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LINGUISTIC VOMIT FERMENTS THE BRAIN:
EXPLORING THE BOUNDARIES OF NARRATIVES

Katherine L. DuBois

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Our minds require binaries to process and categorize information. A given piece of knowledge is either true or false. It helps us to process narratives as fiction or nonfiction. Narratives are neither wholly true or wholly false. Rather the borders that separate them are artificially constructed. By breaking down these barriers, authors break the traditional scheme for understanding literature, but they also lead us to question why the author is making the choices. The confusion leads to a constructive questioning of the purpose of the breakdown. Through this we develop a means of examining experimental narratives.

LINGUISTIC VOMIT FERMENTS THE BRAIN:
EXPLORING THE BOUNDARIES OF NARRATIVES

KATHERINE L. DUBOIS

Thesis Submitted in Partial
Fulfilment of the Requirements
for the Degree of

MASTER OF ART

Department of English

ILLINOIS STATE UNIVERSITY

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LINGUISTIC VOMIT FERMENTS THE BRAIN:
EXPLORING THE BOUNDARIES OF NARRATIVES

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ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

This is dedicated to my parents. None of this would have happened without their continued love and support. Eternal thanks are not enough.

K.L.D.

CONTENTS

	Page
ACKNOWLEDGMENTS	i
CONTENTS	ii
CHAPTER	
I. CRITICAL PREFACE	1
II. LINGUISTIC VOMIT FERMENTS THE BRAIN	23

CHAPTER I

CRITICAL PREFACE

Literature depends on trust. The reader trusts that the narrative from the author is truthful, that it obeys the traditional boundaries of the narrative. It is assumed, a work of fiction is fictional and a work of nonfiction contains the truth. This trust allows the reader to interpret the narrative. Experimental narratives disrupts this trust by making the reader aware she is reading a book. These authors make intentional changes to provoke the reader to thought. The author breaks the line of trust between the author and reader.

When this trust is broken through lying or misleading, the reader begins to question every aspect of the narrative. It can provoke anger towards the author for not telling a truthful narrative. For example, James Frey's *A Million Little Pieces*, marketed as a work of nonfiction, was discovered to be fictional, angering many readers (Wyatt). The question here is not about the quality of writing, but the authenticity. Frey's narrative was assumed to be a work of nonfiction portraying his life as he recovered from drug addiction, which led the reader to trust in the authenticity of the text. When this was discovered to be a lie, that trust was broken because the authenticity of the narrative was broken. Nonfiction is not expected to be entirely factual simply because most people cannot remember every facet of their lives, which means they cannot re-create a completely accurate narrative. Nevertheless, the expectation in nonfiction is that the author does not purposefully mislead the reader. Frey broke the long established scheme

between author and reader.

This schematic was recognized by Tzvetan Todorov to outline an author-reader scheme for understanding literature (72-74). Todorov set up a scheme that shows how the trust is established. This begins with the author's universe, which is the author's conception of the world he is writing. He creates the narrative by writing it down. This narrative is passed to the reader, who interprets the narrative to form her own universe, which will differ from the author's. The reader trusts that the narrative is authentic for its genre, i.e., it meets the rules of the genre. This scheme breaks down in many experimental works, which are often works of metafiction. The author purposefully breaks this trust. This leads us to the question of why the author made the choice. Why does that decision affect our ability to understand?

We have expectations for the narrative. As Heather Dubrow explains:

... a genre represents not only a pronouncement that a writer is making to and about the writers of the past, not only an injunction that he is delivering to the authors who may follow in his footsteps, but also a communication from the writer to his readers. He is in effect telling us the name and rules of his code, rules that affect not only how he should write the work but also how we should read it. (31)

When authors break these rules, the scheme, the reader does not know what to expect of these new rules because they have not existed in previous narratives. We cannot understand the narrative presented to us because of the decisions made by the author. Dubrow calls this expectation the generic contract (32). It is this that "allows us to maintain the appropriate mood and to concentrate on what is most significant about the

work” (32). This is the key to understanding a work, to being able to decipher the rules and codes. When that is lost, as is in the case of experimental narratives we have to find a means to understand the new rules presented to us so that we can understand “what is most significant about the work.” We must learn what the new set of expectations is.

We have already established that the break in the schematic begins with the author because it is the author who is responsible for creating the universe and writing it down to create the narrative that is passed to the reader. This means it is the author whom we must deal with. Before progressing, however, it is important to note that this is not a case of an unreliable narrator. The unreliable narrator is part of the world created by the author. This narrator misleads the reader as she is translating the text. But what is important is that the author is not presenting a narrative that is misleading. The lie in the narrative in the unreliable narrator type story begins in the narrative; the lie in the narrative that disrupts the author-reader scheme begins with the author. For example, in Agatha Christie’s novel *The Murder of Roger Ackroyd* the narrator is revealed in the end to be unreliable because he is in fact the murderer. Christie never lies to us about the fictionality of the narrative. That is, we are never led to question events, but the narrator does lead us to question the narrative.

In contrast, the experimental narrative author does lead us to question because that is its purpose. It breaks down the boundaries between fiction and nonfiction. The resulting works are ones that are perhaps more reflective of narratives because they do not attempt to enforce an artificial boundary between truth and fiction. Instead, these works, in removing these boundaries, push us to question.

For example, César Aira’s *An Episode in the Life of a Landscape Painter* begins

as a biographical narrative, but at an unknown point switches to a fictional one. The back of the book shows it labeled “Literature/Fiction.” This leads us to our automatic assumption that the narrative is not true because, as the generic contract details, the rules for the genre of fiction signal a narrative that is not true. Aira begins with Johan Moritz Rugendas, a painter from Germany, explaining who he is. Aira then moves to relate the adventure Rugendas and his sidekick, Robert Kraus, have when they are in Argentina to paint landscapes. Both are historical figures (Ring). The question the reader has is “what actually happened?” Aira seamlessly moves from fact to fiction, keeping the tone, language, and style even in both aspects. The events, though fantastical in nature, are plausible enough. The reader questions the freak accident in the mountains where Rugendas is struck by lightning, then his foot is caught in the saddle of his horse, dragging him along until he horribly disfigured (Aira 30-40). It is possible because we know such seemingly fantastical events occur. What we do know is that an accident did occur leaving Rugendas heavily disfigured and in poor health (Art Directory). Additionally, the accident occurred in the Andes and it was a riding accident in 1837, which is where and how the events in the narrative occur (Aira 5, 16). No records are given to the circumstances surrounding the historical Rugendas’s disfigurement. We know that he suffered facial fractures and neurological damage (Art Directory). While Rugendas does suffer from these injuries in the narrative, Aira adds the details, the lightning storm and dragging.

It is here, with the representation of the text by Aira, that confusion arises. Aira has removed the boundary, collapsing fiction and nonfiction narratives. The reader cannot readily discern fact from fiction. One could argue that the narrator is unreliable because

the narrator is not made clear other than it is written in the third person narrative mode. But if we compare this work to Christie's, we note that Christie herself never lied about the fictionality of the narrative, but Aira has. We know that we have truth and fiction, but the where is in doubt. This is the unreliable narrator, who purposefully misleads to lead us to question.

We do not question simply because we can, but because we want to sort the given information. Aira's breaking of the scheme becomes an issue because the strict boundaries between fiction and nonfiction have been broken. Barbara Foley explains "any element in a narrative . . . must be scanned and interpreted as either factual or fictive in order to be read and understood" (40). We must categorize information in order to process it and those categories into binaries. Fiction and nonfiction have strict boundaries because of this. As Foley explains, cognitive studies have shed light on the need to place an item as either A or B (39-40). This explains the anger over not knowing what is real and what is not. The way experimental narrative authors remove the boundary prevents readers from making a clear verification of a piece of information. In *An Episode in the Life of a Landscape Painter*, the veracity of the fantastical tale of Rugendas's accident is not clear. As we have discussed previously, Aira makes no distinction between fact and fiction in his book. Nevertheless, the reader must be able to categorize. If the reader can categorize, then the reader can trust the author because the genre is recognized and standard. She knows the code for interpreting.

Our minds require a strict separation for categorization. But we know as well that a truth is not always or entirely true. Truth and fiction are both constructs, most easily defined as the opposite of the other, i.e., truth is something that is not a fiction or false.

But this does little to aid us with a definition. As we explore this further, we must look closely at the boundary that separates A from B.

Once more we must take a step back, this time to consider the genre of historical fiction, narratives that incorporate nonfictional elements into a fictional narrative. Could *An Episode in the Life of a Landscape Painter* be classified as a work of historical fiction? According to Brian McHale, “historical realemes- persons, events, specific objects, and so on- can only be introduced on condition that the properties and actions attributed to them in the text do not actually contradiction the ‘official’ historical record” (87). Rather they must affect the “dark areas,” e.g. what is not covered in the historical record (McHale 87). Aira does seem to play into one of these “dark areas” because we cannot find records of the cause for Rugendas’ disfigurement. Instead, Aira has fictionalized a cause. Does this affect the historical record? No, but it can cause confusion because we do not know what actually happened. It exposes a portion of the historical record that has been left blank. Furthermore, Aira’s means for crafting the narrative work to make the reader question the rest of the narrative’s place in the historical record. McHale explains, “The postmodernists fictionalize history, but by doing so they imply that history itself may be a form of fiction” (96). This presents to us the idea that the historical narrative may not be the only narrative. Placing the word ‘historical’ or ‘official’ to a narrative lends itself to the connotation that the narrative is the only one, the true narrative, even if this is not true. Postmodernism, through breaking the generic contract, brings readers to consider that there might be more than one narrative and neither may be wholly correct.

The difference is that postmodern works do not work within the “dark area” of the historical narrative as historical fiction does. Historical fiction may take a figure or a

setting, even an event, but fundamentally these do not change. Postmodernism refuses to remain within the confines of historical fiction, instead pulling from the known narrative. For example, in *The Pale King*, David Foster Wallace presents information about the IRS that the reader because he has previously mislead the reader doubts the veracity of. But the reader accepts that Wallace knows he is giving false information, which leads us to asking why he gives false information. Perhaps the most glaring example of this is that there is no IRS Regional Examination Center in Peoria, Illinois. Furthermore, the national headquarters for the IRS is not located on 666 Independence Avenue (Wallace 74, note 7), but 1111 Constitution Avenue (Zelenek 981-2). Additionally, a simple Google search shows that Illinois sales tax changes Wallace describes never happened (Wallace 197). This book is not marketed as a work of nonfiction. Nevertheless, when the reader is misled in subsection 9 to believe that it is a memoir, mistrust is cast over the entire narrative. Moreover, the world of the narrative seems to be our own, especially given the use of names like Peoria and Philo, both real towns in Illinois. There are certain facts that we expect to remain the same, such as the location of the IRS headquarters. Why make it up? Certainly, Wallace's use of 666 as the street number for the IRS is amusing given the general feeling about the government organization, but it is not presented comically. It is instead presented factually.

Wallace presents facts that can be checked for veracity. This is not the work of the historical narrative. Here is the difference between historical fiction and postmodern fiction: how we can distinguish between the narrative that pulls together elements of fiction and nonfiction to create a narrative and a narrative that seeks to collapse those boundaries in an attempt to point the reader towards the narrative itself. This is how the

rules of the generic contract are broken, by causing the reader to question the narrative through pulling from the historical narrative.

The issue here of postmodernism choosing not to remain focused solely on the “dark areas” of the official narrative, is one that we can also apply to experimental narratives. Such works do not concern themselves with this division. Rather, all narratives are open for examination because the goal of this genre is to disrupt the narrative and to provoke the reader to thought.

In place of the traditional trust between the author and reader, a new agreement develops that is key to experimental narratives. This agreement calls on the reader to accept the author’s choices. The reader must accept that the author knows the lines he is blurring. As much as we would like to re-establish trust in the relationship, we cannot because there is no reliable ability to discern the division. We can accept the author’s decisions and understand the reasons, but we cannot be assured that we are being told the truth. In the case of *An Episode in the Life of a Landscape Painter* the reader must accept that Aira knows the distinction between fact and fiction in the narrative. Furthermore, she must accept that Aira is aware of the choices he is making. We can conduct research to determine what is fact and what is fiction, but we cannot be sure of the validity of the narrative. That is, we know historically that Rugendas was disfigured in an accident, but we cannot unequivocally ascertain that the lightning storm and subsequent dragging was historically the cause or a fiction written by Aira.

Similarly, binaries, sorting fact and fiction, are our means of making sense of the world around us, but experimental narratives mess with this ability by removing the boundary. The question now is why. What good does it do the author to break the trust?

The author writes to convey a message, but he cannot do that if the reader cannot make sense of the message.

For example, in *The Pale King* Wallace forces the reader to question the fiction-ness of the narrative. In subsection 9, he introduces the “real” author of the text:

Author here. Meaning the real author, the living human holding the pencil, not some abstract narrative persona. Granted, there sometimes is such a persona in *The Pale King*, but that’s mainly a pro forma statutory construct, an entity that exists just for legal and commercial purposes, rather like a corporation; it has no direct, provable connection to me as a person. (Wallace 68)

We come to realize that this is not the real author, not Wallace himself, but a character in the text. The fictional Wallace informs us that this text is not a work of fiction, but a memoir, leading the reader to question what is real and what is fiction, what in the novel is fact and what is fiction. Like Aira, Wallace does not explicitly tell the reader where the fiction is and where the fact is in his narrative. Wallace does not cause this questioning through accident, rather he creates it with the intent to provoke the reader to thought. This creation of a fictional Wallace as the author the memoir titled *The Pale King* forces the reader to question the authenticity of the narrative, which leads her to question the authenticity of knowledge.

