably, marriage and reunion, whether we want them or not, are not agreed to within the context of the drama. To assume that they do take place distorts and simplifies the play as a whole, just as the argument that marriage in the actual world could in any but a fictional sense solve the problems inherent in the actual political economy is mere ideology.

One position on the topic (I would call it the "Protestant" one) might be stated as follows. Sublimation or suppression of the natural sexual urge (e.g., the sublimation that Angelo, Isabella, and the Duke seek, each in his or her own way) is impossible. A modern Augustinian Sister (a member of Luther's order) says of sexual desire: "You can't sublimite it. You can't suppress it. You simply have to damn well sacrifice it." Sacrifice of sexuality, however, can entail (some would say must entail) a kind of internal mutilation—a castration of the heart—that makes not so much for transcendentally temperate, whole men (which is the monachist goal) as for merely continent, hence damnable, eunuchs for God. Surely it is better to marry than to burn in a damnable castration of the heart. Moreover, marriage redeems (or makes chastely possible) the generation on which depends, God knows, our present world order—which order, being neither virginal (like Eden) nor supervirginal (like the world of the Second Coming), requires that some of us, at least, procreate. "Long live chaste marriage!" That, some say, is realism.

The Protestant position recognizes the falseness of mere continence, whether internal (as in the case of Angelo) or external (as in
the case of physically castrated and imprisoned men). Measure for Measure certainly takes this tack—that it is better to marry than to burn—a certain distance. Measure for Measure takes an opposing tack, however, when it suggests that to marry is also to burn, since marriage is essentially incestuous. Does a marriage take place, then, within or without the play? Maybe the spectator must take things as they are; the Brothers (Luther, say) are already—essentially and historically—married to the Sisters. The greater question, however, is: What does the play reveal about the meaning of marriage?, or, What does marriage mean for our culture? Does marriage really solve the confrontation between nature and culture, or the civilized human being’s discontented desire for, and fear of, incest?

The Protestant charge against Catholic monachism—that celibacy is worse than marriage—is not allowed to stand in Measure for Measure. Whatever the validity of the view that celibacy is perversive, the play shows that psychological repression of a similar or worse kind obtains in the institution of marriage. Marriage, which enacts incest, is worse than celibacy, which merely intends incest, insofar as a bad act is essentially worse than a bad intent. Measure for Measure suggests the fictional, or dreamlike, quality of marriage as a chaste solution to the confrontation between nature and culture. Marriage is fictional because what marriage purports to accomplish—a chaste solution to the confrontation between civilization (the rule against incest) and nature (the rule to reproduce no matter how)—it accomplishes only by violation of the incest taboo.

The violation of the incest taboo informing, or motivating, marriage involves the doctrine, essential to Christianity, that we are all siblings. In many societies, what is most important is not to know one’s biological kin but rather to know the group of people that constitute one’s sociological kin and to which, willy-nilly, one’s biological kin belong or should belong. If we take the side of sociology against that of biology—that is, if we universalize our civilized, or social, aspect—then the children’s song has a point: “Sisters and brothers, / Ain’t we everyone?” Sisters and brothers all. Marriage, which in this version must be to a sibling, is as much a profane violation of the taboo on endogamy/incest as it is a sacred attempt not to violate the taboo. The figural line separating my biological daughter, with whom my son may have sexual intercourse under no circumstances, from my sociological daughter-in-law, with whom my son may in certain circumstances have intercourse, suggests the precarious position here of law itself.

The formal idea, or eidos, of marriage in Measure for Measure thus
combines in one vision both incestuous and chaste, both tragic and comic, teloi. For incest, though abhorrent to the political order as we know it, is, from a Christian spiritual perspective, an essential requirement of the Holy Family as of Universal Siblinghood generally, and, from a Christian physical perspective, the antonomasia for and telos of all sexual activity, including that in wedlock. Ordinary marriage is the typical, even perfect, end of comedy, which is only political; incest is the typical end of tragedy, which is only natural. The plot of Measure for Measure, however, brings together marriage and incest, comedy and tragedy, in an extraordinary union. This union is at once impossible and aesthetically necessary. It is what Aristotle calls a “likely impossibility,” like any atonement of two different things. Thus necessity (as opposed to chance) and aesthetic probability (as opposed to realistic possibility) play a key role in the narrative teleology of the drama—for example, in the death of Ragozine, which is at once accidental and necessary. Through the remarkable union of incest (by virtue of which “all are one”) and marriage (by virtue of which “both are two but each is one”) the great problems of dialectic, if not of all knowledge, are solved. In this sense the plot—maybe literary plotting in general—“is a source of knowledge which we absolutely require, and which we have no other way of acquiring.”

The humanist and literary disciplines may be especially well suited to explore the claim that a fiction of adequate commensuration in exchange, or of chastity in marriage, underlies most all human societies. Literary fiction—and above all its most social expression, dramatic plotting—is closely tied to the societal need for fictions of atonement or commensuration in commercial and sexual transactions. Do such social fictions as commercial identity and incest give rise somehow to such literary fictions as disguise and the interchangeability of meaning? Do we do well, or as well as we might, to approach the social and political problems of retaliation and incest by analyzing a work of literature—albeit a brilliant one—rather than by statistical surveys, anthropological fieldwork, or psychological investigation?

Great drama is a response to, and in some measure is born with, the conflict between nature and culture that informs the Western tradition of understanding incest and its taboo. To glimpse the repression inherent in one’s tradition from within that tradition requires the indirection of aesthetic form. Drama is peculiarly able to delineate the problem of sociobiological telos since dramatic form imitates that telos, treating the general as though it were the particular, transforming the like or likely into the necessary, and conflating intent (or desire) with act. Dramatic art is what best explains the more or less artful
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combination of two different things—two siblings or two spouses—into one. Such oneness and atonement are formally definitive in incest, which may help explain why Racine, who incorporated Aristotelian and other unities into his works, generally chose incest as the informing content of his plots. In incest one closes the circle of time, moving forward from birth to death and backward from death to birth: “On this day,” says Sophocles’ Tiresias to Oedipus, “you will be born and die at the same time.”

“Make not impossible / That which but seems unlike” (5.1.54–55). The principle of economy in Measure for Measure is the unlikely collapse of intent with act and of every act with its telos. This collapse allows the exploration of problems otherwise inaccessible. It also allows the exploration of how the process of the play—a series of hypothetical, taliational exchanges—conjoins the natural demand for incest (the only solution apparent in the middle of the play) with the political demand for chaste marriage (the only solution apparent at the end). These exchanges lead up to the unlikely exchange of Claudio for Claudio’s own son, as the precondition for the concluding chaste, if incestuous, marriage.

