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TRIBAL BROTHERHOOD AND UNIVERSAL OTHERHOOD

OR

“In the presence of my enemies”

*Thou preparest a table before me
in the presence of my enemies.*

—Psalm 23

ENEMIES AND FOES

*Thy Friendship oft has made my heart to ake
To be thy Enemy for Friendships sake.*

—William Blake, “To H——N”

The doctrine of universal fraternity—“All ye are brethren”—has its difficulties. The doctrine leads either to celibacy or to incest. And it tends toward abstraction—which was the Victorian position against it. James Fitzjames Stephen, in his *Liberty, Equality, Fraternity* (1873–74), thus criticizes the ideology of fraternity in its quasi-secular romantic guise as a hypocritical substitution:

Love for Humanity, devotion to All or Universum, and the like, are . . . little, if anything, more than a fanatical attachment to some favorite theory about the means by which an indefinite number of unknown persons (whose existence it pleases the theorist’s fancy to assume) may be brought into a state which the theorist calls happiness.¹

Similarly, Aristotle claims that the universal siblinghood set forth in Plato’s *Republic* is merely watered-down kinship, saying that “it is better for a boy to be one’s own private nephew than a son in the way described.”²

The doctrine that "all ye are brethren" turns all too easily into the dogma that "only my brothers are human beings, all others are animals." And since the dogma tends toward bestiality and to a cruelty at once inhumane and—one would hope—nonhuman, it is better to be an outsider in a particularist kinship system, where there are human kin and human aliens, than to be an outsider in a universalist kinship system where there are only humankind and animals. William Blake understood this dialectic of brother and other, and fearing its action in the time of the French Revolution, he remarked in his poem "To H——N" that it is sometimes better to be an enemy where some enemies can be human than to be a friend where all enemies are subhuman.

Many Christian thinkers, confronted with such problems and wanting to be neither celibate nor incestuous, asserted that Jesus did not mean what he said. They asserted that the doctrine "All ye are brethren" was meant to apply only to the Perfect (i.e., to Brothers as monks and Sisters as nuns). For the imperfect many, they argued, there could be two kinds of brethren. The first kind we might call "exogamous" and love them in the sexual way; the second kind we might call "endogamous" and shun them sexually.³

The fearsome implications of Jesus' other cherished injunction, "Love your enemies," were similarly solved—or so it seemed.⁴ Many Christian thinkers, wanting to hate their enemies despite the injunction or considering that politics depended upon our having someone to hate, asserted, once again, that it was meant to apply only to the Perfect. For the imperfect many, they argued, there are two kinds of enemies: "enemies" proper, coming from within our familial group, whom we must love, and "foes" from without our group, whom we may hate. Insofar as we strive to be genuinely political creatures—and not merely supposedly "wishy-washy" or "pluralist" liberals of the sort that detractors of Weimar democracy mocked—perhaps we *must* have foes to hate.⁵

The influential thinker Carl Schmitt, urged to join the National Socialist Party by the philosopher Martin Heidegger, was attracted to the sort of universalist Catholic rhetoric that calls for the inevitability and even political necessity of hatred of foes. He adopted as his own the view that Christ did not mean for us to love our foes.⁶ For example, Schmitt argues in his *Concept of the Political* that in Jesus' Sermon on the Mount, which enjoins love, "no mention is made of the political enemy [foe]. Never in the thousand year struggle between Christians and Muslims did it occur to a Christian to surrender rather than defend Europe out of love towards the Saracens or Turks." For foes, or enemies from within one's national kin, Schmitt says, no quarter should be given; we are to show them neither love nor mercy.⁷

Schmitt's suggestion that the Christian tradition is not, in fact, so universalist as to enjoin treating all others as brothers has its basis in much theology and legal practice in Christendom. For example, it was often alleged by Christians (as opposed to Jews) that "no promises made to an enemy of the Christian faith, whether infidel or heretic, need be kept,"⁸ and Christendom often adopted specialized Roman rules whereby alien nationals, or others, could be accountable to

different laws than citizens, or brothers.⁹ (It is as an alien that Shylock is punished in Shakespeare's superficially cosmopolitan Christian Venice.¹⁰) The stoic or universalist streak in Christian thought ("There is neither Jew nor Greek . . . for you are all one in Christ")¹¹ counters the legal and political practice of Christendom.

Schmitt's further claim, that it did not "occur to a Christian to surrender rather than defend Europe out of love towards the Saracens," seems calculated to obscure the way in which Christian love leads as easily to murder as to being murdered. For aside from the historical question of whether or not it did occur to Christians to surrender to the "Saracens" (or, in other times and places, to surrender to their foes)—and aside from the theological question of whether Christians should surrender to their foes rather than defend themselves—there is the logical question of whether a Christian's not surrendering to slaughter by others or to slaughtering them means that he will not love them. Unwillingness to surrender to an enemy does not necessarily mean unwillingness to love him, especially according to that Christian doctrine where loving a sacrificial victim (an edible animal or god) is the precondition to killing him, and where being slaughtered is sometimes the sign of divine love. Manuals for Christian slaughterers emphasize over and over again that one should love the animal one butchers. "Hold the lamb gently in your arms as you slaughter it." Not only does the meat taste better that way, as we are told,¹² but slaughtering lovingly also turns butchering into crucifixion. According to the christological interpretation of David's famous psalm, "The Lord is my Shepherd," it is the soon-to-be-butchered speaking animal, the Lamb of God, who, happily surrendering to the slaughterer and apparently looking forward to a dinner "not where he eats, but where he is eaten,"¹³ says, "Thou preparest a table before me in the presence of my enemies."¹⁴