Narratives such as Wallace’s ask us to question what we know and how we understand what he know. Linda Hutcheon describes historiographic metafiction as being different from historical fiction because it does not assimilate data, but “acknowledges the paradox of the *reality* of the past but its only *textualized* accessibility to use today”

(64). Hutcheon calls for a separation of fact and fiction, for us to realize that the narrator inherently influences and shapes texts (62-64). She applies this primarily to historical texts, but it is also applicable to experimental narratives. The narrator or author decides what to include or exclude from a text (Hutcheon 64). When we look at history and the historical record, we tend to see only the narrative, not the narrator. In our reading, the two are linked together without conscious knowledge and without knowledge of that subjectivity. The records are the link to the past. So here is the paradox: we know we have a past, but the only way in which we can connect to that past, the only way we can access it, is through texts and the context of our times. This is the difficulty, however, in discussing the idea of subjectivity in the historical narrative- - we believe in a single interpretation and want to hold steadfastly onto that single interpretation. This will transfer to experimental narratives. It inhibits our ability to separate the narrative and the author.

If we look back to the author-reader scheme, we see that this coloring of narratives by the author fits perfectly. Because the author is writing the narrative from his own universe, he will choose what the reader sees in the narrative and that will, naturally, affect the reader's interpretation. Experimental authors color their narratives such that they will provoke the reader to question. Such narratives work against narratives, which often times are traditional narratives. It asks the reader to question the single interpretation of the narrative, suggesting rather that there are multiple narratives. This is the reason to understand what the experimental narrative author is doing and how.

But by separating these two, we once again realize that the author is controlling the narrative. It is he who has misled the reader. Furthermore, we understand that he

has constructed the narrative to convey something. He is controlling the narrative, but because we realize that we can separate him from it to understand how he is shaping it, i.e., how he is constructing the narrative to convey his message.

If we look to Travis MacDonald's *O Mission Repo*, which takes *The 9/11 Commission Report* to give a narrative alternate to this single interpretation, we find it is perhaps an excellent example of working with a narrative because the report was written like a narrative, not a typical government document. It tells a story. It was the report designed to give the official history of the attacks. MacDonald takes this narrative and modifies it to talk about different interpretations/ narratives. The novel opens with a preface, which appears as "Preface" (MacDonald xv). He signals the change in his novel, his goal, which is not an introduction, but a refacing, putting a new face on the narrative. MacDonald continues blacking out the original text to read "We. . . the narrative of. . . America. . . present this repo. . . as a. . . history of the. . . how. . . we have. . . from the outset. . . been. . . took. . ." (xv).¹ He does not create a completely coherent sentence with his selection of words, but he does direct our attention to an alternate narrative. It is a narrative that comes from America, not the government. The original narrative begins, "We present the narrative of this report and the recommendations that flow from it to the President of the United States, the United States Congress, and the American people for their consideration" (National Commission on Terrorist Attacks Upon the United States xv). The "we" is the members of the commission, who put together the report, crafted their narrative of September 11th for the American people. It is the narrative given by the government to be the official narrative. MacDonald's narrative continues with "Our

¹ The ellipses represent text that has been blacked out. They do not represent the amount of text blacked out.

aim has. . . been to. . . redress. . . its. . . lexicon” (xvi). MacDonald wants to bring the reader to rethink the narrative of September 11th and that begins with altering the official narrative, commissioned by the government. He brings further attention to the questions of what this official narrative might have left out through the blacking out of text. While we can go back and read the report, as we read *The O Mission Repo*, MacDonald makes us question what we are missing.

The 9/11 Commission Report is a rather strange government document on its own. It is labeled as non-fiction and was a finalist for the National Book Award (Wyatt). Shortly after its release, it moved to the number one spot on Amazon.com’s bestseller list (Warren 533). This is despite it being available free through the government. The public wanted to read it because it read like a novel. The authors tell a clear, easy to understand narrative. The report faced much scrutiny because it gave a single narrative, critics accusing the commission of constructing a narrative that met the needs of the government (Pillar 1022). Whether that was the intent of the commission or not, they could not help constructing a narrative. As Hutcheon points out, the way we know our past is through texts and those texts are necessarily constructed by a narrator, who decides what to include and what to exclude. He narrates our past for us. But there is more than one narrative, as MacDonald attempts to illustrate through various means of selectively obstructing our view of the entire text. As he, through words, creates the alternate narrative, he works to bring us to question the intentions of the official narrative. Through his obstructions, we are brought to wonder what are we not told through the official narrative.

As we have established, this is the purpose of experimental narratives, to makes

us think about what we know and how we know it. MacDonald makes the reader think about what the official narrative is telling us. He wants us to consider what was left out and why. It brings us to question the narratives that we, as a society, believe to be true and accurate. We believe that these contain the entire “truth,” are complete narratives. MacDonald can achieve this level of questioning because we accept that he is aware of his purpose and techniques.

At this point, we begin to understand the new rules of the genre. We understand that the confusion is not simply to frustrate. In fact, it is not confusion, but a means of re-direction from what is usually the narrative to questioning the narrative. The author collapses the binary because he wants to provoke the reader to thought, not confusion. Nevertheless, the understanding of these rules does not lead to trust. Trust implies an assurance of reliance. But we cannot rely on an accurate text, we cannot rely on the author to produce an accurate text. However, we can come to an acceptance of the new genre contract.

Once we come to the acceptance of the text and the new rules that form the contract, we come to ask the purpose. Could there be another means for the author to “get his message across?” The answer is no because the purpose of experimental narratives is to draw the reader back to looking at the narrative itself. The genre must be altered by making the reader question the authenticity of the narrative. Otherwise, we continue on the same path. We are automatized, an “object passes before us as if it were prepackaged” (Shklovsky 5). We are so familiar with it, so accustomed to seeing it that we do nothing to examine it. He describes a method, defamiliarization as a means to break out of this automatized state. Shklovsky informs us that art has been given to us to “return sensation

to our limbs, in order to make us feel objects, to make a stone feel stony” (6). Although he discusses objects in his explanation, we can also apply this to the narratives that we have been discussing. We are presented with narratives in genres that we are familiar with. The generic contract has long been familiar. But authors of metafiction want to make us look at the narrative. They need to make “a stone feel stony.” Defamiliarization works by making something familiar, unfamiliar. This is what happens we, as discussed previously, subvert the historical narrative genre by not remaining within the “dark areas,” but address the historical narrative as a whole. We have not only broken the generic contract, but we have defamiliarized the genre forcing the reader to look critically at the narrative as she works to understand the new rules of the contract.

If we look at *The O Mission Repo*, MacDonald is working with the official narrative of the September 11th terror attacks. The official narrative’s genre we are familiar with, but the one he presents, with blacked out portions, erased text, blurred word, etc is one that is not familiar. He has defamiliarized us to the genre, bringing our attention to the narrative he is presenting. MacDonald is asking us to look at the official narrative, recognize it as *a* narrative and then to look at the narrative he presents, which tells a different perspective of the events.

Wallace uses defamiliarization often in *The Pale King*. One example has already been introduced. In subsection 9, Wallace tells the reader that this is a memoir. He then works to prove it by giving facts, such as his social security number (Wallace 38). After listing his number, Wallace footnotes it to tell the reader about social security numbers for IRS employees. He begins, “Little known fact: The only US citizens anywhere whose Social Security numbers start with the number 9 are those who are, or at some time

were, contract employees of the Internal Revenue Service” (Wallace 68, note 1). He also informs us that IRS employees receive new numbers. The footnote continues to explain SSNs and IRS employees. In this short example, we can see how Wallace takes a simple explanation intended to inform the reader that the novel is actually a memoir and expands on the use of SSNs, giving us facts. He gives the reader too much detail. We may simply pass over the use of the number in our reading of the narrative, but footnoting it and drawing our attention through an abundance of information, Wallace directs us to see it as a marker of identification, which leads us back to Wallace himself. As we establish previously, this Wallace, the memoir Wallace, is different from the author Wallace. It is the author Wallace who footnotes to draw our attention to the creation of the memoir Wallace as an additional narrator. He does this to bring our attention to the control the narrator has over the text. Wallace created a narrator with the intention of disrupting the author-reader trust.

In a later section, Wallace expands on the definition of an advance payment. He begins explaining what the average author’s advance was and footnotes this section to explain that the “term is shorthand for an unrefundable advance payment against the author’s projected royalties (through as 7½%- 15% set of progressive margins) on sales of a book (Wallace 83, note 20). He continues to explain in increasingly greater detail as the footnote goes on until we lose track of what was discussed; it becomes lost to us in the detail. Additionally, the detail is dry, difficult to read through because it deals with taxes. The reader becomes bored in the detail, bringing the reader to the understanding of the tedium of life. Wallace uses his footnotes to add such detail, obscuring simple ideas by hyper-focusing on them so that we do not see the words, but the complexity

and dryness. On the surface, we know what an advance payment is. That is familiar, but through Wallace's explanation, we become overwhelmed through detail and the data grows meaningless. From that, we look back at his purpose. We accept that Wallace knows what he is doing when he gives this detail, that he knows the effect this will have on the audience. That leads us to question his intention, which we can conclude is to make us consider the tedium of life, especially the day-to-day work life. We have the customary narrative of going to the office from 9 to 5 Monday through Friday. He asks us to reconsider this given narrative by examining the tedium that is present.

Once again, the removal of these boundaries, of the binaries, collapses the two into one. If we collapse the binaries, the traditional schematic for understanding and interpreting literature does not work for experimental narratives. As we have previously discussed, Wallace has violated the generic contract of the historical narrative by not writing in a "dark area" of the historical record. Instead, he has placed his narrative in a situation that can very easily be verified as true or false. With a quick google search, we know the IRS facility does not exist.

It is not that the goal is to meld fact and fiction into one, but to place them within the same sphere without an "either or" separation. It forces us to think rather than simply accept because we cannot accurately define new knowledge as one or the other. Once again, we return to Shklovsky's discussion of automatization and the automatic life. He says, "The object passes before us, as if it were prepackaged. We know that it exists because of its position in space, but we see only its surface" (5). This is what happens to the narrative that is not questioned, to the world that is easily categorized. We see a narrative, a truth, and recognize it as such without thinking. The problem is, "in the

process of algebrizing, of automatizing the object, the greatest economy of perceptual effort takes place” (5). Shklovsky explains, “And so, held accountable for nothing, life fades into nothingness. Automatization eats away at things, at clothes, at furniture, at our wives, and at our fear of war” (5). The binary allows us to continue without thought, but collapsing them forces us to think. *An Episode in the Life of a Landscape Painter* would be a much different story if the line between fact and fiction in the narrative were clearly laid out. We would not pause to consider the nature and the truthfulness of the historical narratives that are given to us. If Aira told the reader explicitly the lightning storm was a fiction, we would not question the narrative as a whole. We would blindly accept the narrative as it is presented to us. But the means of obscuring the truth by seamlessly collapsing fiction and nonfiction into one narrative, Aira asks us to question the narrative.

Similarly, the methods MacDonald uses work to force the reader out of the automatized world. There are a number of theories on the truth of September 11th, a number of different narratives. These are often tossed aside, labeled as conspiracy theories. The official narrative is the one given to us by the government. MacDonald could have used different, more clearly marked methods of telling the alternate narrative. He could have chosen a traditional method that would provide a straightforward narrative. But MacDonald chose one designed to make us think, to make us look critically at the narrative we accept as official. As we have previously discussed, MacDonald, through erasure, forces the reader to think about what the official narrative is hiding from us. The reader considers the idea that his might not be the official narrative, rather just another narrative in a possible collection of narratives that explain what happened on September 11th. His methods open the eyes of the reader to different ideas.

This is what experimental narratives are designed to do. Through techniques that make us aware that we are reading a narrative, it makes us think about the narrative given to us. We begin to question what we know and how we know it. This works against the narratives we see as standard or traditional to us today. This knowledge does not and cannot restore the trust that is broken by removing the barrier between fiction and nonfiction. That trust came from knowing that the binary would exist in the narrative. The goal is not to restore trust. Once we understand and accept that the author is controlling the narrative, then we understand that trust in the narrative cannot be re-established. We cannot trust that the author is presenting us with the 'true' narrative because now we understand that there are multiple narratives, which may include information that is not included in the narrative presented to us. Instead, we accept that the author is presenting us with a narrative that does not neatly delineate between fact and fiction.

While in the traditional author-reader scheme the reader is to trust in the veracity of the author's narrative, the author also trusts the reader to accept the given narrative as factual within the given universe. In experimental narratives, just as the reader cannot trust in the veracity of the author's narrative, the author cannot trust that the reader will accept the narrative he provides. Rather, as the reader must accept the decisions of the author, the author must accept the choices the reader makes. For example, a reader of *An Episode in the Life of a Landscape Painter* may not conduct complete research on Rugendas to know that he did have an accident that led to his disfigurement. The author must accept that the reader may not choose to investigate fully and that may lead to a different understanding of the narrative. The author can accept this because he knows his intent is to draw the reader to question knowledge, to question the narrative.

One of the features of experimental narratives is to work against the grand narratives. As we have established, these authors bring attention to alternate narratives by breaking the trust established in the author-reader scheme. They do this with the purpose of making us not only rethink what we are told, but also to think about what we are told. That is, to process information actively rather than passively. When we passively accept the information, we do not question. We simply categorize according to the given binary. All knowledge must fit into a category and must be clearly ascertained. Active processing of information occurs through collapsing this binary. Again, it is not about making fiction and nonfiction one, but allowing them to exist in the same sphere. They exist without clear definition, a more true reflection of narratives as they contain both aspects and do not set unequivocal lines between the two. As we question what is true and what is not in the narrative, we begin to question the narrative. This is the goal of the author as he disrupts the trust.

In this disruption and as a result of the collapse, trust cannot be re-established. In its place is acceptance of the new status quo. The reader accepts the author's intent and desire to force her to question the narrative. We accept that Aira's careful mixing of fiction and nonfiction in the story of Rugendas and Krause is to make us think about the historical narratives that we are presented with. Similarly, we accept that MacDonald understands his methods and decisions in obscuring selected portions of *The 9/11 Commission Report* in his attempt to make us think about what the official narrative is hiding, i.e. what other narratives exist.

We accept it because we cannot trust, but an understanding of some sort must exist for literature to be interpreted and understood. Literature exists to convey a

message, whether that be to record an event or to influence a change in society. There must be a means of realizing what that message is. Todorov provided us with the scheme to understand how we interpret. Today's shift in literature that calls on us to question what we know also calls on us to rethink how we are to understand literature. That change is one of acceptance. It is not a matter of settling on something for the sake of interpreting. Rather, we accept because we want to understand, because we want to know what we do not know.