My claims for the meaning of the plot are not necessary to enjoyment of the play, but they help one understand its telos. Chapman writes: “If the Body (being the letter, or history), seems fictive, and beyond possibility to bring into Act: the scene, then, the Allegory (which is the soul) is to be sought.” As we have seen, the intrigue of Measure for Measure moves from “a kind of incest” in the figural sense “an unchaste act that is like, or that resembles incest” toward “a kind of incest” in the sense “a certainly incestuous act with one’s own kin.” The plot of Measure for Measure acts out this certain incest through resemblance, although it is “not a resemblance, but a certainty” (4.2. 187) that saves Claudio. This concentration on resemblance gives literature its power to pose the problem of incest and perhaps ultimately to dispose of it.

Incest and Repression

What is’t I dream on? 2.2.179

Taken as a whole, Measure for Measure offers a glimpse of a liberty that, were it understood and realized, would mean the essential transformation, if not the probably impossible end, of politics. In such moments as the beginning of the play, when Isabella seems to vacillate between remaining in the Sisterhood and pleading as a sister, or the
end of the play, when she seems to vacillate between being a Sister to all men and being a wife to Vincentio, *Measure for Measure* seeks out the "glassy essence," or social archeology, of the "angry ape" that is Man (2.2.121). To recognize this exposure of the role of incest and its taboo in society is to challenge—if only for a moment—the basis of all political union as we know it.

The radical nature of such a challenge may explain why more critics and readers have not discussed the centrality of incest to the play. By ignoring it, critics willy-nilly serve the politically conservative purpose of suppressing discontent so that marriage and politics can go on essentially unquestioned. Their frequent claim that *Measure for Measure* is motivated by the desire to uphold an ideal of chastity echoes a desire to uphold that ideal themselves—for it is still upon chastity that such ideologically and politically important institutions as property and kinship are conceptually grounded. Their treatment of incest—or obliviousness to it—has been in effect a kind of repression.

**Literary Criticism.** Contemporary criticism has treated incest in terms of solipsism, narcissism, exclusivity, rebellion, difference versus repetition, sexist oppression, and individuation. Psychoanalysis treats incest in literature as an oneirological fulfillment of individual oedipal fantasy, and anthropology treats it as an allegorical expression of social structure. There are a few anthologies of literary works about incest and only one work that attempts to provide a bibliographical survey of major works about incest as it is ordinarily understood in the Western tradition. In these treatments, incest has been regarded as but one possible erotic theme among many, albeit a theme with an especially "pornographic" component. Those writing more generally about art have tended to treat incest in an equally limited way—as a literary issue at once moral and aesthetic. T. S. Eliot argues that a play about consciously committed incest can be a "good" play only insofar as calling the hero and heroine brother and sister does not make the spectator feel that their love for each other is essentially incestuous. He was preceded in this argument by Thomas Rymer, who objected to the sibling love in Speroni's *Canace* (1546) and in *A King and No King*, by Beaumont and Fletcher, on the quasi-Aristotelian ground that a knowingly incestuous hero cannot be tragic because he is too unlike us to elicit pity or fear.

I believe that, as drama is peculiarly suited to the working out of cultural concerns expressed by the idea of incest and the incest taboo, so literary interpretation and commentary are especially suited for discussing incest. The distinction between biology and sociology (or nature and culture) can be brought into question in terms of the intel-
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lectual and linguistic place of kinship words or names and in terms of a poetics, or metaphorics, or the classification of kin and kind—"a little more than kin, and less than kind." Insight into the figural aspect of language can enable literary scholars to deal anew with the figure of incest in literature. In doing so, they can reconsider the predominantly Western view that consanguinity is the primary, or literal, kind of kinship, and that other kinds—friendship, gossip, even friendship and politics—are merely secondary, or figural kinship.

Anthropology and Psychoanalysis. Anthropology and psychoanalysis, both born in the wake of revolutionary romanticism and in reaction to it, are often limited in their regular approach to the hypothesis of Universal Siblinghood, and hence to universal incest and the possibility of the withering of the incest taboo. The structuralist view of Lévi-Strauss and the psychoanalytic view of most Freudians—that a society without incest is an impossibility and that nuns and monks are essentially parasitic (or subsocietal) neurotics—does not permit the open question of whether there can be, or could have been, incestuous societies or freely celibate individuals.

Anthropology (versed, like Angelo, in the study of the state [2.4.71]) has attempted, sometimes as a central purpose, to elucidate politics and the incest taboo. But anthropology has usually not concerned itself with the incest taboo in the Christian society at its own origins. A good example of a myth passed over is the Virgin Birth, or the fiction of the father as the son of himself (as Claudio is born as his own son from Isabella/Mariana/Juliet). I have tried to direct attention to a similar question, or "mystery," in the Christian tradition by focusing not on parthenogenesis but on celibacy and incest in the Holy Family.

Another sign that anthropologists and sociologists have passed over their own Christian institutions is the relative scarcity of studies about the Catholic orders. Perhaps this silence may be explained, not just by blindness to one's own culture, but by the fact that the orders threaten the very idea of society as most social science conceives it. The sexual and economic structures proposed by the orders—celibacy and communism—deny reproduction and property, essential to our society, if not to all societies. In a fundamental sense the orders thus challenge the very tenet of most anthropology as well as much sociology: the tenet that the incest taboo and the "principle of legitimacy" order the human world. The orders sublimate, or sublate, or damn well sacrifice the complex structure of any and all human societies as social scientists perceive it; they focus exclusively on one spiritual parenthood rather than on either sociological or biological parenthoods; and, to a certain extent, they admit incest as an inevitable
part of human life. In changing siblings to Universal Siblings, the orders are absolutely radical.