It is in the guise of reintroducing politics to Christian social theory that Schmitt depoliticizes that theory. His easy distinction between enemy and foe, for example, generally boils down to the difference between one tribe and another. This difference, as it is essentially not so much political as biological (or thought of as biological), is fraught with various difficulties surrounding the notion of tribal or racial purity. Among these problems would be, on the one hand, the inevitability of either celibacy or incest where the nation and family are one (or are thought of as one)—a problem, though raised by Plato and recognized by the pro-incest French racialist and nationalist Gobineau, that Schmitt chose to submerge;¹⁵ and, on the other hand, there would be the ever present possibility and fear of secret miscegenation or undetectable internationalization through producing bastards or changelings. Put otherwise, Schmitt's way of distinguishing between endogamous enemy and exogamous friend depends on one's being able to tell, from the start, whether any given conflict is an endogamous civil war (the American Civil War) or an exogamous international war (the War of the States). Yet, as Thoreau hints in *Civil Disobedience*, no wars present themselves that way. All wars are about establishing borders. Real politics takes place not between two camps, but on the line that appears both to separate and to join them. On this line, the being we present to ourselves

as both brother and other—the family pet for the nuclear family, say, or the Jew for Christendom—defines the nation as a whole, or defines the species.

Is there a nationalism without racism? The idea that love of nation might not always be linked with love of race or species is comforting to liberal nationalists. Admirable thinkers such as Hannah Arendt and Ernst Cassirer argue in the midst of the mass murders of World War II that there can be a clear distinction between racism and nationalism.¹⁶ And the editors of the *Oxford English Dictionary* maintain the difference between nationalism and racism when they claim that a *nation* is

an extensive aggregate of persons, so closely associated with each other by common descent, language, or history, as to form a distinct *race* or people, usually organized as a separate *political* state and occupying a definite *territory*. In early examples, the racial idea is usually stronger than the political; in recent times the notion of political unity and independence is more prominent.¹⁷

Ironically, however, racial theorists argue for the same difference between race and nation as do liberal nationalists. Thus Gobineau inveighed in 1854 against the idea of *patrie* in favor of the idea of race. According to him, patriotic nationalism falsely substitutes, for the ideology of race, the ideology of a nation supposed to transcend any “ethnic admixture, that is, the intermingling of different races.” And he complains that, whatever the “original” French tribe or *genus* had once been, it had now “degenerated” into a national hotchpot.¹⁸ Hankering after the “original” consanguineous and genetic affiliation, Gobineau claims to discover racial purity in a few blue-blooded aristocratic classes and regions in France. (Not surprisingly, he also finds such racial purity in his own individual genealogy, which, he says, is “Aryan or Teutonic.”)¹⁹

According to Gobineau, the modern liberal ideology of universal brotherhood or racial equality—“that the most different powers are or can be possessed in the same measure by every fraction of the human race, without exception”²⁰—is bent on destroying the “original” division of the world into discrete tribes or unique brotherhoods with vastly differing physical and intellectual qualities. In his book *The Third French Republic*, Gobineau thus calls the French revolutionists’ ideal of national *fraternité* an insidious enemy²¹ and a “false patriotism,” a substitution of mere “politics” for genuine “blood”—which ideal, he claims erroneously, was learned from too great an attention to Jewish (as well as ancient Greek) political theory.²² And in much the same way he criticizes the liberal universalists for their explicit endorsement of the ideology “All men are brothers.”²³

Although the racialist Gobineau is different from most liberal nationalists in wanting *race* rather than *nation* to be the distinguishing mark of the polis, he is the same insofar as the “original” race that he hankers after is fictive in the same way as any geographically boundaried nation. Just as the racialist links together members of a tribe through a bloodline—or fiction about that bloodline—, so the nationalist links individuals through a polis. Thus there can hardly be a nation—if

not also a polis—without an ideology of common political nativity. Plato says that the people of the polis must think of their fellows as sharing a common ground. So the French people are, in “La Marseillaise,” children of the same land. (People who are not indigenous—or are merely “naturalized” citizens—do not always share the same rights as “native born” citizens, even in the liberal democracies. Because I was not native born in the United States, for example, I cannot become president of the United States unless the Constitution of the United States becomes more liberal.) By the same token, liberal democrats who claim to be indigenous make much of the common ground. In Europe in the early 1990s, even as the iron curtain seemed to crumble, the *Volk* of a long divided Germany cried out for a unified “*Vaterland!*” just as if they were autochthonous brothers-german reborn.²⁴

Enlightenment thinkers, of course, would want to disagree with the view that common nativity is what makes the nation. In *Qu'est-ce que le Tiers État?* (1789), the revolutionary Abbé Sieyès, for example, set down his hope that a nation was “a union of individuals governed by *one* law and represented by the same law-giving assembly.”²⁵ That is also the American dream. The utopian Sieyès was no leader, however. And political history tells that the boundaries of a nation’s ground or blood are always already in dispute. “The existence of the nation,” writes Renan in *Qu'est-ce qu'une Nation?* (1882), “is a daily plebiscite.”²⁶ The boundaries of a nation are fictive plots bandied about by real-estate agencies of the mind.

WAR OF THE WORLDS

O, wonder!
How many goodly creatures are there here!
How beauteous mankind is! O brave new world,
That has such people in't!

—Shakespeare, *The Tempest*, 5.1.181–83

Before we judge of them too harshly we must remember what ruthless and utter destruction our own species has wrought not only upon animals, such as the vanquished bison and the dodo, but upon its own inferior races. The Tasmanians, in spite of their human likeness, were entirely swept out of existence in a war of extermination waged by European immigrants, in the space of fifty years. Are we such apostles of mercy as to complain if the Martians warred in the same spirit?