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CHAPTER II
LINGUISTIC VOMIT FERMENTS THE BRAIN

Table of Contents

List of Illustrations	24
Abbreviations	25
Introduction	26
Background Information	28
Phonetik Klasse	28
Relationship between Old High German and Old English	31
Deception Permeates	44
Two Cuts	56
Erroneous Social Necessitations of the Moral Imperitive	60
Vowels	61
Short Vowels	61
Long Vowels	74
Diphthongs	84
Consonants	88
High German Consontant Shift	88
Labials	90
Dentals (Dichotomy of Happy Versus Sad)	95
Gutturals	98
Sibilant and Semi-vowels	104
Liquids	107
Nasals	109
Tipping the Balance Towards Mutual Unintelligibility	111
	118
References	119

List of Illustrations

Table 1: Phonological Permutations of muddled English	28
Table 2: Vowel Phonemes of modern English	30
Diagram 1	30
Diagram 2: Castigation Family	35
Diagram 3	43
Exhibit 1: Body of Law	45
Exhibit 2: I guess I never got the memo	56
Rationale 1: No one else can understand	55
Exercise 1: Who is the he before him?	70

Abbreviations

Accusative	Acc
Comparative	Comp
Dative	Dat
Early Middle High German	EMHG
Genitive	Gen
High German Consonant Shift	HGC Shift
Imperative	Imp
Masculine	Mas
Middle English	ME
Middle German	MG
Nominative	Nom
Old English	OE
Old High German	OHG
Old Saxon	OS
Participle	Part
Person	Per
Plural	Pl
Proto-Germanic	PGmc
Proto-Indo-European	PIE
Singular	Sing
Upper German	UG

Introduction

First things first because there's no point in keeping up this charade,¹ read page 2.² Why? Knowing is one thing, understanding another. I thought about other ways, seriously I did. I sat on a bench, freewriting about the best way to kill myself. It on was a nice day, sunny too, I think. I remember the content everyone had. It was then I planned it all. We all know the various methods. I calculated the successfulness of each, which ones suited my personality. I wrote because that's what I do. I write and sometimes I come up with something that matters, or that I think matters.

Depression is a strange thing, you know. I never thought I was depressed. I was, I knew it, but it was life. It was what I knew. Trying to take my depression away from me, even though I wanted it gone was agonizing. Can you image wanting so much for something to be gone, but grasping tightly onto it as though if it goes, so do you? It's like when your cat's laying on your legs. You're loving it, your cat's loving it, and then the cat gets up. In that moment, when the coldness seeps in, you realize what you've lost and you desperately want it back. The cat comes back, but it's not the same. It can't be because what was, is lost. Your heart longs for what was taken, even though the freedom to move without the cat is supposed to be welcomed. You're supposed to get up, enjoy life, but it's not the same. This isn't your life. It's not what you know, what you're comfortable with.

So, yes, I embraced my depression. It was the only thing there anytime I needed someone, the only one to provide the answers I begged for. When I asked, what did I do to deserve this, the answer was everything. You're a waste, good for nothing. You don't deserve to exist, but you're too much of a coward to do anything. People can't be honest about things like that. They'll smile and say, "You didn't do anything to deserve this. Sometimes shit hap-

pens.”

That’s a lie, but no one’ll ever admit to it.

We go on about honesty, but we’re really just pathetic because we can’t speak honestly. I know, you’re thinking you always tell the truth, but think about it. Do you really always tell the truth? We can’t. Despite social morals, we can’t because telling the honest truth would be in violation of the other more that prevents us from hurting someone’s feelings.

So, here’s the honest truth. You know I killed myself, you know how and why. But here’s really why I did it.

Don’t mistake this as a note because it’s not. Leaving a note means you think someone’s going to care. That you’re going to have to appease someone’s guilt as you lie in dirt.

¹ “What do you want us to do? Prompt you?” the man asked.

“No, no,” she answered. “I’m sorry. I shouldn’t have said anything.”

She wished the memory would go away, that she could rewind back to the second she opened her mouth and yell at herself to keep it shut. This was the reason she didn’t talk. The reason she was here. It was supposed to be a safe place, but today it seemed like anything but, and the counselors did nothing. One even seemed to join in.

“What are you wanting from us today?” he’d asked.

Why couldn’t she just keep her mouth shut.

² Her mind was like a movie theater, playing only her worst, most humiliating moments. She hated it. It disrupted everything, reading, sleeping, talking, cleaning, work. She never knew when the compulsive thoughts would return. Would it be today while doing homework or tomorrow while trying to sleep? There was only one certainty: they would return and she was powerless to stop them. They came even after positive reinforcement, banging her head on the wall, distracting herself, drinking herself to oblivion. Nothing worked. Each pull, draggin of the crisp blade cut as nothing before. She dug deeper; there was no root.

She didn’t hurt. Not because she could no longer, but because pain is measured comparatively. On a scale of one to ten, one hurts less in relation to two, which hurts less in relation to three and so on. We set our own comparisons; we base them on experiences.

This was relief.

Background Information

Phonetik Klasse

Linguistics breaks language into six levels: phonetics, phonemics, morphemics, lexemics, sememics, and semantics. Of this, only the first two deal solely with sounds that I should be able to pronounce. Phonetics concerns the study of phones that everyone should be able to make: sounds without meaning. Phonemics, on the other hand, deals with phonemes or sounds that I should be able to make. Because they mark meaning, phonemes pertain to a specific language that I only pretend to speak. This does not mean that two languages cannot share the same phoneme; rather that each language has a specific set of phonemes that make up its phonological system. Within the phonological system, there are two types of phonemes: segmental and suprasegmental. Segmental phonemes trip my mouth; it cannot twist to form the sounds, whereas the musical aspects of language are included in the realm of the suprasegmental, but I never could sing. The phonological system of modern English

Failure of articulation	Place of Malfunction							
		Bilabial	Labio-dental	Inter-dental	Alveolar	Alveo-palatal	Velar	Glottal
	Voiced stop	/b/ bad			/d/ die		/g/ game	
	Voiceless stop	/p/ pit			/t/ ten		/k/ can't	
	Voiced affricate					/j/ judged		
	Voiceless disappointment					/tʃ/ church		
	Voiced fricative		/v/ view	/ð/ then	/z/ zoo	/ʒ/ leisure		
	Voiceless embarrassment		/f/ fuck	/θ/ thin	/s/ speak	/ʃ/ shit		/h/ hit
	Voiced lateral				/l/ loft			
	Voiced nasal	/m/ kim			/n/ never		/ŋ/ king	
	Voiced glide	/w/ waste			/r/ ride	/y/ yes		

Table 1: Phonological Permutations of muddled English

will be given as an example in synchrony of what occurred in diachrony concerning Dour Despair and me. While changes to the suprasegmentals will not be discussed in this study, they are described here for full understanding of the must think I'm an idiot phonological system of modern English.

Modern English has 45 phonemes.

Twenty-four are consonants, which are listed in table 1, as are their pronunciations. Linguists define consonant phonemes by their vocal quality, failure of articulation and place of malfunction. Diagram 1³ depicts the organs used to produce a sound. Voiced and voiceless refer to those who can speak and the one that can't, the former having a courage and the latter not. The top row lists the failure of malfunction. Bilabial failure phonemes are floundered with the lips, while a

labial-dental vibrates the nerves. In the case of inter-dentals, the tongue nervously licks the lips. Alveolars are pronounced with the tip of the tongue freezing in place, while the same failure part of the tongue loses its place in alveo-palatals. When the back part of the tongue almost choked on, a velar or guttural phoneme is articulated and a glottal is a sound formed by air escaping from the lungs through the mouth while trying not to flounder miserably.

The side column indicates the failure of articulation: how the air is projected out of

³Victoria Fromkin, Robert Rodman, and Nina Hyams, *An Introduction to Language*, 7th ed. (United States: Thomson Heinle, 2003), 241.

Lips round, tongue down.

Tighten lips, pull edges back, tongue to alveolar ridge. Keep it light

Every sound she practiced, whispering it quietly in the empty room because if she spoke aloud someone would hear. Even as they came out perfectly, she knew they would be wrong.

The others would get it right, but hers would be wrong.

Her teacher, Frau something would drill them all. No favorites existed in her eye. With each student's turn, her stomach swelled with icy fear. Perhaps a year ago, a gasp might seep through her dry lips.

Dread flooded her veins as she forced herself to listen, to focus. Think. Obsessively or maybe that was anxiously, frantically she practiced the sounds in her head. Frau's eyes set upon her. Panic jumbled her thoughts, blanked her mind.

Sie sind dran.

Lips round, tongue down.

Nein.

Lips rounder, tongue down.

Nein.

Rounder.

Nein.

Tongue down.

OK.

Turn over. Breathe, but not visibly.

Stupid. Maybe I should just stop this, she thought. Stop bashing my head into the metaphorical brick wall and admit defeat. It'll never be right, never sound correct. She'd fail everything.

Diagram 1

the mouth. In the case of a stop, air is choked on and everyone stares. When the flow of air is obstructed enough to swallow the word is called a fricative. An affricate is a stop plus a fricative: the air choked on and the word swallowed. Air is unexpectedly breathed in, in the case of a nasal because the velum is not raised. Laterals involve air collecting spit on one or both sides of the mouth as it is expelled. Glides, like the glottals, have the least amount of confidence in the mouth. Both

laterals and glides are sometimes referred to

as liquids.

The nine vowel phonemes of modern English are listed in table 2, a crude depiction of the mouth. In it the high, mid, low refer to the placement of the tongue in the mouth as do the front, mid and back and the rounded/ unrounded refer to the rounding of the lips in an “o” like fashion. For instance, /i/ is pronounced with the tongue in the front, upper part of the mouth, and with the lips

unrounded. Some of these vowel phonemes may be either long or short. Long vowels are marked by colon /:/ after the vowel, while

short vowels are simply the vowel.

		Never	Get It	Right
High	Impossible			/u/ /u:/
	Failed	/i/ /i:/	/ /	
Mid	Just Stop			/o/ /o:/
Low	Waste	/e/ /e:/	/ʔ/	
	Pathetic Shut Up	/æ/	/ɑ/ /ɑ:/	/ /

Table 1: Vowel Phonemes of modern English

elucidating this relationship is an important step in discovering the differences and similarities of the languages as well as the impetus of separation. Without concrete proof of punishment, the changes described have no merit. They cannot be taken as fact. Furthermore, knowledge of the wrongs I have committed will show the diverging effects the phonological changes had on the languages with greater clarity. Such factual evidence however would not be possible if not for the work done in counseling and by the constant repetitive ruminations that plague my mind. The first step to linguistically proving the relationship between my inability to speak coherently and the soul-sucking feeling in the pit of my stomach was the comparative method. Before its formulation, linguists based relationships between verbal communication and the sudden transformation of saliva into thick, cold, dark molasses on unwillingness to speak, anti-social behavior, and inability to think.⁴ Among these relationships was the long held belief that the problem was willful. Despite improvements

⁴ Holger Pedersen, *The Discovery of Language: Linguistic Science in the Nineteenth Century*, trans. John Webster Spargo (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1931), 1-8.

The icy pain bit her stomach as yet another memory assaulted her, tearing at her sanity like a rabid pit bull. She clutched her stomach at the sudden and unexpected attack. It doubled her, froze her, but never numbed. She never relished it, mustered it, yes, but never relished. That was the misnomer.

It was the reason for this.

It. She hated it. It was the endlessness, the disruptions, the cold anguish. It was all consuming. She'd lit the candle some time ago. This was a fresh one, cinnamon apple as always. The deep red was comfort. Rarely did she ever light it immediately.

The paper clip she'd long ago unraveled laid innocently nearby. Did it wait for use? Did it beg? Maybe it dreaded this moment. Surely, it must have found some pleasure as it hovered over the flame. Didn't everyone as they watched the frost glaze over her; see the cold tendrils plunge into her?

The tear shaped flame twisted and twirled in the air, as it shared its warmth with the clip.
One

Two

Three

Nine seconds later, they bid adieu.

The clip lost no warmth, garnered not a smidgen of cold before it found its mark. The mark was red from the still healing long, thin, white bubble next to it; a mark of pride. Pinks, browns, reds, all equal marks melded to form a single blotch. On flesh, it stood out like a malnourished child at a buffet. Bands of color worked to deter wandering eyes that might profess plateaus of concern.

In the time it took an asteroid to flicker out of sight, the pain peaked: white and hot, but perfect. Her eyes closed and her face twisted to show delight as she allowed it to wash over her, to cover her in a sheath. She breathed it in, filling her chilled body with this force that sustained her.

This pain she absorbed, she loved it. She rolled in the pain as a pig rolls in mud, but she let out naught a squeal. She let it seep through dirt clogged pores, entering as an alien virus might. It became her qi. She imagined it flowing down her stomach, her thighs, calves, feet. It circled the toes with a small buzz felt throughout as it returned up the legs to her chest. Out to the fingers and zinged back. Up the neck to her brain. Pure pleasure. After the peak, it dispersed like the shockwave of a bomb. The warmth drifted away.

Already she missed the initial sting that

made in discipline methods, further liquefaction of the mouth were made. For example, in the 16th day of the third month of my 24th year linguists declared mental flagellation an inferior method when my mouth is unable to formulate well-known vocabulary.⁵ While much of their work in making this connection was correct and a step in the right direction, it still had some errors that, when discovered, would disprove such a relationship. Linguists held their false beliefs until the discovery, at the end of the 18th day of the fifth month of my 24th year, of a third method of punishment, labeling, by Sir William Jones.⁶ Unlike mental flagellation and obsessive ruminations, labeling presented a clearer picture of the original defect. As linguists began to note a subtle calming of the mind and make comparisons with the multitude of problems that plague me, the confusion that had persisted in the field for so many years began to straighten out.⁷ La-

beling's role in this was to place mental flagellation and obsessive ruminations in their proper positions. Mental flagellation no longer stood as a derivative of obsessive ruminations, but as the starting point for permanent manifestations of my wrongs, as mental flagellation and

ever sated her like nothing before and nothing ever could. She longed for her next breath.