Lévi-Strauss, for example, may seem to begin from a fundamental observation that the incest taboo, or society itself, as he sees it, might never have been; but he treats all histories or stories of a society where there is no incest taboo—all discussions of “a haven where women will no longer be exchanged” and where “one might keep to oneself”—as purely ideological ideas unattainable in “this” life. He does not consider those people who do live at once in supramarital endogamy (incest) and celibacy. (In the same way anthropologists routinely except from anthropological study the abstract principle of universal love.) Structuralist anthropology’s later literary developments are no better. The semiotic view of Roland Barthes is that incest is a “nominative” crime, merely “a surprise of vocabulary”: “The crime consists in transgressing the semantic rule, in creating homonymy: the act contra naturam is exhausted in an utterance of counter-language, the family is no more than a lexical area.” This view of incest as pun might be apt in analyzing individual incest, where one man is, for example, the father of himself as son, but when the same man plays all roles—father, son, brother, and husband—the pun becomes universalized and a new theory of punning is required. Julia Kristeva similarly responds to Lévi-Strauss’s structuralist view that a linguistic system of exchange is analogous to a kinship system of exchange by arguing that the counterpart to incest is poetic language: “If it is true that the prohibition of incest constitutes, at the same time, language as communicative code and women as exchange objects in order for a society to be established, poetic language would be for its questionable subject-in-progress the equivalent of incest.” But insofar as incest marks the end of all ordinary exchange, the better counterpart to incest might be silence, or the end of verbal exchange—silence of the type practiced by the Sisters of the Order of Saint Clare or implied by Benedictine sign language.

Psychoanalysis, like anthropology, comes to the rescue of the political order as we know it when it denies the possibility of the lifting up (sublation) or cleansing (purgation) of the human soul postulated by, for example, the Catholic orders or the libertine Brethren of the Free Spirit. Freud joins the Victorian attack on the early romantic doctrine of universal fraternity when, while admitting a grudging admiration for Saint Francis, he expresses his doubt that the Christian ideal of civilized society—“Love thy neighbor”—can be realized. He argues from common sense that “a love that does not discriminate forfeits a
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part of its value by doing an injustice to its object" and, moreover, that "not all men are worthy of love."29 Like Aristotle, and like James Fitz-
james Stephen in *Liberty, Equality, and Fraternity*, Freud criticizes the ideology of fraternity as a hypocritical substitution of the abstract general for the particular.

An attack on the Catholic orders and their ideology is critical even to the origins of psychoanalysis.30 Freud's central notion of repression, for example, had to do in the first place with novices and nuns, and ever afterwards traditional Victorian psychoanalysis has passed off universal love (the Franciscan ideal) as simple continence—namely, repression.31 (There are some noteworthy post-Victorian exceptions.)32 Moreover, Freud's early ideological understanding of the relationship between the cloister and mental illness has been allowed to stand unquestioned. Freud had argued that "for the asylum of the cloister of an earlier time individual neurotics substitute the isolation of illness."33 This view of the cloister may be helpful in the clinical treat-
ment of patients—even monachal patients;34 however, the fundamen-
tal Freudian position, that religion is a universal compulsive neurosis,35 leaves little room for studying the historical and theological genesis of religious celibacy and the significance of the idea of Universal Siblinghood.

From a Freudian viewpoint, sibling incest in a family or horde where the parent rules supreme (or in a state where a monarch rules sup-
preme) might be, instead of an instrument of equality, an instrument of tyranny. In the Freudian "primal horde," as in the "Cyclopean fam-
ily" hypothesized by Atkinson in Victorian England, the will of the pa-
triarch is supposed to be unrestricted. Rules of sexual conduct affect first the freedom of the younger generation (i.e., incest between broth-
ers and sisters and between sons and mothers) and only later the free-
dom of the older generation (i.e., incest between fathers and daugh-
ters).36 Freud himself wonders, however, whether his "horde" is an unhistorical, or hypothetical, phenomenon,37 and he suggests that perhaps all father figures are essentially figural representations, "ghostly" internalizations, of social forces—representations that can be over-
come, if at all, only by overcoming the social forces that led to, or made inevitable, the tyrant-making trope of the father. But his fiction of tyranny-linked, original incest does not bear on Universal Sibling-
hood because it fails to observe both the qualitative difference between universal incest and ordinary incest and also the hypothesis of a place where all human beings are equal Siblings. Such a place is the prov-
ince not only of Christian brotherhood but also of the romantic and
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revolutionary fraternity to which traditional anthropology and psychoanalysis constitute a conservative and imperialist response.

The Idea of Universal Siblinghood:
Just Friends and Kissin’ Cousins

Is she your cousin? 1.4.46
The same and different. Plato, Parmenides
And what’s the point of a revolution without
general copulation? Weiss, Marat/Sade

To the extent that one puts the whole law of the land into question, one stands at land’s end. Maybe that is why the principal words that characterize the journey we have made are somehow outlandish. “Universal Siblinghood” is a case in point. It suggests an association of men and women that recognizes essentially only one tribe of human beings with no essential intergenerational or intragenerational differences and no essential gender differences, an association that is universalist, equalitarian, and gender neutral. But in ordinary language, and in most all realizable politics, “siblinghood” indicates an association that does recognize some such difference.

Many alternative kinship structures in the history of the West have aimed at the radical sameness Siblinghood presupposes, but each step taken in the direction of homogeneity has most always been matched by a step taken in the direction of heterogeneity. These apparently universalist, equalitarian, or gender-neutral kinship structures have striven for, but never attained, the Universal Siblinghood, or ideal association, that marks the fulfillment and end of kinship as we know it. They are worth examining both for the light that they can shed on our ability to realize the hypothesis of Universal Siblinghood and for the light that the hypothesis of Universal Siblinghood can shed on the traditional understanding of kinship in the West.

Beyond Christian Siblinghood. The kinship structure posited by the Catholic orders exemplifies Universal Siblinghood, yet its universalism, equalitarianism, and gender neutrality are generally unrealized or utopian in practice. To test whether such a structure is possible, let us consider a few apparently nonuniversalist and nonequalitarian tendencies in Christian doctrine and practice and a few universalist and equalitarian tendencies in Judaism, a religion against which Christianity often defines itself.

Early Church thinkers promulgated the view that all human beings are essentially members of one siblinghood, or tribe, insofar as any-
one could be converted to Christianity.* Jesus is reported to have said, "All ye are brethren" (Matt. 23:8). And Paul writes: "For ye are all the children of God by faith in Christ Jesus. For as many of you as have been baptized into Christ have put on Christ. There is neither Jew nor Greek . . . for ye are all one in Christ Jesus." (Gal. 3:26–28.) Some Christian thinkers, following out the gist of Jesus' saying, urged their followers to call all human beings "brethren."38 Yet most Christian doctrine supports hierarchies that militate against tribal oneness or universalism. Thus some authorities—eventually the dominant ones—claimed that, although the old distinction between Jew and Greek to which Paul refers may no longer obtain, a new distinction, that between Christians and non-Christians, does obtain.