—H. G. Wells, *The War of the Worlds*

Can we ever really tell for sure who are our species’ insiders and who are on the outs? Do we always know, when we see E.T., what is Extra-Terrestrial and what is merely an Extraordinary Twin? Would interplanetary travellers be better able to distinguish extraterrestrial creatures as essentially human or nonhuman than were the Christian missionaries who thought the extra-European Kodiak islanders to be nonhuman because they supposedly had no incest taboo?

The Christian missionary Brothers were confronted with the notoriously

ambiguous quality of kinship terminologies among alien peoples. And, thanks to their universalist doctrine that “all human beings are siblings,” the Brothers were quick to project unto others the profane familial incest they themselves feared or the sacred incest they adored. (They feared incest insofar as all sex acts for human beings perfected as Brothers are physically incestuous. They adored incest insofar as the crux of Christianity, Jesus, is his own father and also the father, brother, husband, and child of Mary.) By the same token, the missionaries were prone to exclude from the human species those humanoid creatures whom they suspected of incest. For these outlandish forerunners to secular anthropologists, the only being with whom one might have nonincestuous intercourse would be a monster, as in the folk tale “Beauty and the Beast,” or a god, as in the Annunciation, or an extraterrestrial being, as in Roeg’s science fiction film *The Man Who Fell to Earth*.

It was as part of the millennial problem of “plurality of worlds” that the old question, “Are the creatures on other planets, if such there be, our brethren?,” assumed importance for secular Christian universalists. Leibniz considers human kinship in these terms, and suggests that in the universe “there may be species intermediate between man and beast . . . ” and that “in all likelihood there are rational animals somewhere, which surpass us.”²⁷ And Leibniz takes seriously the *Tempest*-like lunar romance of Bishop Francis Godwin: “If someone . . . came from the moon . . . , like Gonzales . . . , we would take him to be a lunarian; and yet we might grant him . . . the title *man*. . . .”²⁸ Humanoid bipeds from other celestial bodies could well be granted the status of human beings, says Leibniz. And, given the usual conflation of species with family, he says, these bipeds would also have to be “brethren.” But could they also be granted the status of being members of our family? “No doubt some [people] would maintain that rational animals from those lands [are not] descended from Adam.”²⁹ If the view that these animals are unrelated consanguineously to Adam is correct, then the lunarians would be of our species but not of our family. The doctrine that all human beings are brothers and sisters would no longer obtain.

The immediate quandary here for Christian universalists pertains to the potential unredeemability or unconvertibility to Christianity of the humanoid lunarians if, as seems likely, they are not descended from Adam. (In America in the 1680s, by analogy, planters in the Virginia colonies argued that black slaves should or could not be Christianized because they were not descended from Adam.)³⁰ Though such creatures might be of our species, they could hardly be of our family. Christianity, though it usually belittles blood ties, as we have seen, makes them all-important in the case of the link with Adam.

The genealogy of the partly extraterrestrial Jesus—His Adamic consanguinity—has a great importance in the Gospels.³¹ Jesus was the “son of man [*adam*]” born pretty much of humankind. And in line with this anthropocentrism, which makes of God an earthling with blood ties to Adam, it is hard to maintain that extraterrestrial creatures could be considered our brethren without making some such potentially blasphemous claim as that God the Father visited the inhabitants of

other planets and mated interspecies-wise with one of them (just as with the Virgin Mary) or that there has been interplanetary space travel linking the humanoid lunarians as our consanguineous kin. Thus the quintessentially romantic Chateaubriand, in his *Les Martyrs*, sees Jesus as visiting the inhabitants of other planets.³² Any further solution to the problem of the “plurality of worlds” so defined would have to internalize the vacillation at the heart of Christian doctrine between the view that kinship is essentially physical and the view that it is essentially spiritual.

When other worlds are presumed uninhabited, the fact of nonhabitation is often explained by the corruption of human life on Earth. Thus Chateaubriand, in his *Génie du Christianisme*, argues that, although God created the other planets as future habitations for “the race of Adam,” those worlds have remained only “sparkling solitudes” because man sinned.³³ Other thinkers have argued that extraterrestrial creatures, whether human or not, might be in some theologically technical sense better than us earthlings. In *Night Thoughts*, for example, Edward Young addresses the extraterrestrials thus: “Had your Eden an abstemious Eve? . . . / Or if your mother fell, are you redeemed?”³⁴ In 1768, the English publisher John Newberry³⁵ wrote: “I cannot imagine the inhabitants of our earth to be better than those of other planets. On the contrary, I would fain hope that they have not acted so absurdly with respect of [God], as we have done.”³⁶ That the sons and daughters of terrestrials are uncorrupted by us is the eighteenth-century American David Rittenhouse’s thought.³⁷ Dostoevsky’s story, “The Dream of a Ridiculous Man,” is the “tale of a man who would devote his life to the gospel of universal love after having been conveyed in a dream to a planet peopled by innocent, loving creatures, whom he corrupts.”³⁸

Kant was an advocate for the view that there is humanoid life on other planets. For him, it is our contemplation of the stars and the creatures on them that links the aesthetic sublime with the moral world. In the *Critique of Practical Reason* Kant thus recalls man’s place in the universe.³⁹ And in *Observations of the Feeling of the Beautiful and the Sublime* Kant considers in a Rousseauist spirit that “it will not be necessary for women to know more of the cosmos than is necessary to make the aspect of the sky touching to them on a fine night, after they have grasped, to a certain extent, that there are more worlds, and on them more creatures of beauty to be found.”⁴⁰ Kant’s *Theory of the Heavens*, the third part of which is “based on analogies of nature, between the inhabitants of the various planets,”⁴¹ considers directly the kinship or likeness among the various planetarians. Kant here suggests that the inhabitants of the solar system are morally or intellectually developed according to the distance of their planets from the sun. Earthlings stand in this scheme somewhere near the middle. The inhabitants of Jove and Saturn are said to be superior to us; and the inhabitants of Mars are supposed to be sinful like us, just as if they too had experienced a fall from grace and a redemption. From Earth, then, we might look out onto the other creatures of the solar system: “From one side we see thinking creatures among whom a man from Greenland or a Hottentot would be a Newton, and on the other side some others would admire him as an

ape.”⁴² Kant compares the differences between inhabitants of the planets (human earthlings and humanoid Saturnians) with the differences between inhabitants of the Earth (humanoid apes and human earthlings).