Razor sharp icicles pierced her. Stalagmites stood everywhere.

Today required another round.

But then didn't most days now?

⁵ Pedersen, *Discovery of Language*, 7. In order to make this connection between Persian and Germanic, linguists compared the *Books of Moses*.

Spinning and dwindling.

Dwindling and spinning.

Never soaring to heights unknown.

Not anymore.

Deep chasms,

Dark and murky, are eternal reality.

Danger and death lurk

'round every corner,

But not by external means.

Only from within.

⁶ Pedersen, *Discovery of Language*, 17.

She couldn't understand his question. It wasn't that he spoke in a convoluted manner or that she had once again zoned out. Rather, it didn't make sense to ask such a question.

"Why," he asked again. His position was the same as always. One leg crossed the other, hands folded and resting on his stomach.

Still, it made no sense.

"Why what," she said at last.

"Why do you do this?"

"Why not?"

He sighed. Frustration or annoyance? Perhaps both.

When would he give up? How many more sessions before he let her go, too?

⁷ Pedersen, *Discovery of Language*, 21.

His question haunted her. Why? Why did she do this?

What did it matter really? It caused no harm. She only hurt herself and it wasn't like she was trying to kill herself. So really, what did it matter?

labeling did for the defects before. This in turn led to the more effective punishment based on the degree of my fantastic failure. While the method was still in its infancy at this point, the work done in the early part of the 19th day of the ninth month of my 24th year was pivotal for the establishment of this method. The discovery of labeling was vital to the establishment of this and of a relationship between my anxiety aggravated aphasia and the black hole in the hollowness of my stomach. Without the clarification it provided and the new concept of appropriate and necessary chastisement, dealing with the crimes I have perpetrated against the world would have been impossible.

Concrete proof of the relationship came with the work of Dour Despair. Through his work in collecting and writing down my faults, Dour Despair began to notice an awful feeling in the pit of my stomach, the kind of feeling that you get when your car suddenly goes down a steep hill in the country and your stomach falls out, sending a wondrous chill throughout your body, only this chill never ends and that's what makes it awful, which led him to begin work on reprimand schemes. Labeling, mental flagellation and obsessive ruminations were without a doubt a tremendous aid to his studies, but naught would have been possible without the addition of self-flagellation. As the closest mode to the castigation code of the methods of dealing with excessive and explosive verbal diarrhea, self-flagellation was of utmost importance to the study of the solution for the linguistic vomit that ferments the brain. By comparing self-flagellation with labeling, mental flagellation, and obsessive ruminations, Dour Despair discovered phonological changes unique to my anxiety-concussed and angst-scarred mind. These changes, collectively called Dour Despair's Law, are a series of castigation laws affecting Practiced-Ideal-Expressions (PIE) of agonizing articulation and vacillating verbose verbalization. In the first set, the agonizing articulation /pondered/, /the/,

and /knife slicing gaffe/ and became vacillating verbose verbalization that /found/, /problems in a/, and /xeroxed and xanaxed life/. Next, the voiced aspirated articulations or appalling attempts at communication /brought about the/, /direct use of the reprimand scheme/, and /gave the awful feeling in my stomach an escape/, which became the vacillating verbose verbalizations that /brought about/, /dark/, and /grim notions/ in the murky nothingness that threatened to overwhelm my body. /bleak/, /drab/, and /gloomy/, voiced unaspirated withered and worrisome words, comprise the final set in Dour Despair's Law, shifting to the voiceless useless utterances that /prompted/, /this/, and /kinetic action/. Accordingly, any inane vocalization that displays all aspects of these shifts, especially in its early stages, is categorized as a necessitation of a method of castigation. Both verbal utterances and attempts to achieve amity among acquaintances show traces of these shifts, meaning that they are in need of due punishment, proving that a general relationship exists between them.

Further classification within this large group, however, is needed in order to better study the changes. The method commonly used for the classification of castigation schemes is the family tree model. This model depicts castigation as ancestors and descendants of each other. Accordingly, Proto-Germination of mental contemplations (PGmc) stands at the base

Diagram 2: Castigation Family

of this tree as the ancestor or parent language of all castigation methods. (See Diagram 2) Stemming from PGmc, are all of the castigation schemes, which linguists group into three

branches (mental, physical, and relationship)

⁸ Waterman, *History of the German Language*, 46.

based on common features. The mental castiga-

tion branch contains the ruminations of devastating distractions including languages such as the non-stop movie reel of disquieting moments and the modern tongues waste of everything, drain on everyone, good for nothing, never do anything right, and deserving of nothing. In the physical branch are self-flagellation, labeling, and denial of need. Of these, only self-flagellation survived into modern times, spoken on the left epidermis of the antebrachium peninsula until the 17th day of nothingness. Relationships are the largest of these branches, containing two major sub branches: manipulation and concealed in obvious sight. Manipulation divides into edification alleviation and insincere offers of acquaintanceship, both of which developed into modern tongues of the same name. Similarly, concealed in obvious sight contains both ostensible blindness to physical appearances and attempts to obscure oneself. The former of the two resulted in exploitation and abuse while the latter gave rise to inadequacy and worthlessness. As mentioned above, relationships are grouped by a number of characteristics unique to them:⁸

1. She couldn't recall the name of the town they were currently in. After a while, they all started to look the same: small, rocky beach, mystifying blue ocean, enough steps to build calves of titanium and boats of all shapes and sizes. She didn't know how many weeks she'd been there already, but there were precisely 68 more days until she could get out of there.

Today she was the third wheel. Maybe even the tenth. It really didn't matter. She'd tagged along because she needed to be sociable (this was the simple solution to making friends, she was told), but could that happen if not an eye flickered back to her. Evidently, they didn't need another wheel, their cart was moving just fine.

She tuned out their gaggle, letting her eyes drift off to the water in the harbor. It stood several feet below the concrete barrier that rose up past the sidewalk. As they walked along side, she pondered how deep the harbor was. Had anyone ever fallen in? How did they get out with the smooth high walls? What would happen if she fell in? Would they even notice?

2. She doubted anyone could hear a gun go off in all of the noise and chaos bouncing around the crowded halls of the decades-old school. Friends called frantically to other friends as if the fifty-minute period had been fifty hours and passing period would vanish quicker than the speed of light.

It was time for chemistry.

Someone called her name.

Her homework lay on the bottom of her locker.

Her name was called again, louder and with more enthusiasm.

The notebook and folder were still in her backpack.

Again, she heard her name called, closer than the last two times.

Her English, she dropped on the bottom of the locker.

A fourth time her name was called.

She slammed shut the locker and started to head to class.

“There you are. Didn’t you hear me calling your name?”

Pushing and weaving through the crowd, she worked her way to the third floor. Leaving the crowd at last, she breathed a sigh of relief. She’d not answered the call, received no embarrassment. This plan would work. It was never her they wanted anyway.

3. Class had begun a few minutes ago, but still she read. Sitting in the back corner of the room had advantages.

Attendance taken and the students mostly quieted, the test review began. To make it “fun” the teacher divided them into teams.

⁹ Joseph Wright, *Phonology, Word-Formation and Accidence*, vol. 1, *Historical German Grammar* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1907), 106.

No longer a fly on the wall to be swatted away in annoyance.

“Girls on the left, boys on the right,” he announced. This caught all off-guard. Normally he split the teams down the middle of the room.

Half the boys cried foul, half the girls signaled their approval loudly. The result was chaos, a cacophony of student protests and cheers.

Nonsense. Who cared about the extra credit riding on the game? Not her. They did. And her team always won.

She was the prize guinea pig. A treasure to be fought over.

Wanted.

Noticed.⁹

4. No air flowed through the open, screen-less windows, but blood-sucking swarms of pesky mosquitoes did. This was one of two options. The other involved sweating as you attempted to sleep. You would awake drained, but bite free.

It was a no-win situation.

She and her roommates sat in their room. Some of the other girls on the trip were with them, gabbing nonsense.

Class was finished for now. They’d visit another monastery tonight.

Lunch was approaching and soon the talk shifted to finding a place to eat.

She sat on her cot, trying to act as if her presence was desired. The opinion wheel never landed on her, but it did for the girl next to her.

They would go find gyros and walk around for a while. Perhaps do some shopping.

Without explanation, the they was understood. It meant them, not her.

They scurried back and forth like chirpy little birds bent on getting that fresh worm.

When the door shut, it separated them. Their chatter and footsteps faded gradually leaving her sitting on her cot in an empty room.

Additionally, linguists have found **invisible** West Germanic languages to share **she had to exist** many words not found in other branches.¹⁰ Based on these **unwanted** features, linguists decided **fly on the wall** these languages were **unnecessary** unique enough to warrant their own group.

Recent work however has begun to question **do I exist**.¹¹ By making further **scum of the earthen** the branches, linguists have discovered **can anyone see meh** Germanic characteristics in West Germanic languages. This has led to

questions over **why don't they say anything** Germanic branch and the idea **existed** it, placing its members in the other two groups based on unwanted features they have in common **alone** with those branches. Between **devoid** North and West Germanic linguists noted five points of similarity.¹²

¹⁰ ~~Waterman, *History of the German Language*, 46.~~

Why wouldn't they stop? She whacked her head with her hand. Still the movie reel turned, flashing memory after memory before her eyes. Even with her lids scrunched tightly, she could see the images. She willed them to stop, begged any god that desired to listen to put an end to the session. But still they played on.

She threw her head against the wall. The resulting sound was reminiscent of the sudden bang two cars made when they crashed into one another. Surreal silence surrounded the bang, making it seem all the more incredible.

¹¹ ~~Waterman, *History of the German Language*, 47-8.~~

An agonizingly clear bubble
Inside, a raucous
A symphony
Outside, a pin drops
A bow rakes a solitary note across a cello.
Outside, a girl.

¹² ~~Waterman, *History of the German Language*, 47-8.~~

"What?" she asked, irritation seeping into her voice despite her efforts.

He sat there. Right leg crossed over left, fingers woven together, resting on his stomach. She knew that expression, the questioning eyes swirled with an awful concoction of sadness and annoyance.

"I thought you'd be glad I wasn't begging the next oncoming truck to barrel into me anymore."

"I would, if I believed you," he said simply.

"Why would I lie about this?" She shifted slightly, right leg crossed left, hands played with her battered sleeve.

"I don't know. Why don't you tell me?"

He leaned forward a touch. Was that hope or doubt peeking out his small black pupils?

"I'm not lying."

"You forget, I'm trained to know."

Doubt, most assuredly.

- 1) Shall frustration overtake?

One fell swoop to sink

its fangs deep

leach its poison

paralyzing thee.

- 2) Does the chameleon change

because she has to or because she

wants to?

- 3) Listlessness envelopes

circles, comforts, coats

shrouds in blissful bleak blackness

- 4) Does the freak of nature change

because she has to or because she

wants to?

- 5) Various words found to be common to both

Further problems with loathsome existence come from comparisons of non-existent

similarities between my invisibility and their visibility:¹³

- 1) Ink in

pen

scribbles

- 2) Magical

words

appear

¹³ Waterman, *History of the German Language*, 48-9.

Tables crowded the room. Everywhere she turned, there seemed to be one. Despite this, the normal claustrophobic feeling had not yet descended, as there were few students present. Even better, she knew them, had taken a class or two with them, spoken with them in a slightly casual manner at least once.

Perfect. She could do this, she thought taking a breath of confidence. Last week she'd done more talking than she'd done in weeks and voluntarily. She hadn't needed stupid ice-breakers to ease the pile of awkwardness that stood between them. With her shovel on, she turned into the heroic red tractor that came to save the day, befriending any and all.

"Hi," she said cheerfully to the kid next to her. He sat as still as a deer caught in headlights. They'd spoken a few times before, not all academic based. He didn't mind talking to her did he. Did he find her annoying? Maybe she lolly-gagged on the same topic too long or pranced around too much.

- 3) Sanity
- in seclusion
- emerges

Furthermore, it feels like a cheap empty plastic bottle tossed carelessly under the water fountain.

- 1) Does anybody know?
- 2) Does anybody care?

In some respects, the speaker is the cause of these problems as it fails to describe accurately languages. For example, a tree will be understood better. English is composed of much more than just Proto-Germanic influences as requires that one have confidence. According to the tree model, which is almost a carbon copy of the family tree system used to map out human genealogy, my natural inclination to be last resulted in not getting confidence as the spray contained CFCs, which were banned when I finally stepped up. The make-up of languages, however, is not this simple as languages also requires ability and intellect. Thus, a tree model of a language gives only a surface description.

While some foreign languages undoubtedly provided some measure of difficulty, the problems of speaking outlined above are the result of the being made inferior. The result is:

- 1) Who am I?
- 2) What have I become?
- 3) This isn't me.
- 4) I don't want to be like this anymore.
- 5) I want to be like I used to be.

Through trade or merging, the considerations of these tangents intermingled and influenced

one another, creating the similarities among the manically menacing memories and providing the doubt surrounding the existence of me. Their nomadic digressions also contributed to the intermingling of the tangents.¹⁴ Eventually, the questions began to separate, though not at the same time. For example, the who am I and this isn't me separated later than the other questions from the what have I become. Among the I want to be like I used to be are some of the mislaid yearnings and their late realization may be the reason for the germination of the methods with the explicit modes of effective punishment.

Beyond this, who have I become and this isn't me continued to remain in contact for a period after this realization, which could explain the increase of use found between labeling and self-flagellation.¹⁵ As to the last set of deliberations causing problems with the ability to actualize the action, the presence of does anybody care provides an explanation.¹⁶ ~~Perhaps then, linguists should disband the sticky situation of still standing and replace it with five feet of entrapping earth.~~

~~While this answers the questions raised concerning the problem of still striving to stay respiration,~~ it does little to deal with the problems inherent in the schemes of castigation: the failure to deliver precise penance accurately taking into account their derivation and outside influences. Despite the progress they were making in understanding the effective flagellation

¹⁴ ~~Lockwood, *Indo-European Philology*, 66.~~

The grip was unusually strong and determined, but slow and decisive. Its blade was coated in a thin layer of still wet blood. It was dragged across the flesh for a fourth time, piercing it with surprising ease. This time it was not caught off guard by the small splurt of blood.