But who, or what, are "Christians" according to a Christian? (Another way of putting this question might be: Who, or what, are "human beings" according to a Christian?) Paul implies that faith and baptism are the distinguishing characteristics of the tribe of Christians; mere human being and sonship to God are not enough. Many Church Fathers argued that only those who have already become baptized or become active members of religious orders are "brothers" (i.e., sons of the same Father). Origen writes: "Learn then what gift you have received from my Father. You have received, by your new birth in me, the spirit of adoption, in a manner to be called sons of God and brothers."39 Similarly, some authorities claim that only members of one's own holy order are brothers.40 When Jerome says, "Te universa salutat," he means that only his own community of Eremites are brothers to him.41 Optatus says that it is impossible for a Christian not to be a brother to other Christians;42 he thus implies that there are human beings in the world who are, to Christians, other than brothers.

Just as Christianity involves these nonuniversalist or intertribal differences, so it involves nonequalitarian or intratribal differences within the group of Christians. Jesus is reported to have erased or risen above intergenerational differentiation within the tribe, saying, "Call no man your father upon the earth: for one is your Father, which is in heaven" (Matt. 23:9). This rule would seem to collapse all

*The view that the human world is, or ought to be made, one is, in this context, the imperialist legacy of Alexander the Great and Greek and Jewish Hellenist philanthropic and metropolitan thinking in general (Torrey, Second Isaiah, p. 126, and Finkelstein, Pharisees, 2:566). The post-exilic community of Israel had already established the "new and Revolutionary principle" that one day the Temple would "be called a house of prayer for all peoples" (Is. 56:7; cf. Bickermann, Ezra to Maccabees, p. 19). Although all peoples entering the Temple is not necessarily the same as all people becoming one people, yet every individual could become a Jew (Zech. 8:23; cf. Bickermann, Ezra to Maccabees, p. 20).
human generations into one generation, but it can be disturbing in at least two ways. First, a group of human beings that becomes a brotherhood by positing a common Father merely replaces one hierarchy (son versus father) with another hierarchy (sons versus Father). The sons are unequal to the Father in the second hierarchy just as the sons are unequal to their fathers in the first hierarchy, even though one of the sons in the second hierarchy is the equal of, even is, the Father, being at once the vaguely illegitimate son of no one earthly and also the Son who, as Father of himself and of all of us, is the theological and structural lynchpin of Christianity. If we call ourselves equal siblings only by virtue of sharing in common a divine Father who is above us all, then Christianity is in no absolute wise a universal siblinghood.

Second, Christian sects soon began to call the priest "father." They thus violated the letter both of Jesus' rule ("Call no man your father") and of most Jews' rule ("Call your father your father" by way of respecting him according to the Ten Commandments) adopting instead the practice of the pre-Christian mystery cults, in which the priest was routinely called "father." Indeed, the Christian authorities apparently violated more than the rule of Jesus against calling any man father; they became more hierarchized in intragenerational terms than the pagan cults. Some authorities argued that within the Christian tribe only confessors were to be called "brothers"; others said that bishops were to call one another "brothers" and to call their abbots and priests "sons." (A single man could thus be father and brother to one person; as in Measure for Measure the Duke as friar is a "father friar" [3.2.11].)

I mean to suggest not that Christian authorities were unduly lax but that there is a historical tendency for most any Christian church to differentiate between tribes and within the tribe. I would characterize this tendency as more inevitable than hypocritical. After all, the full implications of universal and equalitarian Siblinghood are utopian and idealist, even unbearable, for most all of us. If Christendom were really equalitarian it would lack any kind of parental authority. Not only do most all people need a visible authority in order to behave well, much as the people in Shakespeare's Vienna need the Duke, but Jesus' rule "All ye are brethren" is, for all practical biological and political purposes, impossible to obey insofar as the hypothesis of Universal Siblinghood requires either celibacy or incest, both of which lead to the ending of the body politic as we know it or as we need to know it. If Christian doctrine were realized, Christendom would become the spiritually and physically libertine society envisioned by the
Brethren of the Free Spirit, which official Christendom is compelled to condemn.

The Christian claim that we are all brothers, when taken together with the Christian promise of liberty, must present itself either as a call for universal incest (the call of the Brethren of the Free Spirit) or as a Pauline call for absolute celibacy. Paul, seeming to retreat from the Christian ideal of a free association of *liberi*, writes: “For, brethren, ye have been called unto liberty; only use not liberty for an occasion to the flesh, but by love serve one another. For all the law is fulfilled in one word, even in this: Thou shalt love thy neighbour as thyself.” (Gal. 5:13–14.) We are enjoined to love all people equally (as free sons, or *liberi*, of the Father), while we are enjoined not to disobey the old rule against loving all people equally. (The old rule enjoined a different kind of love for siblings and kinsmen than for others and a different kind of love for spouses—who were others before marriage—than for siblings, kinsmen, or others.) Paul refuses to transcend the old rule. (He ejects the incestuous Corinthians from the Christian community and perhaps also executes them.) It is as though the politics of Christianity were that political liberty is possible only by the death, in celibacy universalized, of the body politic.

The most disturbing aspect of the Christian idea of Universal Siblinghood is not the inevitability of a retreat from it but the inevitably inhuman or inhumane practical consequence of making a retreat that is not openly acknowledged. The Christian ideology of universal human brotherhood tends to conflate intraspecies difference with interspecies difference, or, put otherwise, it can encourage us to call or treat as “animals” all living beings outside the “universal” group of siblings. The question Who, or what, are “Christians” according to a Christian? is too often posed, or re-posed, as Who, or what, are “human beings” to a Christian? Even if we agree to love all human beings equally, as Jesus enjoins us, we still have to determine which beings are human, hence to be loved, and which are not.