We ordinary folk would want to believe that Newton’s extraordinary tribe, and Kant’s, is our own, but we might also wonder whether we are not, after all, fellows of the Hottentots. In Sayles’ cult movie *The Brother from Another Planet* it is suggested that any mirandous “brave new world” we might discover in some distant galaxy would only discover to us again the problems of species and family difference that inform humanoid life on Earth. We are strangers in a strange land, aliens on an alien planet. And like the angels who visited the hospitable Abraham under the burning desert sun, we want only to spend the night in the goodly tents of Jacob.

WAR OF THE SEXES

Surely a man might unmask fraternity without vociferating that he is an egotist and a misanthrope.

—Mr. Harrison, cited in James F. Stephen, *Liberty, Equality, Fraternity*

Monastic brotherhoods and nationalist fraternities sometimes depend for their internal cohesion on thinking of women as extratribal if not also extraspecial. The anthropologist Robert Paul, writing of Tibetan monasteries, quotes the misogynistic French song, “Without these damn women we’d all be brothers / Without these damn women we’d all be happy.”⁴³ A universal siblinghood, however much it may transcend other tribal differences, does not always entail gender neutrality.

Yet Protestant sects and European Catholic orders do sometimes promulgate gender sameness. In America, the incestuous Perfectionists and celibate Shakers, or Shaking Quakers, would rise above ordinary gender distinctions,⁴⁴ for example, and many Catholic orders cited Saint Paul in their regulations, saying, along with millennialist and apocryphal works, that “there is neither male nor female, for ye are all one in Christ Jesus.”⁴⁵ Many people in these traditions emphasize the idea of the holy kiss, which is given without any restriction as to gender.⁴⁶ A few stress the idea of the androgynous god, as when they call Jesus a male lover and female parent combined.⁴⁷ And some Brothers and Sisters, principally the Franciscan friars, institutionalize in the kinship structures of their societies not only an incestuous conflation of kinship roles—where spouse, child, parent, and sibling become one—but also an androgynous conflation of gender roles—where celibate friars take on, in relation to one another, the alternating roles of mother and son.⁴⁸ By the same token, in early stages of their historical development, universalist political movements like the French Revolution, with their ideals of potentially universal siblinghood, often show a similar lofty tendency toward gender homogeneity.

Ideal gender homogeneity, however, is already the seedbed for real gender heterogeneity. Confronted with a world of sexuality and politics, universalist gender-

neutral and androgynous sects and movements reestablish strict distinctions. Where the universal siblinghood is defined as essentially a *fraternité*, it becomes misogynous, or fearful of women, who are often regarded as being outside the species insofar as they are outside the family; and where the siblinghood is defined as essentially sororal, it becomes fearful of men, who are similarly regarded as extraspecial.

In 1789, the first year of the French Revolution, though the delegates to the Estates General owed their selection to women's votes, the equal status of women was already under siege. Condorcet saw the potential for a misogyny to arise which, by defining women as essentially nonhuman, would destroy the universal siblinghood hypothesized by revolutionary ideologues. He therefore published his defense on behalf of women's rights. In *On the Admission of Women to the Rights of Citizenship*, Condorcet argued that the women of ancient France had liberties that should be institutionalized for all women. Even as he worked from within the conservative context of the Rousseauist view that women had a reason of their own and that their domesticity should serve the wider polity,⁴⁹ Condorcet laid out the logical premise of the universalist position regarding the war between brother and sister Frenchpersons: "Either *no* individual of the human species has any true rights, or *all* have the same. And he or she who votes against the rights of another, of whatever religion, colour, or sex, has thereby injured his own."⁵⁰ Condorcet's articulation of this definitive position didn't much help the immediate cause. The French Constitution of 1791, in its *Declaration of the Rights of Man and Citizen*, granted suffrage to some men and denied it to all women,⁵¹ and in 1792 the First Republic granted it to all men, continuing to deny it to women.⁵²

Thinkers such as Etta Palm had argued as early as 1790 that "we [women] are your companions, not your slaves."⁵³ And many women saw themselves betrayed both as human beings and as siblings by the republican Constitution. In 1791, adopting Condorcet's views about species and special rights, Olympe de Gouges published her *Declaration of the Rights of Women*. In 1792, the Prussian Theodor Gottlieb von Hippel wrote in his essay, "On Improving the Status of Women," that "all human beings have the same rights—all the French men and women alike should be free and enjoy citizen's rights."⁵⁴ And in the same year Mary Wollstonecraft exclaimed, in her memorable "Vindication of the Rights of Men," that the "nature of reason must be the same in all [people]"⁵⁵ and warned the now increasingly fraternal and misogynistic revolutionaries that they must change their constitution, "Else this flaw in your NEW CONSTITUTION will ever shew that man must, in some shape, act like a tyrant."⁵⁶