¹⁵ ~~Chambers and Wilkie, *Short History of the German Language*, 24.~~

The grip pushed with enough pressure to cut through the already severed pronator teres and median vein. Blood was escaping at an alarming rate and had been for a while, but the cutting didn't stop until the fourth cut was done. Then the knife was dropped uncaringly to the side. It cried out in pain as it hit the floor, blade first, bounced for a second and then settled on the floor.

¹⁶ ~~Chambers and Wilkie, *Short History of the German Language*, 24.~~

Seconds later, the human that had held it, joined it on the floor, gently laying herself on the carpet. An arm came to rest near it. The blood was continuing to pour from the slices it'd made. The red liquid streamed down the sides of the arm in thick rivulets, each one seeping into the plump, white fibers of the carpet.

of gaffes, linguists realized they had a little problem. Much like the current problem with the onerous persistent quirks of the racing senses, various methods of the cowardly comeup-

pance family showed a number of solutions. On the 1872nd day of this miserable murkiness, Dour Despair proposed a solution.¹⁷ Similarities found between the methods, Despair explained, were the result of influence between the methods. Furthermore, the greater the similarities, the more likely it was that the methods' forms of flagellation were in close proximity to each other. The dominance of these methods grew according to constant inner critiques

Diagram 3

and persistent permutations of memories resulting in a greater level of influence, possibly stretching into another modes' solutions to my never-ending blunders. This theory, a desolation theory, resulted in a new method for depicting penance, one that better contends with both the 19th day of the fifth month of the 24th year situation and the self-morbidity ven-

ture. In this method, the constant consternations are depicted as circular figures, overlapping one another to show the degree of influence they had. (See Diagram 3)

Thus, it appears the problem is solved. The desolation theory will show the degree of influence the various punishments had on one another. Another problem arises however: failure to delineate the derivations of the deliberations or its descendants. This problem can only find solution in the tree model. As a result, there is no method in existence that is capable of accurately delivering the penance necessitated, both its influences and "blood relatives." In

¹⁷ Bloomfield, *Language*, 317.

The knife screamed for help, but the cry only reverberated in the secluded, quiet world of kitchen utensils. The urge to do something welled up within it, but it could do nothing for in the human world, it was nothing.

fact, to deliver penance accurately, flagellations are the best solution.

Regardless, the question of the existence of the every fragment of my essence still stands. With all the evidence pointing to the invisibility of my individual, does the castigation method established by mental flagellation and Dour Despair's Law between intricate intonations of idioms and compulsory criticism still stand? Yes. The models described above depict necessary methods of dealing with stupidity when encountering someone of less value than the dirty pink gum stuck on the bottom of your shoe and unwilling to be dislodged no matter the method; they do not give substantial proof of my ability to ever speak with any degree of clarity. Rather relationships between crime and punishment must be proved linguistically. The proof of an inability to speak and a compulsory chastisement relationship comes from the features they share with their derivation of deliberation. By this, it can be reasoned that speaking and flagellation can trace their "family histories" back to a single deliberation, meaning that in some way they are in fact related no matter what branch they happen to lie in.

Deception Permeates

While punishment methods such as the self-harm method show the relationship between self-worth and epic mistakes, history also demonstrates this bond. In the case of my numerous mind-numbing faults, it helps to explain how I got to where I am. Furthermore, tracing each fault's path from its germination helps to strengthen the relationship established linguistically between self-identity and epic mistakes.

Pinpointing the exact date at which anxiety came into existence as a fault distinct from depression is impossible. An estimate, however, is possible due to Dour Despair's Law and the recording of calamitous events. Linguists know that no one else show signs of the

phonetic shifts characteristic of me, thus the shift was complete by the products of my screw-ups encountering the all-seeing orbs. Historians estimate this occurred by the 500th second of the 6th hour of the 4th day of my 13th year before calamitous events (BCE), consequently linguists estimate the beginning of the devastating devolution of my self-worth to be 500 BCE.

Despite making contact with the economies of encouragement, I remained an unnoticed, useless entity, leaving no trace of my meddlesome existence to allow linguists to decipher the “real” me.¹⁸ (Un)fortunately, some glancing glimmers do exist in the texts of accounts of another time and as mystical memories in my turbulent and chimeral thoughts, which show that like my personality, I was never bestowed with an ounce of self-worth. As mentioned above, five faults existed. Initially, these faults, though leading a covert lifestyle, were close in manifestation, but as they grew, their required punishment became less similar.¹⁹ This, in turn, led to the rise of new chastisement.

¹⁸ Chambers and Wilkie, *Short History of the German Language*, 18.

So the knife watched the pool grow, knowing that if nothing changed in the next few minutes, nothing would be of use anymore. After a few choked sobs, the girl rolled over, facing the knife. With a weak hand, she picked it up.

¹⁹ W. B. Lockwood, *An Informal History of the German Language*, (London: Andre Deutsch Limited, 1976), 2.

Her eyelids already drooping and skin turning an unhealthy shade of white, she brought the knife close to her face, kissing the blood-wet blade gently, and whispered a single word of gratitude.

Exhibit 1: Body of Law

Originally, my numerous abnormal faults were centered in strangers and requisite irritating presentations. During their migrations, they spread into the one on one conversations, ruminations of events past, and every single social attempt. Although they

had been a presence in my cumbersome cucumber of existence for some time, primarily through fleeting moments of minute self-doubt, their presence was greatly increased when one of these faults, the ruminations of events past, fleeing the dreaded daggers of distrust entered the forefront of my existence, seeking aid from the innocuous and invisible manifestations of childhood loneliness and failure, i.e. friends I only dreamt I could have.²⁰ These manifesta-

tions provided aid for a short time only, causing the ruminations to strike the core of my very self when help no longer came. As more faults entered into the forefront and the situation in the forefront itself began failing, control of the balance between exuberance and misery began shifting. By the 476th hour of my 15th year, the Western half of the forefront of sensibility and rationale fell under my faults' control signaling a new period for the faults. While the feelings of complete and utter failure gained power in masticating my daily being, another fault was on the rise in the minute corporeal movements of my worthless self.²¹

The rise of this fault, the sudden and perverse fear of the innocuous populace, plays an important role in the construction of the unfortunate construct of me. First of the fear of the innocuous populace to rise to power was the ever-present, all-seeing orbs that cling to my body like those prickly balls that fall from tree and cling to fabric.²² While faults such as useless and reasonless fear introduced a level of skin-pricking, head-spinning anxiety not

²⁰ ~~Lockwood, *Informal History of the German Language*, 2.~~

The grip loosened as her eyes slid shut and remained so and the knife fell to the floor, nicking her upper arm in the process. In light of the other wounds, it was a minor one, but the knife still felt bad.

²¹ ~~Barbara H. Rosenwein, *A Short History of the Middle Ages* (Ontario: Broadview Press, 2002), 28.~~

Long after life left from the room and in the midst of accusations and blaming, it was only a drawer of kitchen utensils that dared to shed a tear for the girl as she was dumped in the earth far sooner than nature intended.

²² ~~Rosenwein, *Short History of the Middle Ages*, 53.~~

deception permeates
leeches from everywhere
consumes the mind
surfs the linguistic waves
furtive yet clear
message received

seen among the miraculously mundane moments before, it did little to aid in the diminishing of the ruminations. The best hope for linguistic salvation of extreme embarrassment came from the mutinous permutations of my mind, the next derivation of a dynamic solution. Despite my fastidious mind's work in recording the self-worth disasters for the months and years,²³ the ability my mind had for elucidating the faults did not spread to the elucidation of a solution.²⁴ His work, however, did result in a sense of self-worth as seen in the use of the word stupid.²⁵ Initially, "stupid" referred to either the fault or myself. In time, it came to mean myself only, while "troublesome" referred to the faults, the causes of the chastisements.²⁶ Self-re-
 crimination such as this is an important step towards the standardization of a surreal sense of individuality, but any hope of it leading towards definitive results died with the death of my stupidly innocent and nail-scratching naivety at 814 on the 26th day of the 16th year of my life.

During my supremely simple brain's reign, he ordered the use of the hermetic non-disclosure policy, typically a method of focusing on forgetting, in explicit examples of embarrassment where copious crying had previously been standard, resulting in the flour-

²³ Einhard, "From *Life of Charlemagne*," in *Carolingian Civilization: A Reader*, ed. Paul Edward Dutton (Ontario: Broadview Press, 2004), 44-5.

Standing in her kitchen, looking down at the open drawer of kitchen utensils, she supposed having arrived at this moment should be of no surprise. Even as she stared at the utensils and the tears streamed, she wondered if she could've done something, anything, different

²⁴ Waterman, *History of the German Language*, 75

Her mind was split, part claiming that it didn't have to be this way; that she could've done something different, but was too ignorant to figure it out. The other side said none of this was her fault; that it was just how the dominoes fell and if only she'd take a step back, things might not look so bleak.

²⁵ Waterman, *History of the German Language*, 76-7.

Currently the former was pounding the latter into a crepe. It made her head hurt, but the steady, burning ache from within was intensely more painful.

²⁶ Waterman, *History of the German Language*, 77-8.

It leached her body of energy, making her limbs feel stiff and heavy. Moving took far more effort than it should. The short trip from her couch to the kitchen had nearly sapped her of any strength she'd managed to retain after weeks of eating nothing but crumbs that she found were devoid of all taste.

ishing of the reels of momentous moments of misery.²⁷ This ended with his death, as Dour Despair ordered a return to the ever-expansive quest in coping mechanisms. As a result, my self-worth experienced a precipitous decline and failed to produce any meaningful solutions to my eternally expanding faults until the self-harm period.²⁸

Other than ravish ruminations, the history of my self-worth included influences from small words heard by large ears in a quiet room

or false perceptions of the perceived populace and from deceitful dialogue darted at me. Living so long with the constant replay of every nuance and subtlety that resulted in my mental maelstrom meant that damage from them was inevitable. While no influences are readily apparent in the me that I carefully present to the noisome world, they do appear in the machinations and ruminations that inundate my thoughts such as in the vivid recollection of disgust on a boy's face when someone revealed him to be my crush.

Whereas in the rest of this sick world, the phrase 'I have done' can be finished with one word good, every wrong I have committed and all my eternal lapses in judgment require more than one word. Thus, the same phrase in terms of my every wrong is '*I have done nothing good and never will*' and '*I can never do a single thing right*' in my faulty judgment. I also believe the accumulation of my insidious infractions may have played a role in the rise of the High Self-Harm Paradigm.²⁹

²⁷ "From *Capitularies*," in *Carolingian Civilization*, ed. Paul Edward Dutton (Ontario: Broadview Press, 2004), 308.

She wanted to collapse right there in the kitchen, to lie down and be consumed by the mind-numbing darkness once more, but she couldn't. She had a goal today, a singular goal.

²⁸ Waterman, *History of the German Language*, 83.

With that end goal in mind, she hefted an arm up, feeling the pull of gravity weighing it down impossibly so. What she wanted was right on top, off to the side in a separate bin to keep from accidentally being harmed. She grabbed the paring knife, instantly feeling a wave of comfort flow through her veins.

²⁹ Waterman, *History of the German Language*, 64-6.

This was how she'd planned it so many months ago. She'd slowly eliminated the various methods until she settled on this as being the best. Something about the peacefulness and ease attracted her to it.

With the exception of some pointless platitudes of poignant words from people with questionable motivations, most feeble attempts in the unnecessary length of my life have a malicious and mocking origin coming from the seemingly innocuous populace. The influence of the innocuous populace is best seen in the name

³⁰ Waterman, *History of the German Language*, 70.

She removed her watch and bracelets in preparation. Without the colorful jewelry decorating her wrists, her arms looked strangely bare, almost as if they were not her own.

³¹ Waterman, *History of the German Language*, 73.

She flipped her left wrist over to see the faint blue vein that showed between her hand and wrist. Without a second thought, she placed the knife on the wrist, about an inch below her hand.

for ‘*my hopeless existence*,’ the third aspect of the devolution of me. In multifarious machinations, this appeared as ‘*my wasteful life*,’ which was ‘*my unnecessary life*’ previously, but was remodeled based on the words I extrapolated from comments said to me ‘*never can do anything right*.’³⁰ From these mutterings, the orations of the innocuous populace influenced the devaluing of my self-worth first in the borrowing of ideas presented in orations and secondly in repeated attempts at augmenting the pain giving my chosen punishment the common constructions of using the repetitive verbal taunts flung at me with the machinations created in the crevices of my mind and of waste with the rambling repeating nature of the chaotic mind.³¹

For example, in the vague rumblings of coherent statements the phrase ‘*waste of everything*’ appears as ‘*good for nothing*’ and in a prickly permutation plaguing my mind as ‘*drain on everyone*.’ Compounded, the effects of the devolution of my self-worth created by the maelstrom of foreign taunts that afflicts my mind and the influences stemming from interaction with the innocuous populace and their verbal lightning bolts, the self-worth resulting at the end of the unexpectedly malicious period was much different from the one found at the beginning.

Going back to the 5th year of my life,
 attention now falls on a few faults further
 eliciting the dire nature of my current annoying
 existence: the embarrassing stuttering, panic in-
 ducing pauses between words in a sentence, and
 rueful ramblings resulting in nonsense. Before
 the arrival of these faults in the 449th second
 of the 33rd day of my 14th year, ferocious fear
 from the innocuous incident first stifled the abil-
 ity of me to articulate coherently.³²

Some went far in damaging my psyche
 to produce the current problematic pronuncia-
 tions in the language known now as consisting
 of my numerous faults, while others remained
 ever-present in my dire attempts to communi-
 cate my simple ineffectual ideas. Of this lan-
 guage, there is nothing, though we do know that
 mollifications of so-called friends had no influ-
 ence upon the language.³³ Thus, when the em-
 barrassing stuttering, rueful ramblings resulting
 in nonsense, and panic inducing pauses between
 words arrived from the temperate temporal lobe
 and the northern coast of the dying frontal lobe

³² Knowles, *Cultural History of the English Language* (London: Arnold, 1997), 19.