According to the doctrine of Universal Siblinghood, all human beings are brothers and all brothers are human beings; it follows that all beings who are not brothers but others must be other than human, namely, animal. In this respect the universalist ideology of Christianity resembles the ideology of primitive societies in which “human being” and “fellow tribesman” are indicated by the same word or are thought of as being the same and the ideology of modern nationalist states that think of, and treat, non-nationals as though they were animals. The universalist doctrine that “all men are my brothers” can
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turn out easily enough to mean “only my brothers are men; all others are animals.” This formulation tends to transform any being whom we would ordinarily call human but who cannot or will not become a member of our brotherhood into an animal or to lead us to treat him as an animal (the fate of the “dog” Shylock), just as it can tend to transform beings that we would ordinarily call animal into members of a human family (the fate of household pets).49

If the human family and the human species are one and the same, as the idea of Universal Siblinghood holds them to be, then inter-familial crossover (marriage) and interspecies crossover (dehumanization and anthropomorphism) are also one and the same. When Paul says, “Love thy neighbour as thyself” (Gal. 5: 14), implying that we humans are all brotherly neighbors, whom does he leave us to love in a sexual manner without committing sibling incest? Only those outside the neighborhood, or the brotherhood. But if all human beings are brothers (i.e., if the species and the family are one and the same), then we humans can love only animals in a sexual way. Then bestiality would be the only way, besides celibacy, to avoid incest, as would be figured in such folk tales as Beauty and the Beast, in which a beast is transformed into a human being at the instant it is kissed.

For would-be universalist Christian philanthropists, then, there can develop an ideologically overwhelming need to dehumanize certain beings that we might ordinarily call human (anthropoi)—that is, to treat beings from outside their own neighborhood as extra-species, not merely as extra-tribal. Among such philanthropists the quintessential other has been the Jew, against whose religion in general and whose doctrine of love in particular Christendom for millennia has sought to define itself. A disapproving Matthew thus claims that the Jews teach limited misanthropy, not philanthropy (Matt 5: 43); and anti-Semites for centuries have argued that it is impossible for a Jew to understand universal love.50 Yet the idea of universal brotherhood is no stranger to Judaism. It is a dominant Jewish view that Abraham, by his piety and philanthropy, “made brothers” of the whole world.51 The Old Testament asks, “Have we not all one father? hath not one God created us?” (Mal. 2: 10). This transcendence of kinship by consanguinity moves the injunction to be one’s brother’s keeper in the direction of loving neighbors (Lev. 19: 18), strangers who dwell within the community (Lev. 19: 34), strangers who dwell in strange lands, and finally everyone. Rabbis Hillel and Meir enjoin that one should love all mankind, or all “creatures,” and Aaron ibn Hayyim writes, in a book whose publication in cosmopolitan Venice he oversaw in 1609,
that the law of “Love thy neighbour,” which he endorses, includes in its purview non-Israelites as well as Israelites.\footnote{In the Judaeo-Christian tradition as a whole, then, there appears to be a radical and ineradicable tension between the demands of tribal heterogeneity and the demands of Universal Siblinghood. Toward universal kinship Judaism, which began as a practical, particularist tribal religion and has long existed as an other in the diaspora, seems bound to strive; and away from Universal Siblinghood Christianity, which began in an idealist rejection of particularist kinship, seems bound to stray.}

\textit{Greek Phratry, French Revolution, and Hurrian Fratriarchy.} Within the Western tradition, a few non-Christian, noncelibate groups have, like the celibate Catholic orders, striven for but never attained the universal or ideal association that marks the fulfillment and end of kinship as we know it. They have accommodated tribal differences while tending toward tribal homogeneity. Among these kinship systems are the ancient Greek phratry, which emphasized intertribal difference together with intratribal homogeneity, the French Revolution, which emphasized intratribal difference along intergenerational lines together with intertribal homogeneity; and the Hurrian fratriarchy, which emphasized intratribal difference along intragenerational (primogenitural) lines, together with intratribal homogeneity along familial lines.

The Greek phratry—a religious and political association from which, it is said, politics as we now know it developed—involved an absolute erasing of, or rising above, differences between living generations in the same tribe. In its festival of initiation, or Apatouria (“feast of men of the same fathers”), all \textit{phrateres} became at once brothers and sons of the same fathers.\footnote{For all its radical equalitarianism, however, the phratry remained bound to tribal consanguinity (not all men had the same fathers, only fellow tribesmen); it was not universalist in vision.} We can call ourselves all one brotherhood only by assuming a common father in heaven; in the words of one Elizabethan poet, only “Our Father, which in heaven art, \ldots mak'st us all one brotherhood.”\footnote{Similarly, “Alle Menschen werden Brüder!” (All men will be brothers!), writes Schiller in the great romantic “Ode to Joy” that Beethoven set to music in the Ninth Symphony. But men will become}
brothers, according to Schiller's "Ode," only because "above the stormy canopy / There must dwell a loving Father." The very term "brothers," which implies a common parent, is thus an obstacle—semantic and ideological—to comprehending or effecting the collapse of intergenerational difference that Universal Siblinghood presupposes.

By contrast, according to historical hypothesis, the pre-Abramic Hurrian fratriarchy—the "rule of the brothers" from which Judaism may have developed—emphasized intragenerational differences because of its rule of primogeniture. In the fratriarchy, "authority is exercised by the eldest brother and is handed on from brother to brother as something inherited, the inheritance passing to the oldest son of the first brother on the death of the last brother." At the same time, the fratriarchy denied interfamilial differences by officially adopting spouses into the family as "sister," either at the time of marriage or earlier. Such adoption provides one explanation for the motif of the sister-wife in the Old Testament, notably in the vaguely incestuous nominative relationship between Abraham and Sarah and between Isaac and Rebecca. Despite its emphasis on intertribal equality—even, arguably, on intertribal incestuous homogeneity—the pre-Abramic fratriarchy involved a strict hierarchical division of power among the brothers.

The Hurrians did not allow for intragenerational equality, just as French revolutionary fraternity did not allow for intergenerational equality and as the Greek phratry did not allow for intertribal equality. Before considering two more kinds of intratribal differences of particular interest in the contemporary West—those that divide the tribe along gender lines and along social, or economic, class lines—we might pause to wonder whether there is not an appropriate illustration of universal, equalitarian Siblinghood that overcomes the differences we have considered so far. Is there a more appropriate terminology to express the idea of inter- and intratribal equality, the idea of the ending of tribalism?