In England the problem of equality of the sexes was often discussed in terms of whether marriage was a reciprocal and equal relationship like that of brother to sister, which is what the conservative Coleridge eventually came to believe,⁵⁷ or a generally univocal and unequal relationship, like that of father to daughter, as argued by the radical William Godwin in his *Political Justice* (1798). Godwin, following out the implications of the French Revolution's near-Kantian redefinition

in 1792 of marriage as a civil contract involving "the mutual and exclusive use of each other's genitals,"⁵⁸ argued for "the abolition of the present system of marriage" and raised the question "whether the intercourse of the sexes, in a reasonable state of society, would be promiscuous, or whether each man would select for himself a partner to whom he would adhere as long as that adherence shall continue to be the choice of both parties."⁵⁹ Godwin's clarion call for an end to marriage—even for a republican promiscuity that recalls Sade's argument for incest in his "François, encore un effort si vous voulez être républicains"—was heard by thinkers such as Shelley.⁶⁰ (Shelley later married the daughter of Godwin and Wollstonecraft.) But, generally speaking, Godwin's work gave rise only to lampooning. (*The Anti-Jacobean Review* [July 1797], for example, mocked "the promiscuous intercourse of the sexes as one of the highest improvements to result from Political Justice.")⁶¹

One political theorist remarks on the turn against women's rights in France in the 1790s that, "having revolted against the older patriarchy of the father-king . . . fraternal men imposed on women a legally secured definition of politics—this time, the patriarchy of the brothers and honorable husband-fathers."⁶² This remark has the ring of truth, but it begs the question as to why men, who called all women sisters (i.e., beings from inside their family and species), came to treat them as animals (i.e., beings from outside their family and species).

Beyond any need or desire to form a gender-neutral siblinghood, which many in the early 1790s certainly had, there is the fear that incest must result from such a siblinghood. As the revolutionary nuns who played an important role in the *doléances* of 1789⁶³ would have known, universal siblinghood requires either absolute celibacy or incest—either liberty from the flesh, as in their sacred celibacy, or liberty of the flesh, as in the profane incest of the republican Sade and Byron. Small wonder that most mid-nineteenth-century would-be "liberators," faced with these alternatives, preferred the zealous liberty of saints and sinners to the more moderate and inherently misogynistic worship of women "as on a pedestal." (An example is the attitude toward women at work in Auguste Comte's positivism.)⁶⁴

In the same way, we might reconsider the religious bent of the feminist "liberator" Flora Tristan. An early Fourierist in the familist tradition, she defined herself as a "Sister in Humanity" and embraced the views of the Saint-Simonists and Owenites that "sexual equality would be achieved through the emancipation of the working class."⁶⁵ Tristan was a precursor of Friedrich Engels, writing in France in the 1840s at the same time that Margaret Fuller was writing in the United States; she demanded of Frenchmen that they "emancipate the last slaves still remaining in French society, proclaim the rights of woman, in the same terms that your fathers proclaimed yours."⁶⁶ The religious tendency of her universalist model is all too clear. Tristan, an illegitimate child, compares herself to St. Teresa of Avila, and turning away from the interconnected problems of incest and celibacy to which St. Teresa's *Life* draws our attention, she likens her own role in history to that of the *filius nullius* Christ.⁶⁷

JUDAISM AND CHRISTIANITY

Love thy neighbor. That is, as Jew and Christian assure us, the embodiment of all commandments.

—Franz Rosenzweig, *The Star of Redemption*

Early church thinkers promulgated the philanthropic view that all human beings are essentially members of one brotherhood. But who, or what, are brothers, or human beings, according to a Christian? Many Church Fathers argued that only those who have already become baptized or become active members of religious orders are “brothers.” Origen writes: “Learn then what gift you have received from my Father. You have received, by your new birth the spirit of adoption, in a manner to be called sons of God and brothers.”⁶⁸ Similarly, some authorities claimed that only members of one’s own holy order are brothers,⁶⁹ and others that only confessors were to be called “brothers.”⁷⁰ Optatus says that it is impossible for a Christian not to be a brother to other Christians,⁷¹ implying that there are human beings in the world who are, to Christians, other than brothers. The universalist impulse thus led to a remarkable particularism. Paul had written that “there is neither Jew nor Greek . . . for ye are all one in Christ Jesus.”⁷² But while some Christian thinkers urged their followers to call all human beings “brethren,”⁷³ others claimed that in the new dispensation the new distinction between Christian and non-Christian was at work.

Jesus’ rule, “Call no man your father upon the earth: for one is your Father, which is in heaven,”⁷⁴ would seem to collapse all human generations into one generation, almost as in Thomas Paine’s radical *American Rights of Man* (1791). Yet the group of human beings that becomes an egalitarian brotherhood merely by assuming a common Father is only replacing an earthly hierarchy, that of the sons against the father, with a heavenly hierarchy, that of the sons against the Father. The sons are unequal to the Father in the heavenly hierarchy just as the sons are unequal to their fathers in the earthly hierarchy. One of the sons in the second hierarchy, whose central ideological figure is the spiritually incestuous Holy Family of Christianity, is Christ Jesus, the theological and structural linchpin of Christianity. Jesus is the ambiguously illegitimate son of no one or of no one human (*filius nullius*) and also the Son who Fathers himself. Christianity’s equal liberty (association of the sons, or *liberi*) thus depends upon a liberal Fatherhood that is also a paternal liberty. (In Shakespeare’s *Measure for Measure* Duke Vincentio, Vienna’s “father friar” and “brother father,” wavers between the role of parentarchal duke and that of either fraternal monk or universalist libertine.)⁷⁵

Not surprisingly in view of these difficulties, Christian sects fell off from the egalitarian ideal of “calling no man your father upon the earth.” They adapted the pre-Christian mystery cults’ practice of calling “father” the director of ritual practices.⁷⁶ They called the priest “father.”⁷⁷ (Eventually some Christian authorities said that bishops were to call one another “brothers” and to call their abbots and

priests "sons.")⁷⁸ Thus these sects violated both the letter of Jesus' rule, "Call no man your father," and the letter of most Jews' rule, "Call your father your father" (honoring him according to the fourth commandment).