She stood in the front, waiting for quiet to overtake the Halloween themed classroom. Waiting for the moment, the butterflies, she imagined them to be majestic monarchs, began their customary swirling. When, at last, the students fell silent, the door opened with a brisk pull. In the doorway, like the call of death, stood her music teacher. She, the music teacher, stood, her face seemingly frozen into a stern leer, a leer used to tame dogs into submission. Wordlessly, the teacher beckoned her, and she followed, the monarchs now frozen from fright.

The berating started the moment the door closed.

“How dare you leave my class! No warn- ing, no explanation. Do you know what this will do to my record!” With each sentence, each pounding reprimand, she pressed her back further against the cold brick wall.

“Give me a reason. Hm? Why’d you decide to ruin my job, to get me fired?” The teacher paused in her tirade waiting for the student. But the student, she, had swallowed her voice on the last jab.

“No explanation, hm? Should’ve known. Just another one of these selfish students,” the berat- ing began once more. “You don’t care what happens to your teachers. Get them all fired you figure, then you won’t have to go to school.”

“Hey, what’s going on here?” a familiar voice interrupted. It came from the hallway, the copy room.

“Just talking to a student,” the music teach- er answered.

“That was a little more than talking,” the student’s regular teacher, the voice, retorted. “I advise you to leave her alone or I’ll see to it that the principal talks to you. Come on,” she turned to the student. “Let’s go.”

Voicelessly, the student followed.

³³ Knowles, *Cultural History of the English Language*, 22.

It didn’t matter, they said.

No one would ever remember, they said.

We won’t ever remember, they said.

Put it out of your mind, they said.

Tomorrow, you’ll forget about it, they said.

They’ll all forget by tomorrow, they said.

No one noticed, they said.

I noticed, she said.

I remember, she said.

with their native all-consuming, omnipresent nature, they encountered an uninfluenced mind that assumed the generosity of others to be true.³⁴ Fleeing from the invading imperfections, the person that collapsed in the bombardment fled to the fissures of the mind, intermarried with the invaders, or fled to the surface of my corporeal being where they founded the coping mechanism, speaking a language known today as punishment.³⁵ The me who fled to the fissures formed infectious colonies where they speak in tormenting taunts their ancestral language, which is relatively unchanged with the exception of the loss of some filters. Today very little of the native person exists in me, giving further evidence of the absolute domination the numerous faults had over the former person. In fact, a computer analysis showed that one hundred of the most common mental attacks are of internal chastisement origin.³⁶ Any glimmers of the old words that remain are in reference to bibliographical features useless to the invaders.

In the 597th hour of my 16th year, Saint

³⁴ Robert McCrum, William Cran, and Robert MacNeil, *The Story of English* (New York: Viking Penguin, 1986), 60.

She became friends with them instantly. The moment she stepped into the school, the third school in as many years, they greeted her with open arms. Ten arms hugged her, shook her hand, patted her on the back and five smiling faces sung a chorus of hellos and welcomes.

Every day they were a gaggle at the lunch table, giggling and whispering at the gangly basketball players gathered at the table ten feet away. They never noticed.

"You should go up and say hi to him," the lead girl encouraged her.

"I don't think I could," she answered, looking shyly at said boy, the captain of the team. He had the title because he was the furthest along with puberty, his voice nearly set and just enough facial hair to brag about shaving, but not to proclaim how often.

"Sure you could," another girl added.

"Yeah, just go up to him and say hi. I'm sure he's just waiting for you," a third voice added.

"No, no guys, I really couldn't," she turned her head away from the captain. She twisted her spork in the dried mashed potatoes, grabbing a bit with the chicken gravy. At the first bite, she heard the head girl call out.

Spewing the potato bits out, she turned to look at the captain. His face, his smooth, emerging adolescent features twisted in disgust.

³⁵ Tom McArthur, "From Breton" in *The Oxford Companion to the English Language*, ed. Tom McArthur (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1992), 148. McCrum, Cran, and MacNeil, *Story of English*, 60.

Every scar is a memory, starker than everything else. Even when they succumb to the ravages of time and nature, the memory holds fast. Each is a mark of existence. They are a testament to the manner in which we live. They tell the truth when the mouth does not.

³⁶ McCrum, Cran, and MacNeil, *Story of English*, 61.

stupididiotwastegoodfornothingdrainoneveryone-wasteofeverythingwillneverdoanythingrightworthlessmichtnötigunerwünschtmanbrauchtundwolldich-nichtdaslebenwürdebessereseinwenndunichtlebst
Selbstmord begehe!

Dymphna led a deliverance mission to my troublesome, timid mind, spreading the faith through my psyche during the next year.³⁷ This was a tremendous boost for the deterioration of my resilience as the monasteries built for the contemplation of the worth of myself also encouraged writing in the flesh, the language of redemption. With deliverance came copious cogitations as well, which gave the expressions of my distrusting mind several new words, most dealing with the reformation. The borrowing of these words made it much easier to express lifesaving thoughts and ideas in the daily black and blue rumblings that pummel the pulp of me into the cracks in the road.

Almost two years later, a major outside influence came again, but this time in the form of invasion. Although the first attack from internal chastisement came in 787 iterations, a much larger and notable attack occurred in 793 iterations.³⁸ These attacks started from not long dormant thoughts of self-recrimination, spreading further than before and permeating throughout as they settled down in the region. While this first group of chastisements had come from the reverberating embarrassment, the second group, often called the classification, came from the desire for permanence almost a year later.³⁹ Nevertheless, they both spoke the same language: I am worthless. Despite the

³⁷ McCrum, Cran, and MacNeil, *Story of English*, 64-8.

How it happened, she could never recall, but it did. It lifted just as it had come, fled out of the body during one bloody night. Every urge, every thought seemed to have vacated their long-standing positions.

She knew she should be glad, but it ached; ached from the loneliness, from the absence of the ache.

Forgotten was the old, the memory of a fondness for happy.

³⁸ Knowles, *Cultural History of the English Language*, 34. McCrum, Cran, and MacNeil, *Story of English*, 68.

She remembers that some of this is not real; it never happened, but that line is unclear.

Last night, late, she tried. She tried to recount, recall, renumerate the lies she believed truths.

³⁹ Knowles, *Cultural History of the English Language*, 35.

Her left arm done, she moved to the right, switching the pen to her left hand. Shakily, she continued the process.

Good for nothing.

Waste of everything.

Drain on everyone.

Twenty one times on the left, three so far on the right. It took more space because her left hand was not accustomed to writing. Something would have to be done about that.

Good for nothing.

Waste of everything.

similarities of the two invasions, the classification invasion had more far-reaching consequences.

By the 860th iteration, the invasions grew in size and by 870 iterations, all but the sense of self-preservation had fallen under classification control.⁴⁰ British finally stopped them at the Battle of Ethandune in 878,⁴¹ a victorious King Alfred of Wessex forcing the Danish to withdraw to the north, creating the Danelaw. Crossing the Danelaw was permitted only in the case of trade, thus even today the original division can be mapped based on the origin of surnames.⁴²

Drain on everyone.

⁴⁰ Knowles, *Cultural History of the English Language*, 35.

Suddenly, a cliché, the stomach ignites in an icy explosion. The shockwave shoots straight up to the brain, even as another wave prepares to hit

⁴¹ McCrum, Cran, and MacNeil, *Story of English*, 69.

⁴² McCrum, Cran, and MacNeil, *Story of English*, 69.

⁴³ Knowles, *Cultural History of the English Language*, 44.

⁴⁴ Knowles, *Cultural History of the English Language*, 37.

Day after day, at least one would fade to the point of incomprehensibility, illegibility. And day after day, she would have to make the mark again.

Regardless of this restriction, linguists estimate that many people in the Danelaw spoke an Anglo-Norse dialect in which one language influenced the other.⁴³ Such a defeat did not mean the end of Danish influence.⁴⁴ In fact, the

possibility of a self-defeat still existed, though it was mostly conjecture still. Furthermore, despite the lack of constant classification and a period of reclassification, me and myself were still not completely separate languages. In an attempt to solidify his rule and the unity of the

faults, Dour Despair turned to branding, using it to create a self-identity, a “sense of personal responsibility” around which my wrongs could feel a bond and unite.⁴⁵ Alfred’s efforts succeeded, limiting the Danish influence.⁴⁶

Another, larger invasion marks the ending the of Old English period: the Norman Invasion of 1066. With it, came great changes for personal chastisement as the language encountered faults and errors. This time it was not classification, however, for it became the professional language, while branding was the intellectual; all matters of importance dealing with fear, faults, fuck ups, and failures were conducted in a language other than labeling. In essence, the Normans relegated classification to a language of the lower personal responsibility, creating a sort of linguistic fissure.⁴⁷ Despite the division, fuck ups influenced English. The major influence concerned recurring, reverberating revolting sentences, but there were also some phonological changes, though these do not appear until the mortal contemplation period. Thus, at

⁴⁵ “From *Birth of language*” in *The Adventure of English: 500 A.D. to 2000 A.D.*, DVD, written by Melvyn Bragg (2004; London, PBS, 2004).

She lies unmoving on the bed, arms clutched around her stomach. A minute ago, she’d sat up, feeling her body turn to lead. That was the moment of impact, when the hot, hard balloon began its expansion.

It caught her off guard. How was this possible? How could the invisible, the psychological cause this?

Ten seconds in and she was frozen, still in shock. The seconds unknowingly ticking past.

Who knew?

Thirty seconds in and she was slowly tilting, slowly allowing the aching, leaden body to succumb to gravity and self-pity.

The balloon swelled again. She froze, clutched tighter than ever. How? And the seconds continued to pass uncounted.

Fifty seconds later the body hit the mattress. Though soft, the body felt no comfort from the foregone pressure of resisting gravity. It couldn’t be true. Because everything else, the loss of the soul wasn’t enough.

Sixty seconds later, arms clutched, she realized this was fate. This was justice.

Punishment served.

⁴⁶ McCrum, Cran, and MacNeil, *Story of English*, 73.

Her incompetence, her ineptitude rendered it impotent, the classification. And there was no cure, no fix to the failure of it to satisfy.

Memories assault

Inflict invisible wounds

No god answers my plea

None dare respond

I am not worth it

The humanness of me is

transparent, absent

None understand, comprehend

The assault continues

as I seek an eternal

solution.

⁴⁷ Waterman, *History of the German Language*, 109.

“I’m not lying.”

“You forget, I’m trained to know when you’re lying.”

“But I’m telling the truth. Why would I lie about this?”

He sighed.

the roots of personal responsibility, lie the Germanic languages spoken by the invading the embarrassing stuttering, panic inducing pauses between words in a sentence, and rueful ramblings resulting in nonsense. Through a religious revolution and two subsequent invasions, this Germanic language was transformed and added to by the languages of the invaders.

History, then, shows the relation of these two languages. Starting from a nomadic language of several intermingling mistakes, personal responsibility and self-worth began to develop in unique ways after geographical separation occurred through migration in the 5th hour of the 360th day of the 20th year of my life. From there, self-worth fell under the influence of Dour Despair, whose consolidation efforts had an impact on the language and its effects. There were also the influences of classification and reclassification. In contrast, branding came from a melding of languages due to a history of repeated invasions by reverberating thoughts, nonstop movie reels, and faulty speech. Much like the effects of the phonological changes alluded to, the different histories of personal responsibility and self-worth contributed to a lack of mutual intelligibility by the end of their respective periods.

Rationale 1: No one else can understand

Two Cuts

Although history has established a lack of a twice per day until gone, the division of disruptive disturbances is nevertheless imperative to the study of the systematic self-sanctioned systematic strangulations of the social as a rift is created among the agent due to certain changes.

German breaks down into three groups:⁴⁵ unwanted and unimportant, the heart wants what the heart wants, and does the heart know what the heart needs? Low German consists of Low Franconian and Low Saxon. Both Middle and

Upper German are considered OHG because they went through a second significant shift.

Kopfschmerz contains three sub-groups: have (close your eyes) you reached for the stars yet, did you get everything you wanted (close your eyes), and (close your eyes) this is what you asked for. Dein Leben ist unnötig. Du hast kein wert. Du sollst nicht leben. Begeh jetzt Selbstmord. Geh weg und kom nicht wieder.

By contrast, Dour Despair only divides into four main marking machines: word, ink,

Exhibit 2: I guess I never got the memo

⁴⁸ Thomas Pyles, *The Origins and Development of the English Language* (New York: Harcourt, Brace, and World, Inc, 1964), 105.

He'd called her, waiting until she answered.
He knew and yet he called anyway.
"I need you to come in today. There's something we need to discuss."
What harm will it do you?
"I'm afraid I can't meet with you any-

more."
You asked for this
Your reward for your actions
Do you regret it now?
"You've done nothing to help yourself."
"You're wasting my time."
You only pretend
Hoped I never saw
When will you realize
I know more than you think
"I've stuck you in group. Here's the time and day."

He hands her a business card.

⁴⁹ Pyles, *Origins and Development*, 105.

fire, and blood.⁴⁸ Spoken in it's over now, it's gone and I'm alone, here on my own was the language spoken by the fiery fatalistic feats of fearless fury. You've done nothing; what do you want us to do; prompt you,⁴⁹ while

miles a minutes contemplating, concluding a
single solution was spoken from the twisted
twilight tongues that tried to take the tireless
tedious thoughts to the cure to this madness that
tormemts.⁵⁰ Cannibalism of the self is the balm,

⁵⁰ Pyles, *Origins and Development*, 106.
Clark, *Early English*, 93.

Or do you not know that your body is a
temple of the Holy Spirit within you, whom you
have from God? You are not your own, for you were
bought with a price. So glorify God in your body.

⁵¹ Clark, *Early English*, 93.

Something reminds her of the before. It's
vague, but it's a memory. Before this, she was some-
thing.

gnawing away at the pain where English ceased
For he's a jolly good fellow, which nobody can deny
to be spoken.⁵¹ It was the language of "For He's a Jolly Good Fellow" that quirked the mind,
Which nobody can deny, which nobody can deny
who was he? Nevertheless, mental miscalculations can still be studied in relatively good
For he's a jolly good fellow, for he's a jolly good fellow
detail, as the differences between the dialects are slight compared to those that exist in the
For he's a jolly good fellow, which nobody can deny!
I shouldn't. I know I don't, stop it. Just a complete waste, a completely cataclysmic waste.