**Just Friends and Kissin' Cousins.** A term that would express the idea of Universal Siblinghood, of a Siblinghood where both inter- and intragenerational differences were overcome and all human beings were equally affined, would have to imply both universal kinship and either celibacy or incest. It might therefore be an outlaw term relegated to the linguistic peripheries of archaism, obscenity, slang, or humor, where it could least forcefully put into question ordinary social and linguistic interaction. "Blood brotherhood" is such a term; the practice that it denotes was actually outlawed. Two other such terms are the archaic "just friends" and the humorous "kissin' cousins."
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English “friend,” to which we usually attach only the general meaning “intimate associate,” has the alternate meanings “kinsman” and “sexual lover.” “Kinsman” is its basic meaning in Old Scandinavian and High German dialects, and its unequivocal meaning in several Elizabethan genealogical discussions of “all the sons and daughters of Adam and Eve the which were our first friends” and in such Shakespearean plays as Two Gentlemen of Verona:

But she I mean is promis’d by her friends
Unto a youthful gentleman of worth,
And kept severely from resort of men,
That no man hath access by day to her.

“Sexual lover” is the meaning of “friend” in such Shakespearean plays as Love’s Labor’s Lost (5.2.404–5) and in our contemporary phrases “boyfriend” and “lady friend.”

If a friend as “kinsman” and a friend as “sexual lover” were to be combined in one person, the result would be incest. Such combination occurs in Measure for Measure. Lucio uses the word “friend” to convey “kindly” (1.4.24) greetings to Isabella from her brother, and he reports that Claudio “hath got his friend with child” (1.4.28). But the friendship between Claudio and Juliet involves kinship as well as sexual love because of the cousinship between Isabella and Juliet, and hence between Claudio (Isabella’s brother) and Juliet, whether this kinship be consanguineous or somehow adoptive. Thus friendship in Measure for Measure combines elements of kinship and sexual love; it indicates a potentially universal relationship that is at once chaste and unchaste, or incestuous.

Among the ancient Greeks such friendship—whether in idea or in practice—was the basis of a remarkable new politics, if not of politics itself. The history and theory of Greek political association reveal a motivating tension between ordinary kinship structures, which insist on essential family differences, and such friendship societies as the Pythagorean “union of friends” (haetery), which, in contrast to the ancient phratry, “provided bonds that transcended consanguinity and thereby enabled members of different kin groups to associate in a polis.” Similarly, Plato discounts “ordinary” family kinship in favor of friendship, which he calls the only truly “natural” kinship.

The Pythagorean doctrine, in particular, went beyond seeing friendship as an association mediating family and state to conceive of friendship as an association transcending family and state taken together. The Pythagoreans argued that friends were obliged to share in the perfect communion of the spirit, to share everything (or to have
all things in common), to be equal to each other, and to be second

drifts to one another; they insisted, moreover, that admittance to

in this universalist sense later influenced Plato’s republican emphasis

on equality and justice and the Stoics’ doctrine of the universal love of

mankind (philanthropia). The Stoics took the Pythagorean doctrine

of universal friendship to its logical conclusion that, insofar as equali-

tarian friendship transcends all hierarchical kinship, such prohibi-

tions as the incest taboo are null.

Shmuel Eisenstadt has argued that friendship always involves an as-

pect of submerged kinship, but in the republic hypothesized by cer-

tain ancient thinkers—and perhaps practiced in the Pythagorean

colonies—one is no longer a kinsman to some men and not to others

but a friend to all men. In this universalizing of kinship, “friend”

means, to all intents, a kinsman with whom one legitimately could

have sexual intercourse, the definition of “friendship” that is also sug-

gested in Measure for Measure.

The second term that may simultaneously imply both chastity and

incest is American “kissin’ cousin.” “Cousin” already implies a certain

indifference to tribal as well as generational distinctions: “All cousins

are equal” in the language of the kin-cousin monarchs of Europe,

“none share parents, which leaves each cousin free in relation to every

other.” By virtue of a good-natured ambiguity, “kissin’ cousin” (un-

like, say, “motherfucker”) suggests an incestuous relationship without

downright disapproval.

The Dictionary of American Slang says that “kissin’ cousin” refers to:

(1) a “Platonic” friend who is granted the same intimacy accorded to

close blood relations and (2) a member of the opposite sex with whom

one is sexually familiar when the parties involved believe mistakenly

that their intimacy is unknown. Neither “official” definition says that

a kissin’ cousin is a consanguineous relative. According to the diction-

ary, in the hillbilly dialect where “kissin’ cousin” originated, however,

the term does denote a consanguineous relative; in the hills, “kissin’
cousins” are cousins who kiss. If we accept this commonsense view,
then “kissin’ cousinship,” which by the “official” definitions denotes

both a chaste, “Platonic” relationship and an unchaste sexual one,
really denotes both a chaste and an incestuous family relationship.

To be tongue-in-cheek about it, the difference here between chastity

and incest depends both on the kiss and on the degree of cousinship.
Kisses may be of the familial, chaste kind or of the extrafamilial, sex-

ual kind, and cousinship may be of so close a degree as to allow legiti-
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mately only for chaste kisses (in the family way) or of so distant a degree as to allow for sexual kisses (in the romantic way).

The distinction between chaste familial kisses and unchaste extrafamilial kisses involves the ordinary distinction between incestuous and nonincestuous associations, the by now familiar rules about whom one can kiss and how. There is an extraordinary view, however, that all kisses are essentially at once both chaste and unchaste, a totalitarian or potentially universalist doctrine that holds all kisses to be essentially the same. This doctrine looks to such osculatory models as St. Peter's "kiss of charity" or St. Paul's "holy kiss"—a kiss "promiscuously given without any restriction as to sexes or ranks, among those who [are] all one in Christ." Such a kiss is typically mouthed by everyone during such holidays as Christmas, when many Christians celebrate the birth of Christ with a public and universal liberty, a Saturnalian festival that gives every man the license of kissing any woman found under the mistletoe. If we accept the Christian doctrine of Universal Siblinghood, or Cousinship, then unrestricted kisses of this kind are the only kisses there can be.

The danger inherent in such a universalist doctrine of kissing is that it leads to ordinary incest between ordinary cousins or siblings. This danger encouraged the Church Fathers to outlaw the "new" totalitarian practice of the promiscuous kiss among lay people and reestablish the "old," strict rules about who can kiss whom and how. At the same time, however, the Church Fathers held fast to the totalitarian ideal of Universal Siblinghood. They maintained, for example, that all kissing—both marital and extramarital—is the first step in the consummation of marriage, or, teleologically speaking, that kissing is sexual intercourse. In this way the Fathers came to look upon all kissing between unmarried nonkin as either spousal or adulterous (not merely as fornicatory) and upon all kissing between kin as incestuous. All "mouthing" was thus understood to be either a sacred or a perverse violation of social bonds, with the one delicate exception of a kiss between a husband and his wife, that is, a kiss between a "brother" in the universalist sense and the particular woman whom kissing was once illegitimate (by virtue of an incest taboo that outlaws kissing any woman because she is a "sister" in the universalist sense) but who has become legitimately kissable by virtue of a sacred marriage. When one's sibling is also one's sacred spouse—"My sister, my spouse"—all kisses are not only incestuous, but also chaste.