I mean to suggest not that Christian authorities were unduly lax or hypocritical, though perhaps they were. I mean to suggest that there is a historical tendency for any universalist movement, whether religious or secular, 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 of us. (Exceptions here would be thinkers like the chaste Saint Francis and the incestuous Marquis de Sade.) If the universalist doctrine were realized, Christendom or the national state would become the spiritually or physically libertine society, or antisociety, envisioned by the English Family of Love and by the French libertines—precisely the sort of society that political Christendom is compelled officially to condemn.⁷⁹

The most disturbing aspect of the idea of universal siblinghood is not, as we have seen, the inevitability of a retreat from it, but rather the inevitably inhuman or inhumane practical consequence of making a retreat that is unwitting or unacknowledged.

It is one small step from the most extreme *philanthropeia*, or love of others as brothers, to the most extreme *misanthropeia*, or hatred of them.⁸⁰ The doctrine of universal siblinghood according to which all human beings are brothers and all brothers are human beings—a doctrine Dante presents in secular guise in his vision of a United Nations living in perpetual peace⁸¹—can 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 can lead us to treat that being as an animal, just as, in some primitive societies the notions of "human being" and "fellow tribesman" are indicated by the same word and are thought of as being the same.⁸² By the same token, an injunction to love as brothers all men—including both exogamous "foes" and endogamous "enemies"—can turn into an injunction to treat all men equally as others.

Moreover, if the human family and the human species are one and the same, interfamilial crossover (marriage) and interspecies crossover (dehumanization and anthropomorphism) are also one and the same. When Paul says, "Love thy neighbor as thyself,"⁸³ implying that we humans are all brotherly neighbors, he leaves us only those beings outside the neighborhood, or outside the brotherhood, to love in a sexual manner, without incest. But if all human beings are brothers, then we humans can love chastely only animals. Bestiality would be the only way, besides celibacy, to avoid incest. For universalist Christian philanthropists there thus develops an almost overwhelming need to dehumanize certain beings, like Muslims and Jews—a need to treat beings from outside their own neighborhood not only as extratribal but also as extraspecies.

As we have seen, the quintessential alien for Christians is the Jew. And it is against the Jewish particularist doctrine of love that Christendom for millennia has

sought to define itself, claiming with Saint Matthew and other anti-Semites that the Jews teach misanthropy and that it is impossible for a Jew to understand universal love.⁸⁴ Yet Judaism and Christianity are poles of the same spectrum. Neither the idea of universal brotherhood nor that of total otherhood, which are so important to Christianity, are wholly foreign to Judaism. (Nor are these ideas alien to Islam, as we have seen.)⁸⁵ For example, the cancellation of particular kinship bonds that are important in the Christian rite of profession (as described by the Port-Royalists) and in the Catholic doctrine of the “equal forgetfulness of all persons, whether relatives or not” (as described by Saint John of the Cross)⁸⁶ plays a role in the Jewish ritual of conversion, which involves a stripping away of kinship bonds followed by a rite of “brothering.” For many Jews, the “convert” stands in relation to everyone as both brother and other, or neither. This stance involves quandaries about celibacy and marriage. In some branches of Judaism, for example, “a proselyte is as a new born babe who stands in absolutely no relationship to any preconversion relation. Consequently, a proselyte’s brothers and sisters, father, mother, etc. from before his conversion lose their relationship on the proselyte’s conversion. Should they too subsequently become converted, they are regarded as strangers to him, and he might marry, e.g., his mother or sister.”⁸⁷ Christian sects, faced with the same threat to the integrity of the ordinary kinship structure as the influx of either the converted or born again (i.e., the person regenerated *sui generis*, without consanguineous parents, like the foundling or *asufi* discussed by Maimonides), resorted to the injunction to be celibate. Jewish rabbis, on the other hand, developed kinship theories such as the *rikhub* principle and promulgated ways to forbid marriages between the “new born babes” that are converts (or foundlings) without resorting to the Christian alternatives of absolute liberty of and from the flesh.⁸⁸

By the same token, the idea of universal brotherhood is not foreign to Judaism. Postexilic Jewish thinkers said that one day the Temple would be called “a house of prayer for all peoples” and that every individual could become a Jew.⁸⁹ (The similar view that “the human world” is one or ought to be one is, as we have seen, the imperialist legacy of Alexander the Great and of Greek Stoic and Jewish Hellenist cosmopolitan thinking.)⁹⁰ It has always been a Jewish view that Abraham, by his piety and philanthropy, “made brothers of the whole world.”⁹¹ The Old Testament asks, “Have we not all one father? hath not one God created us?”⁹² This apparent transcendence of human consanguinity moves the injunction to be one’s brother’s keeper in the direction of loving neighbors, thence to loving strangers who dwell within the community, thence to loving strangers who dwell in strange lands, and finally to loving everyone.⁹³ Rabbis Hillel and Meir enjoin Jews to love all mankind, even all creatures.⁹⁴ And in 1609 in the cosmopolitan city of Venice, Aaron ibn Hayyim published his powerful defense of the view that the law of “Love thy Neighbor” includes in its purview non-Israelites as well as Israelites.⁹⁵

Across the spectrum of the Judaeo-Christian tradition, then, there is a polar tension, both radical and ineradicable, between the demands of tribal heterogeneity and those 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—is bound to strive; and away from universal siblinghood Christianity—which began in an idealist rejection of particularist kinship—is bound to stray.⁹⁶

WAR OF ALL AGAINST ALL; OR, USURY

Just as the conceptions of human brotherhood and (in a less degree) of human equality appear to have passed beyond the limits of the primitive communities and to have spread themselves in a highly diluted form over the mass of mankind, so, on the other hand, competition in exchange seems to be the universal belligerency of the ancient world which has penetrated into the interior of the ancient groups of blood relatives. It is the regulated private war of ancient society gradually broken up into indistinguishable atoms.