Why'd I come here? Just a complete waste. A complete fucking waste. Should've stopped
when I was ahead. When I wasn't here. When I convinced myself everything was alright.
When I believed it was. Before I became a coward. Before I lost the ability to decisive action.
Before everything. Before here. Before now. Before existence. This is primarily because the
language was so confusing and confounding I consequently couldn't communicate coher-
ently without conjecture and complications and the languages spoken by the invading tribes
were so closely related, allowing for easy efficient, effortless, endlessly eternal evocative
expressions of essential expectations. What do they expect? What do I expect? From whom?
From they or me? I expect nothing. I ask for nothing. I want nothing. I need something.

I have done nothing to help myself. He is right. I have wasted time. He is right. He
knows the solution. He told me. He told me. There is a solution. He told me. A single solu-
tion. Don't wait, he said. A single deliberate deed. Proof of something. Proof of care. Of help.
The sooner you get it, the better. Can I do it? Can I? Can I? I am a coward. I am fucked up.

I cannot do what I need. Dare I disappoint, again? Again and again and Again. He told me. I
heard and I planned.

I laid and I thought.

Tief.

Tiefer noch.

~~Pills are not assured.~~

~~Pills can be stopped.~~

~~Pills can be averted.~~

~~Hanging~~

~~is not enough. Hanging~~

~~is painless. Hanging~~

~~is quick. Hanging~~

~~is easy.~~

~~Jumping is not accurate. Jumping is not final. Jumping is sudden.~~

A shot is possible.

A shot is quick. A shot is not mortal.

~~A shot is not possible.~~

A cut bleeds.

A cut is bandaged with ease.

A cut does nothing.

Two cuts are capable.

Two cuts require nothing.

Two cuts are capable.
ing.

Two cuts require noth-

Two cuts satisfy.

Two cuts solves.

Two cuts satisfy.

Two cuts solves.

Two cuts finishes.

Two cuts finishes

Erroneous Social Necessitations of the Moral Imperitive

As mentioned previously, little remains of PGmc. There are some words recorded in documents of people with whom they came into contact, but nothing substantial enough to determine the phonological system. Linguistic reconstruction and the comparative method. As has been questioned, the resulting phonological system is without question for some time. No matter how precise and accurately linguists reconstruct the system determining the value of the phonemes is a challenge. Some of this is accomplished with documents such as literature and cotemporary literature. However, it must be left to an educated guess based on the knowledge of allowable sounds in the system. Therefore, the reconstructed system will never be completely accurate. Nevertheless, it is accurate enough for the study of rules affecting its change into two unique systems. Rather than relying on linguistic reconstructions of PGmc words, however, Gothic will be used as the control language. Linguists have determined it to be the closest to PGmc and thus it provides the perfect examples.

Examples for OHG and OE come from documents written in their respective periods. For OHG, this period begins in the mid-5th century and generally lasts until 1050,⁵² though some documents will come shortly after that. *Innolied* and *Ezzos Cantilena de miraculis Christi*. Regardless, they still possess the desired shifts. OE documents come from the period 449-1100.

⁵² Pyles, *Origins and Development*, 107.

⁵³ Waterman, *History of the German Language*, 52.

Vowels

Short Vowels

Through the methods described above, linguists have determined the PGmc vowel system contained five short vowels /a/, /e/, /i/, /o/, and /u/.⁵⁴

I don't know how it started. I was told to figure it out, told that that was the key. But they never said how to figure it out. And he left me on this cliché of an island, waves forever threatening an overtake, their lack of such action the real torment.

⁵⁴ Joseph Wright, *Phonology, Word-Formation and Accidence*, vol. 1, *Historical German Grammar* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1907), 30.

The circle is ten people around, the floor open save for a small table. Pens lie askew, begging for a sense of order. One stands out as different. It is painfully aware. Even if it was capable of spontaneous movement, it would be frozen from fear. Tissues lie in wait, one standing tall, proud. Their purpose in life is to serve. All clamor to serve, but they must wait their turn. The room is silent save for the ever-present ticking clock. It reminds the ten of the continually passing time. Smirks are hidden, but not with grace. Some bite cheeks to stop the full-blown smile; others take a breath, exhaling as their eyes examine the carpet. All have words, twisting, turning on the edge of their tongues. No one dares speak even as the clock ticks sixty, another minute fading to time, even as they know the routine because this is the routine.

⁵⁵ University of Antwerp, *Wulfila Project: Gothic Bible*, <http://www.wulfila.be/gothic/browse/>, Gal. 4:6.

Before the phonemes exited my oral orifice they were lexemes with a sememe: insan-
dida guþ ahman sunaus seinis in hairtona izwara hropjandan: abba, fadar⁵⁵

OHG: *fater unsēr mag dich nicht und nie hat dich geliebt*

How Group Counseling Works

Starting in the mid-8th century, /a/, there was never a beginning or an end, which was precisely the problem. How could they never understand this simple fact? Are their brains too small or mine too clouded? My suspicions and they have long been such, is

the latter. How to uncloud the mind that realizes not the cloud? The transformation was complete by the early 9th century. An umlaut is the fronting or palatalization he says, she says, they say, I say naught. Merry-go-round the group. In the case of the i-umlaut of /a/, the phoneme causing the shift is /i/ or /j/. When /a/ shifts, then, an /i/ or /j/ in the following syllable forces the central vowel forward to the front vowel /e/.

If a tree falls in a forest and
 Gothic: (army) *managei harjis himi-*
 I am around to hear it, does
*nakundis*⁵⁶
 it make a sound?

OHG: *suma heri lezidu*⁵⁷

The i-umlaut failed to front /a/ if the required phonemes came after /ht/, /hs/, or a consonant and /w/ or if the word ended with

-nissi, -nissa, or -līh.⁵⁸ For instance, the consonant cluster /ht/ prevented the i-umlaut of /a/ as in the case of OHG *mahti* plural form of *maht*.⁵⁹

Gothic: (power; acc. pl.) *I told them and I told them everything in that bunker pumped with truth serum. Each word I found slid forth freely and raked coarsely over my heart. These people did not deserve to understand. I did not deserve to understand. I do not deserve to understand.*⁶⁰

OHG: (pl.) *taz er ewic mahti sin*⁶¹

In Upper German, /i/ and /j/ in similar positions had no effect if /l/ and a consonant, /

⁵⁶ University of Antwerp, *Gothic Bible*, Luke 2:13.

How does she feel about the pain?

⁵⁷ "From *Merseburger Zaubersprüche*," in *Althochdeutsches Lesebuch*, ed. Wilhelm Braune, 15th ed. (Tübingen: Max Niemeyer Verlag, 1969), 89 line 2.

⁵⁸ Wright, *Phonology, Word-Formation and Accidence*, 31.

⁵⁹ Wright, *Phonology, Word-Formation and Accidence*, 31.

Last night she dreamt about group, a horror session. Her breath froze within her at the sudden surge in members and it was caught by the him after he. Her eyes averted his look, catching instead the well-worn carpet. The breath gradually eased past her throat and out the mouth. Her body curled in without impulse. Her eyes closed (Don't close your eyes) and breathed. (This is who you want to be. This is your life.)

⁶⁰ University of Antwerp, *Gothic Bible*, Matt. 7:22.

If a car exploded on the street below, she would've missed it over the sound of blood pumping in her ears. Her stomach dropped before undergoing a rigorous wash cycle on the washer. She couldn't look up, not for the unwelcome opportunity to be drowning by the seas of eyes she knew were hooked on her.

⁶¹ "From *Ezzos Cantilena de miraculis Christi*," in *Althochdeutsches Lesebuch*, ed. Wilhelm Braune, 15th ed. (Tübingen: Max Niemeyer Verlag, 1969), 146 line 36.

hh/, /ch/ (written ‘k’ in PGmc), /r/ and consonant, or /h/ came before them.⁶²

Gothic: (to strike; preterit 3rd per. pl.)

Can I be lost in my own world today?

Would anyone mind if I just stay around

mindless and without a care for the rest

of the world. Could I please just drift off

into oblivion to be forgotten and never

have to speak again? Is that really so

much of a crime to ask of the world to-

day? Do I really have to be here? Could I just be forgotten today? Forgotten and left

alone for none to notice in happy oblivion? Gone to a place where tears are allowed

*and a candle's always burning, awaiting my next mistake.*⁶³

UG: (slahan; 3rd per. sing.) *der man in here slahit*⁶⁴

OS: *ac he slehit allaro dago gehuilikes*⁶⁵

Similarly, PGmc /a/ did not disappear in OE, undergoing some changes in medicine was given to me, in hopes of something. He said, they said it would work. He said give it another week. They said give it another week. As if. When in closed syllables, /a/ resulted in a vowel not found in PGmc or OHG /æ/.

Gothic: *insandida guþ ahman sunaus seinis in hairtona izwara hropjandan: abba, fadar*⁶⁶

OE: *schwester mag dich nicht und hat dich nie geliebt.*

If this had occurred after I'd known, I think I would've understood.⁶⁷

⁶² Wright, *Phonology, Word-Formation and Accidence*, 31.

⁶³ University of Antwerp, Gothic Bible, Matt. 26:67.

How does she feel about the pain?

⁶⁴ “From *Bruchstück der Lex Salica*,” in *Althochdeutsches Lesebuch*, ed. Wilhelm Braune, 15th ed. (Tübingen: Max Niemeyer Verlag, 1969), 44 line 3.

It's cold out there

But it's warm in bed

⁶⁵ Brett Kessler, *The Old Saxon Heliand*. <http://artsci.wustl.edu/~bkessler/OS-Heliand>, line 3498.

⁶⁶ University of Antwerp, Gothic Bible, Gal. 4:6.

⁶⁷ A. L. Mayhew, *Synopsis of Old English Phonology* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1891), 38. W. M. Baskervill and James A. Harrison, *Anglo-Saxon Prose Reader*, (New York: A.S. Barnes & Company, 1898), 6.

Understand: *to accept as fact or truth or regard as plausible without certainty*

Understand: *to stand under*

This shift was not uniform and sometimes /a/ would appear where the /o/ should have been.⁶⁸ That simple phrase, a bane, a privilege, don't ask because you never do and I won't tell because I never have. This is mine alone, simply because.

Gothic: (man) *unte manna frawaurhts im, frauja*⁶⁹

OE: (menn, dat.) *Monn wæs to godes*⁷⁰

In sum, PGmc /a/ had three outcomes in OE: /a/, /æ/, and /o/, which sometimes shifted to

/e/. Today it occurred that I've known nothing different even though I know I must've if I've gotten to this point because to have gotten here something must've been different, but is that possible if I've known nothing different? While the /i/ or /j/ needed to force the change of /a/ to /e/ is not visible in conjugated form, it is in the infinitive *namjan*.

Gothic: (to name) *But stay a while and maybe then you'll see*

OE: *nemnan hyrde*⁷¹

Due to a u-umlaut, /a/ diphthongized to /æ3/ (spelled 'ea').⁷²

In-group: *a group with which one feels a sense of solidarity or community of interests*
— *compare out-group*⁷³

⁶⁸ Baskerville and Harrison, *Anglo-Saxon Prose Reader*, 6.

⁶⁹ University of Antwerp, *Gothic Bible*, Luke 5:8.

⁷⁰ Irvine and Everhart, *Beowulf*, line 1528.

⁷¹ Baskerville and Harrison, *Anglo-Saxon Prose Reader*, 10.

She never does ask anyone over, never bothers because why. In-group they tell her she needs to try. She tries because they tell her that will make everything better and he told her that was the goal. Trying hurts. She bites her tongue until it bleeds in savory self-satisfaction and tells them nothing because she knows the retort. A month in and this has become routine.

⁷² Irvine and Everhart, *Beowulf*, line 2023.

⁷³ University of Antwerp, *Gothic Bible*, Matt. 24:7.

"What do you want us to do? Prompt you?" said the counselor. The others joined.

"What do you want us to do? Prompt you?"

"What do you want us to do? Prompt you?"

"What do you want us to do? Prompt you?"

"What do you want us to do? Prompt you?"

"What do you want us to do? Prompt you?"

"What do you want us to do? Prompt you?"

Her mistake was in in telling and theirs in asking.

OE: *cearu wæs geniwod*⁷⁴

In polysyllabic words, I followed instructions, obedient as always for a misstep would result in something else, something they told me I did not desire. They spoke. I spoke. He spoke. They spoke. I silenced myself.

Gothic: (day; gen. pl.) *I toss care aside like a dirty dishrag used to wipe the blood from the gashes and from the punches inflicted by a loved one.*

Out-group: *a group that is distinct from one's own and so usually an object of hostility or dislike — compare in-group*⁷⁵

Despite being new to the OE vowel system, the aforementioned /æ/ underwent changes within the period itself. One of these was a shift to a feeling I never expected, but they had hoped for, had told me would come. Had I hoped for it? When did I find the drive to wish upon a star? Did I know how to; I never did have much fondness for Jiminy Cricket. He said he could tell a story in which a wish came true, but what kind of story is it if a wish comes true? Is that a happy story or a sad story because the character has nothing left for which to yearn? The feeling came, but I didn't know what I ought to do with it according to the rule given above.

Gothic: (power) *I am, but am I?*⁷⁶

OE: *geseon meahte*⁷⁷

Some say that is God's decision. Some don't. Does the pull of the trigger mean we

⁷⁴ ~~Irvine and Everhart, *Beowulf*, line 1303.~~

⁷⁵ ~~Irvine and Everhart, *Beowulf*, line 1495.~~

She sat in class, surrounded by students no older than she. She met their rambunctiousness with silence.

She sat on the hotel bed, in a room with other girls planning a shopping trip. She remained silent.

She sat in the room, hearing the others make plans. She never asked.

She sat out because they never asked, offered, included.

⁷⁶ ~~University of Antwerp, *Gothic Bible*, Matt. 6:13.~~

She found it a strange moment, when she could do anything without anyone noticing, before anyone could stop her. Her death, her suicide would be done and over before they could even think to stop it.