The bipolar tension between chastity and incest that "kissin' cousin" expresses can be resolved, if at all, only in a chaste, incestuous union where the ordinary boundary between kin and nonkin seems to dis-
appear, as in a miraculous comedy. (What brings a smile to our lips when we hear the term “kissin' cousin” in Elvis Presley movies and Al Capp's 'Lil Abner cartoon strips is the term’s referring simultaneously to both kinds of kisses and to both kinds of cousinships.) “Kissin’ cousin” suggests cousinship at that ideal point where kin can kiss legitimately in both the familiar and the romantic way, or at the point—and this is the same thing—where they can kiss legitimately in neither way. Such cousinship exists on the borderline of legitimacy or transcends law altogether. At such a point we toe the line of civilization; we are cousins who kiss—“a little more than kin, and less than kind.” *

Class Difference. The stoic philosopher Epictetus implied that a universal siblinghood rules out intratribal differences along the lines of social or economic class when he cried to a master beating a slave: “Slave, do you not want to help your sibling [adelphos], who has Zeus for father, who is born of the same germs as you and is of the same heavenly descent?” In imagining a homogenization of class difference by rejecting the bonds of ordinary consubstantiality, Epictetus agrees with the gist of Christian monachism as promulgated by such mendicant orders as the Franciscans, who adopted a universalist theory of kinship and a communal theory of property (or antiproperty). For them, beggars and those who sustain beggars should become one “for the Lord’s sake,” as the beggars put it in Measure for Measure (4.3.19–20), and dukes everywhere should come into composition with the king (1.2.1–2). The Gospel’s counterpart to the collapse of essential difference between classes imagined by Epictetus and Francis is the class homogeneity imagined by Paul. “There is neither bond nor free,” says Paul, “for ye are all one in Christ” (Gal. 3:28).

Homogenization of two or more social classes can be realized, in familial or superfamilial terms, only when either (1) members of different classes recognize their common descent (the way of Epictetus) or (2) members of those classes intermarry. Recognition of common descent and marriage ordinarily exclude each other, however, because the common descent two people share can rule out the possibility of nonincestuous marriage between them. In literature, marriage across class boundaries has often been represented as incestuous, by the same means used to present sexual liaisons with members of the Catholic orders as incestuous: the offending fictional pair turn out unwittingly to be blood relatives. In some works of early American literature, for example, masters who marry slaves or bourgeois who

*HAM 1.2.65. These words, Hamlet’s first in the play, respond to his incestuous uncle-father Claudius’s calling him “cousin” as well as “son.”
marry workers discover too late that their spouses are also their siblings. In such works, the penalty for marrying outside one's class was to discover that one had married inside one's family. Thus the conservative injunction to maintain existing social class structure, or the endorsement of class exogamy, was bolstered by the taboo against familial endogamy.

Sophocles' *Oedipus the King* is the classic example of a literary work in which the penalty for class exogamy, or apparent class exogamy, is familial endogamy. In Sophocles' drama, which is partly about class upheaval during the period of equalitarian democratization under the Greek tyrants, Oedipus ascribes Jocasta's outbreak at learning he is not the biological son of Polybus and Merope to her fear that he may have been born from the lower classes. It is in an egalitarian and democratic spirit that Oedipus says, "I at least shall be willing to see my ancestry, though humble. Perhaps she is ashamed of my low birth." Where Oedipus sees class exogamy, Jocasta sees familial endogamy.

**Gender Difference.** A universal siblinghood, even when it transcends intertribal difference and the kinds of intratribal differences we have discussed so far, does not always entail gender neutrality. Indeed, the patriarchal aspect of the traditional Catholic orders already suggests how gender hierarchy can still exist. Robert Paul, writing of Tibetan monasteries, even blames misogyny for the rise of the monastic brotherhoods, quoting the French song, "Without these damn women we'd all be brothers / Without these damn women we'd all be happy."

But is not the "pure" relationship of brother to sister the human association that most nearly approaches absolute gender neutrality? (That is the romantic thesis of Hegel.) Nowhere are the dual themes of Universal Siblinghood (by autochthony) and gender neutrality, taken together, better expressed than in the meeting of siblings in *Cymbeline*. Imogen, disguised as "Fidele," meets Arviragus, her brother, who has been kidnapped in infancy and brought up in Wales as "Cadwal." Sibling extends friendship to sibling:

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Arviragus. Are we not brothers?  (CYM 4.2.3)
Imogen. So man and man should be,
But clay and clay differ in dignity,
Whose dust is both alike.
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Soon after the Welsh meeting scene—in which man and woman recognize each other as absolutely equal siblings in the universal sense but not as brother and sister in the familial sense or as man and
woman in the sexual sense—Imogen takes one beheaded man for another (much as does Angelo in Measure for Measure); she takes Cloten her half-brother for her husband Posthumus, with whom she was raised as with a brother.

Although the Catholic orders affirm a patriarchal God, significant factors mitigate gender hierarchy within the orders. As Christian theology conceives marriage—for example, the marriage union of a man and woman into one body—the corporeal union, the new body, must be androgynous or hermaphroditic. Thus marriage to Christ must erase or rise above gender differences. The ideology of many orders thus tends towards gender neutrality, at least ideally. This tendency has sources in the New Testament (“There is neither male nor female,” says Paul, “for ye are all one in Christ Jesus” [Gal. 3:26–28]), as well as in apocryphal works. The “kiss of charity” or “holy kiss”—a kiss given without any restriction as to gender or kinship—suggests the effect in general practice of the doctrinal tendency towards gender neutrality. In some English devotional works, moreover, Jesus is female, or is both a male lover and a female parent taken together. And gender neutrality was a tenet of such physically or spiritually incestuous sects as the Shakers and Perfectionists.

For some Franciscan Brothers and Sisters, finally, there was not only an incestuous conflation of kinship roles (in which spouse, child, parent, and sibling become one) but also an androgynous conflation of gender roles (in which Franciscan friars alternately took on the roles of Mother and Son in relation to each other). As the first conflation involves “spiritual incest,” so the second involves “spiritual androgyny.” The realization of both spiritual incest and spiritual androgyny, taken together, was the heretical project of the Brethren of the Free Spirit.