—Sir Henry Sumner Maine, *Village-Communities* . . .

One of the few passages in the Old Testament where the law explicitly allows Jews to treat fellow tribespersons differently than other people is that which forbids a Jew to lend money at interest to a brother and allows him to do so to a stranger: “Thou shalt not lend upon usury (*neshekh*) to thy brother (*ahikha*) . . . Unto a stranger thou mayest lend upon usury.”⁹⁷ This rule for tribal brotherhoods was taken up by the anti-interest rhetoric of premodern Christendom. One unlikely result, as we shall see, was that the Christian definition of usury came to inform Christendom’s definition of nation and to prepare the way for the universal otherhood of modern individualism.

To obey the Mosaic code concerning monetary interest one has to know who is one’s brother. For a Jew this means knowing, or at least believing that he knows, who is akin to Jacob, or a fellow “son of Israel” (*b’nai yisrael*), and who is not. For a Christian, however, all men are brothers, not only the sons of Israel, so there is no need to know any man or woman’s genealogy. It makes no difference to a Christian if he is descended from Ishmael rather than from Isaac, say, or from Esau rather than from Jacob. It is enough for a Christian to know that he is a human being, that is, descended from Adam or Eve. Saint Jerome, commenting on Jesus’ statement “All ye are brethren” in view of the Deuteronomic rule regarding monetary interest, thus argues that all monetary interest is forbidden.⁹⁸ Thomas Aquinas later bolstered this rejection of monetary interest by adapting to Christian purposes the Greek view that all monetary interest, or *tokos*, was perverse. Had not Aristotle argued that monetary interest was unnatural insofar as it made money breed as though it were animal offspring?⁹⁹ Although a few Christian jurists inquired into the ambiguity of the term *ahikha* (brother) in the Deuteronomic law—it was said to refer to a child of the same parents, a fellow tribesman, and to a man who participates in the same *logos*¹⁰⁰—most Christians contended that the prohibition of usury among particular brothers in Deuteronomy had been universalized.

Not all Christians agreed, however, that the Christian condition of universal fraternity made all men the sort of fraternal kin that would outlaw usury. In the

medieval period, for example, the Patarenes and Cathars understood Jesus to be rejecting the distinction between kin and nonkin and so they regarded all men equally as both brothers and others. For the Jews there are distinct brothers and others, and for Saints Jerome and Thomas Aquinas there are only brothers, but for the Patarenes all human beings are simultaneously both brother and other or neither brother nor other. Accordingly, the Patarenes insisted that money lending at interest might be allowed for everyone. (By the same token they defended celibacy for everyone, arguing that if all men are kin, celibacy is the only way to avoid incest. The libertine Brethren of the Free Spirit similarly defended incest, arguing that if all men are nonkin, there is no incest.)

The Patarenes were persecuted by the official Church in precapitalist times. But their views on brotherhood became acceptable among Protestants such as John Calvin. Calvin argued that all men are brothers in Christendom insofar as they are equally others.¹⁰¹ In much the same way Saint John of the Cross, who founded the discalced Carmelites with the *converso* Saint Teresa of Avila, argued for universalizing everyone as a stranger: “You should have an equal love for or an equal forgetfulness of all persons, whether relatives or not, and withdraw your heart from relatives as much as from others. . . . Regard all as strangers.”¹⁰² (“But the fury of tyrants does not stop short of their own relations,” writes Seneca to his young tutee Nero. “They treat friends and strangers alike.”)¹⁰³ Maine, in his Victorian study of village-communities, argues in the same vein that in the global village everyone is equally estranged and familial, as if every human being were an indistinguishable atom. It is as if human beings, who had once been bound together in many tribal brotherhoods, now became atoms bound together in a single universal otherhood.¹⁰⁴

In eighteenth-century France, the old rhetoric of usury that opposes the ideal of universal or national fraternity to interest-based capitalism was especially influential. There the traditional Christian double charge against Jews—that Jews regard Christians as nonbrothers and therefore lend money to them at usurious rates. This was the gist of Foissac’s prize-winning anti-Semitic essay *Le cri du citoyen contre les juifs* (1786). Isaiah Berr Bing responded to the charges in a letter of 1787. First, Bing disproved Foissac’s thesis that Jews hate non-Jews and treat them as aliens; he showed that, according to Jewish law, all those men who observe the Noachite laws partake of salvation and that Jewish principles “oblige us to love you as brothers, and to perform for you all the acts of humanity that our position permits.”¹⁰⁵ Second, Bing pointed out that Deuteronomy allows not for “usury” but for “interest.”¹⁰⁶ Finally, Bing linked the problem of fraternity with that of interest, claiming that the intention of the Mosaic code regarding usury was “to draw closer the bonds of fraternity [between the Children of Israel], to give them a lesson of reciprocal benevolence.”¹⁰⁷ This lesson of fraternal benevolence, he said, rightfully applies also to nations other than the Jews. Referring specifically to the debate about whether Jews might be allowed to become citizens of France—as if the Deuteronomic term for “brother” were now to define “fellow national”—Bing said

that there might exist “two nations . . . who live under the same climate [and] between whom there is a sort of political equality.”¹⁰⁸