The equal marriage between siblings or Siblings idealized, but not realized, in Measure for Measure suggests not only the end of intertribal hierarchy (the foreign wars) and intratribal hierarchy (the civil strife)—the dukes come to composition with the king and Vincentio is at once Brother and Father—but also the end of inequality between the sexes. In the gender union of marriage, where two become one, the domestic conflict about which gender constitutes the “head” (“he’s his wife’s head” [4.2.3]) appears or disappears together with the international wars and the civil strife.

Plato’s Retreat: The Lie of the West

Foucault has called the seventeenth century, at the beginning of which Shakespeare wrote Measure for Measure, an age of great sexual
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liberation. Whatever conceptual breakthroughs may have been made in that century, our present ability safely and cheaply to cut off the human reproductive process has made for widespread and permissible extramarital intercourse. That is why, despite renewed fears of venereal disease, we say we live in an age of sexual liberation.

At the same time as old rules against fornication and adultery seem to be disappearing, however, we stress ever more the rules against incest. The many tracts against incest published in the last few years represent, I take it, an ancient problem keeping us from genuinely liberal freedom even in “the era of the pill.” Of course there are a few proponents of the view that incest can have “positive” effects, and some Western democracies even have lobbyists for “pro-incest” laws. But discussion of whether the taboo can be overcome—as opposed to discussion of whether incest should be practiced or legalized in violation of the taboo—is still considered heretical (like the Brethren of the Free Spirit), or bestial (like Beauty and the Beast), or utopian anarchic (like theorists who call for a willful ignoring of the taboo), or—most powerfully—abusive of children.

The popular contemporary argument that incest is basically child molestation focuses on the unhappy fact of father-daughter seduction or rape in our vestigially patriarchal society. Exposing and preventing intergenerational molestation is, I think, an admirable goal; it is one with which, I trust, the argument of my book does not interfere. An exclusive focus on incest as molestation and rape can be intellectually harmful, however, since it can serve to prop up the taboo with yet another rhetorical defense (“There is an incest taboo because it protects children from disaster”) rather than help us understand the taboo. Our contemporaries’ attacks on incest have focused on such beleaguered figures as Saint Dymphna, who refused to marry her father and consequently was killed by him, but I have focused on such figures as the saintly founders of the Catholic orders, men and women who refused to marry their beloved siblings and so entered a state of Universal Siblinghood. This focus on universal incest is not much immediate help to women “kept down,” like Kate Keepdown, in a vestigially patriarchal society; but it may be of use to male and female students of the incest taboo and what may become of it. That is why I have dared to entertain for a while the heretical, not to say beastly, view that incest of a kind is an essential precondition to liberty, or that incest is essential to, and is the measure of, any truly equalitarian society.

“What is’t I dream on?” (2.2.179) Angelo asks as he attempts to “raze the sanctuary” and as the player-Brother Vincentio and novice-
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Sister Isabella try to raise themselves above the sanctified taboo. Without some such external agency as genetic surgery, which, as in science fiction, might remove the incest taboo from individuals (with what consequences to our political institutions we are now almost in a position to understand), or some such social transformation as liberal, or libertine, revolution presupposes—without some almost inconceivable or outlandish transformation of human families and political organizations—we shall remain but half-awake to the possibilities of another kind of humankind.

Is Universal Siblinghood, then, finally a pipe dream? Consider the birth of classical political theory with the ideal political state Plato's Socrates proposes to explain the fears and desires of the individual human soul. This republic, says Socrates, must rest fundamentally upon the "noble," or "well-bred," lie of universal kinship,\textsuperscript{101} a lie that Socrates likens to such poetic fictions as autochthony in Thebes (the birthplace of Sophocles' Oedipus) and other mythic expressions of common origins.\textsuperscript{102} Such fictions play a role in social ideology like that of the bed tricks in Measure for Measure and All's Well That Ends Well; they cozen cousins for the cousins' general good. "To cozen," said Randle Cotgrave in 1611, means "to clayme kindred for aduantage,"\textsuperscript{103} and the Universal Siblinghood Socrates would pretend to claim might benefit universally humankind.

Myths of common origin do have their political use. (We treat brothers better than others, don't we?) But it is almost impossible to persuade the first ("original") generation of people who must be convinced they are all kin—that is, to persuade our generation—that we are kin. We are predisposed, after all, to saturate with reason whatever ideology has lived long—the nuclear family, say, or the emphasis on consanguinity.\textsuperscript{104} In the Republic, Socrates expresses his hope to overcome such predisposition by means of persuasive reeducation:

I'll attempt to persuade first the rulers, then the rest of the city, that the rearing and education we gave them were like dreams; they only thought they were undergoing all that was happening to them, while, in truth, at that time they were under the earth within, being fashioned and reared themselves, and their arms and other tools being crafted. When the job had been completely finished, then the earth, which is their mother, sent them up. And now . . . they must think of other citizens as brothers born of the earth.\textsuperscript{105}

It is especially hard to convince people that they are all essentially autochthonous siblings—or, in the ideology of the French Revolution, children of the earth—when, and if, they come to understand that such kinship requires a kind of incest.\textsuperscript{106} This requirement surfaces
for a moment in the Republic, when Plato says of the guardian of the City: "With everyone he happens to meet, he will hold that he's meeting a brother, or a sister, or a father, or a mother, or a son, or a daughter, or their descendants or ancestors." Whether or not Plato himself regarded sexual unions between consanguinous brothers and sisters as illegitimate, the noble lie of Universal Siblinghood and incest that underlies the Republic—together with the practical dependence of most all political orders on the incest taboo—was so disturbing that, in a moment of prudence, Plato retreated from his extremist view, or rather submerged it, cozening his interlocuters back into believing that some of them are cousins and some are not. One interlocuter attributes to Socrates' prudential "shame" Socrates' hesitancy to reveal fully the noble lie of the republic. And shame is what keeps Plato from pursuing very far the connection of universal kinship with friendship and politics. He goes no farther than quoting Aristophanes' comedic Assembly of Women: "The law will grant that brothers and sisters lie together if the lot falls out that way and the Pythia [at Delphi] concurs." However, we all know that "the lord whose oracle is at Delphi neither speaks nor conceals, he only gives signs." We can hardly say whether the end of kinship is the ending of the taboo that informs kinship.