Some Frenchmen praised Bing’s letter. (Among them was the revolutionary leader Mirabeau, author of *Sur Moses Mendelssohn* [1787], writing in his *Monarchie prussienne*.) And some political thinkers in the nineteenth century also asserted the idea of equal fraternal or national coexistence between two nations. (That was the ideal rallying cry half a century later in bilingual Québec in the New World, where, as we have seen, Lord Durham “found two nations warring in the bosom of a single state.”)¹⁰⁹ But most revolutionaries opposed the idea of binationalism or multinationalism. They wanted not two coexistent nations (*convivencia*) but one brotherhood of free and equal brethren: *liberté, égalité, fraternité*. The French revolutionary leader Abbé Grégoire thus argued in his *Essay on the Physical, Moral, and Political Regeneration of the Jews* (1789) that Jews should become equal brothers. And Clermont-Tonnerre argued in his *Opinion relativement aux persécutions qui menacent les Juifs d’Alsace* (1789) that the Jews of France “must constitute neither a state, nor a political corps, nor an order; they must individually become citizens; if they do not want this, they must inform us and we shall be compelled to expel them. The existence of a nation within a nation is unacceptable to our country.”¹¹⁰

Encouraged by this sort of possibly well-intentioned universalism, Napoleon in 1806 encouraged a convention of Jewish notables (Sanhedrin) held in Paris to become French brethren or citizens. All that they needed to do, Napoleon said, was to repudiate the teachings of Deuteronomy regarding usury. Insisting that Jews and Frenchmen were essentially or potentially brothers who share the same father, Napoleon, apparently referring to Mendelssohn’s *Jerusalem*, argued that “the [Jewish] Sanhedrin, after recognizing, as the [National] Assembly has done, that Frenchman and Jews are brothers . . . must prohibit usury in dealing with Frenchmen or with inhabitants of any countries where the Jews are allowed to enjoy civil rights. . . . I am anxious to do all I can to prevent the rights restored to the Jewish people proving illusory—in a word . . . I want them to find in France a new *Jerusalem*.”¹¹¹ Among the twelve questions that Napoleon’s Commissioners posed were three that connected usury with the idea of fraternal nationhood: “In the eyes of Jews, are Frenchmen considered as brethren or as strangers?” “Does the law forbid the Jews from taking usury from their brethren?” and “Does the law forbid or does it allow usury toward strangers?”¹¹²

The convention of Jewish notables eventually asserted that “all Frenchmen [are] our brothers”¹¹³ and endorsed the notion that from that time forward the technical term “Jews within France” would become “Frenchmen of the Mosaic persuasion.”¹¹⁴ And it ruled out usury for French citizens, promulgating the view that the term *ahikha* (brother) in Deuteronomy applies to all French citizens regardless of religion.¹¹⁵

The convention’s rulings about usury and about brotherhood as French nationhood (even united nationhood) found popular expression in Jewish education. Samuel Cahen’s *Précis élémentaire d’instruction religieuse et morale* (1820), for

example, taught that the term *ahikha* in the Deuteronomic commandment concerning usury means “all human beings who recognize God” and stressed that the obligations of “fraternal charity” apply to Jews and non-Jews alike.¹¹⁶ Elie Halévy’s catechism of the same year taught similarly that “a Jew of today cannot, without . . . transgressing the law of God . . . engage in this illicit commerce towards individuals whose religious opinions, it is true, differ from his, but who are no less strict observers of these great principles, fundamental principles of all . . . civilized peoples.”¹¹⁷ Sometimes this universalist impulse seemed to transcend altogether the differences between Jew and non-Jew. For example, Simon Bloch, editor of *La Régénération*, wrote in 1836 that “we are born into the religion which our parents profess, but we must elevate ourselves to piety (*piété*) by our own efforts. . . . We receive, in the bosom of our mother, our first religious impressions, but we draw piety from a celestial source. Religion is the temple; piety is the goddess.”¹¹⁸ Bloch recognized that consanguineous matrilineality is a key factor in defining membership in the siblinghood of Israel (*b’nai yisrael*), but he transposed it, through the standard French nationalist rhetorical figure of collactaneous matrilineality (as in Jacques-Louis David’s revolutionary “Festival of the Unity and Indivisibility of the Republic”), into a potentially universal spiritual affinity that seems to include the controversial hypothesis of diverse gods and goddesses.

Many European Jews believed that they might participate fully in the national or political life of their adoptive countries just so long as they endorsed the doctrine of essential universalism. For example, the Rousseauist historian Isaac D’Israeli, a Jew of Iberian ancestry, came to the conclusion that a particularist Judaism “cuts off the Jews from the great family of mankind.”¹¹⁹ And praising the new spirit of universalism, D’Israeli arranged to have his twelve-year-old son Benjamin baptized in 1817 into the Anglican Church. (Benjamin Disraeli became Prime Minister half a century later. One might compare Karl Marx’s father in Rhenish Prussia arranging to have his six-year-old son Karl baptized as a Protestant in 1824.)

However, Moses Mendelssohn had not been mistaken to warn Jews and Christians alike of intolerance’s mask of universalism.¹²⁰ And just as *fraternité* was being extended to the newly liberated Jews of France, the Imperial Edict of 1807 “imposed discriminatory regulations against the economic and political opportunities of the Jews” as aliens.¹²¹ Chamfort, pondering the French republican promise of “liberty, equality, fraternity” and the French revolutionary slogan of “fraternity, or death!,” commented thus: “‘Fraternity or Death?’ Yes: be my brother or I will kill you!”¹²² “If I had a brother,” quipped the Austrian Metternich, “I would call him cousin.”¹²³ Laments the American Emerson: “In France ‘fraternity’ [and] ‘equality’ . . . are names for assassination.”¹²⁴ If a person cannot or will not become a brother then he is not human and may as well be treated as such. The promise of universal brotherhood—even a united nations—turns all too easily into the individual and fatal fraternity of Cain and Abel.¹²⁵