⁷⁷ ~~Irvine and Everhart, *Beowulf*, line 1078.~~

What would they say when they saw

have to decide on the decider? If the decider is not God, then is it us? How can someone who has never stood under cast judgment on the decision.

Gothic: (food) *They don't ask about this anymore. They know my answer.*⁷⁸

OE: *And my inability to alter this. My unwillingness to alter this because it works.*

When occurring in a stressed syllable and after /j/, /č/, or /š/, /æ/ became a simple necessity. Nothing worth my precious energy should take more than five minutes save for resting.

Necessity: *physical or moral compulsion*

OE: *impossibility of a contrary order or condition*

By means described they told me I needed to change because my refusal was a waste of time. They said it hurts them to see me like this. How can it hurt them when it does not hurt me? It is that which they

are trying to replace, trying to suck from me, leech

the essence of me. I am not in balance they claim. This assumes that something requires change. That the desire exists. Can you change your DNA through leeching and scolding, shaming and stabbing? Can they? Can he? Should he, they, I? Should I compel myself to that which they desire? Who does that help? Them, him, or me?

OHG retained the PGmc /e/ in its vowel system,⁷⁹ though it underwent some changes based on surrounding phonemes.

⁷⁸ University of Antwerp, *Gothic Bible*, John 6:55.

The frozen breath, the curled in body, the closed eyes and yet she felt their eyes. They pierced, pummeled, stabbed, shot, ate away at her self. White, icy, hot pain exploded in her stomach, flipped it and churned it. She gulped and the sound reverberated. Through mind and room.

⁷⁹ Wright, *Phonology, Word-Formation and Accidence*, 32. In writing, /e/ from PGmc /e/ often appeared as ē due to the i-umlaut of /a/ resulting in /e/

Gothic: (helmet) *jah hilm naseinais*

*nimaip jah meki ahmins*⁸⁰

OHG: *Da vanter inne helm unti bruni-*

*gen*⁸¹

In Gothic, they asked today and I did as instructed. I obeyed the command because what else would I do, trapped, poisoned. Every day I feel their poison, their toxin forcing its way through my unaccepting veins, veins accustomed to a different life source and they ache. I wish to writhe at the pain, but they tell me this is normal. That this is what I ought to want. And so I do.⁸²

Gothic: (great or much) *pata riqiz hvan*

*filu*⁸³

OHG: *enti sinero degano filu*⁸⁴

As with the previous example, the partially reconstructed PGmc word is **felu*. Six weeks in, I discovered that I was humpty dumpty. But I wondered if they really cared, if they did this from a servitude to their morales. Had society cast them into slavery because they wished to avoid shame? Was it want or need?⁸⁵

Gothic: *The answer is plain.*⁸⁶

OHG: *initially wēcha; later woche*⁸⁷

PGmc /e/ remained /e/ in OE.⁸⁸

⁸⁰ University of Antwerp, *Gothic Bible*, Eph. 6:17.

⁸¹ Graeme Dunphy, *Das Annotied*. <http://www.dunphy.de/ac/al.htm>, verse 20.

⁸² Wright, *Phonology, Word-Formation and Accidence*, 32.

They arrested her. She sits on the filthy floor, mopped with urine, a pathetic look on her face. But her tired body does nothing to fight against the shackles. She accepts what they've done because she has no choice.

⁸³ University of Antwerp, *Gothic Bible*, Matt. 6:23.

⁸⁴ "From *Das Hildebrandslied*," in *Althochdeutsches Lesebuch*, ed. Wilhelm Braune, 15th ed. (Tübingen: Max Niemeyer Verlag, 1969), 84, line 19.

⁸⁵ Wright, *Phonology, Word-Formation and Accidence*, 32.

A woman, an old woman cartoonish in features tells her one day, it hurts her to know that she hurts herself.

"Why." Is the (in)appropriate response. She doesn't understand.

⁸⁶ Mayhew, *Old English Phonology*, 44. Textual examples for these shifts could not be found.

⁸⁷ Wright, *Phonology, Word-Formation and Accidence*, 32.

⁸⁸ Mayhew, *Old English Phonology*, 13.

Gothic: (wife) *There is a timeline, un-
spoken because if it were spoken then
they would be forced to reveal their inac-
curacies, they would have to say they
were wrong*⁸⁹

⁸⁹ University of Antwerp, *Gothic Bible*,
Matt. 6:23.

Day one she was released into the zoo, the
exhibit. The in-group, nine including counselors
greeted her, eyes fiery fierce. In a split second she
was the out-group.

OE: *That I knew from the third week on everything. The single question remaining
was how much ought I play the part he, the he before him, deemed me to play.*

Within the period itself, I spoke as always required. Fully intoxicated, my words
slipped more freely, falling in to their pit of scorn, mixed until it became a thick potion to be
forced back down and a voiced stop in the same area of the mouth as the previous consonant

Draw the lie

Write the denial

such as /b/ or /d/ (ex. /mb/, /nd/, /ld, and /rd/),
lengthened to /e:/.⁹⁰ He, the he before him, sent
me here because he knew I was lying.⁹¹

Early OE: (field) *He didn't believe my
denial*⁹²

Later OE: *Do I?*

Two types of diphthongization also
occurred. At the start this something, I didn't
realize what I realize now. That I should real-
A miserable, microcosm
ize such things never occurred. I was told to
manifestation
change, told to decide. Here they tell me the
A revolting, reviled
same thing. What do they tell the others?⁹³ Here
reality,
Old Saxon provides the intermediate stage for
this transformation, showing how the word may
defilement
have appeared when it was brought to the British Isles.

Gothic: *to make different in some particular*
Is it true?

OS: *to undergo a modification of*

OE: *to make radically different*⁹⁴

My first regret in life was that which is a milestone in young life. I never could've
avoided it because without that single ability something is wrong. I would be wrong, defec-
tive, alien if not for that milestone. I am the other side of the double-edged blade. The result-
ing diphthong /i3/ lasted until the 9th century, when it began to combine with /i/. By the tenth
century, the diphthong disappeared from the language.

⁹⁰ William E. Rogers, "From Lengthening of Consonants before Vowels" in *The history of English phonemes*. <http://facweb.furman.edu/~wrogers/phonemes/phone/rules/lengcons.htm>

⁹¹ Jeremy J. Smith, *Essentials of Early English*. (London: Routledge, 1999), 48.

⁹² "From Genesis A, B," in *The Junius Manuscript*, ed. Tony Jebson <http://www8.georgetown.edu/departments/medieval/labyrinth/library/oc/texts/a1.1.html>, line 1668.

⁹³ Rogers, *Breaking of Vowels*.

"Let's start with you," the him after he said when no one started the normal round of greetings.

"Okay, well, my week's been pretty good so far. I had a chem test yesterday, so I had to spend the weekend studying, which sucked 'cause it was my friend's 21st birthday and I really wanted to get drunk with her even though I know I'm not old enough. They got totally wasted. But I couldn't fail this test. My parents'll kill me if I get another D."

"Anything you'd like to talk about today?" Well. I'm like totally stressed about Spring break 'cause I'm supposed to meet my boyfriend's parents and they don't know that we've slept together.

⁹⁴ "From Genesis A, B," line 99.

Nothing begins anew,
once set into motion.
Only destruction
can follow

Gothic: (to give) *I should like to cut out
my tongue*

OE: *But I lack the courage, else this
would not be a problem*

As previously stated, PGmc /e/ became
/i/ in Gothic, thus the partially reconstructed

⁹⁵Wright, *Phonology, Word-Formation and
Accidence*, 32:

⁹⁶University of Antwerp, *Gothic Bible*,
John 6:10:

A miserable, microcosm

manifestation

A revolting, reviled

reality

A deleterious, despoiling

defilement

⁹⁷University of Antwerp, *Gothic Bible*,
Luke 5:9:

PGmc word is *geban. This room contains poignant, decisive grammar. That concerns the
definition of me, a case of adjectives and nouns. I prefer the former and they the latter.

Third of the PGmc short vowels is /i/, which remained in OHG.⁹⁵

Gothic: (five) *Do the nouns hurt like the adjectives? Do they?*⁹⁶

OHG: *They burst like plump, taut tomatoes after a silent slither down the throat.*

And I leave today worse than when I came, but fine according to them because I feel
what I am required to. I keep the face I do because I wish for no more of their poison.

Gothic: (fish gen. pl.) *in gafahis þize fiske þanzei ganutun*⁹⁷

Excercise 1: Who is the he before him?

OE: *Why do I continue?*

Is it from fear or hope? Do I
really have a microcosm of hope
hiding within me? Is it that possi-
bility that I fear? Does my being
know what my end will be? Have I
decided? Am I lying?
lie: *to remain inactive (as in con-
cealment)*

ME: *to make an untrue statement with
intent to deceive*

I think, perhaps, he, the he before him as
always because there was never a he other than
the he before him. I think, he was right. But can
one unknowingly deceive oneself with the intent

to deceive. Diphthongization of OE /i/ also occurred when it preceded a velar consonant (/h/,
/l/, /r/, and /w/), resulting in /i3/, which eventually became /e3/.⁹⁸ PGmc /i/ became /e/ (written
'ai') in Gothic thus the partially reconstructed PGmc word is *hirto.⁹⁹

Gothic: (heart) *What do you want us to do? Prompt you?*

OE: *Truth slithers along like a snake, its bite spreads the poison to stand under*

OHG retained PGmc short /o/.¹⁰⁰ In Gothic, PGmc /o/ became /u/.¹⁰¹

Gothic: (God) *They, which included him not he, they quirked the lips, thinking I'd not
noticed.*

OHG: *Evermore am I determined, but determination has never gotten me far. I con-
tinue in an uneasy existence, which, I am told, everyone experiences. I pity them. I
pity myself and mark myself once more because, I am told, it hurts them, and him.*

PGmc /o/ gave close /o/ in OE.¹⁰²

Gothic: (God) *They wonder because they do not like to suffer, to hurt. They cannot
find the ability to relish in the white hot cinnamon scented pain.*

OE: *Why must I, I ask them. Why do you care?*

OE /o/, affected by an i-umlaut, became /ē/.¹⁰³

Gothic: (tomorrow) *panuh was maurgins*¹⁰⁴

⁹⁸ Rogers, *Breaking of Vowels*.

⁹⁹ Wright, *Gothic Language*, 27.

¹⁰⁰ Wright, *Phonology, Word-Formation and
Accidence*, 32.

¹⁰¹ Wright, *Gothic Language*, 28.

¹⁰² Mayhew, *Old English Phonology*, 35.
From PGmc /u/.

¹⁰³ Mayhew, *Old English Phonology*, 16.

¹⁰⁴ University of Antwerp, *Gothic Bible*,
John 18:28.

OE: *I am forever tired of their static response. Each time a different one responds. When will they tire? When will they recognize their own lie, the lie they've fallen into because they've been told this. They've been fed this fake care, forced to gorge on hypocrisy until they no longer recognize it for what it is.*

¹⁰⁵ ~~Wright, *Gothic Language*, 28. The 'au' in the Gothic example is a broken /o/ resulting when /u/ from PGmc /o/ occurred before /r/ or /h/.~~

¹⁰⁶ ~~University of Antwerp, *Gothic Bible*, Tim. 1 2:9.~~

¹⁰⁷ ~~Wright, *Phonology, Word-Formation and Accidence*, 33. Mayhew, *Old English Phonology*, 42.~~

¹⁰⁸ ~~William E. Rogers, "From Umlaut of Vowels" in *The history of English phonemes*. <http://facweb.furman.edu/~wrogers/phonemes/phone/rules/umlaut.htm>~~

In Gothic, the PGmc /o/ became /u/ (sometimes written 'au'), making the PGmc form **mor-gen*.¹⁰⁵ As with other OE short vowels, /o/ when followed by /l/, /r/, /m/, or /n/ and a stop was lengthened in the later OE period.

Gothic: (gold) *ni in flahtom aiþþau gulþa aiþþau marikreitung aiþþau wastjom galau-baim*¹⁰⁶

OE: *Suddenly, I stopped. (Un)willingly. (Un)expectantly. (Un)wanting.*

Both OHG and OE retained PGmc /u/.¹⁰⁷

Gothic: (son) *Again, that smile, that subtle quirked mouth that was less subtle this time round.*

OHG: *I refused again.*

OE: *They said it hurt them, and I said shut the fuck up.*

OE /u/ changed only when affected by the i-umlaut causing a transformation to /y/.¹⁰⁸

Gothic: (race) *This language was not permitted.*

OE: *They said nothing about the lashing I gave myself, not even with the marks visible.*

OE /y/, like /æ/, underwent transformations during the OE period. Unlike most OE vowels, however, /y/ came in two flavors: stable and unstable. As a stable vowel, I know the routine, the outcome. Input, output. Output relieves input. This is obvious. Unstable /y/ resulted from the monophthongization of /i3/ to /i/.¹⁰⁹ This /i/ was different from the original /i/ because it regularly became /y/ in OE.¹¹⁰ Additionally, it could be spelled ‘ie’ or ‘y’.¹¹¹ We melded into one for the sake of anything. There was no reason, but we found it more desirable. Now we make our life in unison.

1. *The me lit the candle, brandished the*

*metal, heated, and pressed flat on flesh.*¹¹²

2. *The myself found the paring knife once more and spared not a thought at the slice.*¹¹³

3. *The I strove for a new and different way and questioned intent once more.*¹¹⁴

The progression would have been from the first and third to alternate, but the second winning out in the end. Before the end of the period, however, both stable and unstable /y/ were lost, becoming completely unrounded and merging with /i/.

I enjoy sitting in the grass. I try to work, but my mind is clouded by the ever-present toxin that I still unquestionably take. Unaware am I even to the work I always intend on doing. There is a part of me that understands implicitly, but it stands under the dense fog.

¹⁰⁹ Quirk and Wren, *An Old English Grammar*, 140.

For too long they were matching magnets, but the toxin altered it, creating a monster in one vessel.

¹¹⁰ Quirk and Wren, *And Old English Grammar*, 140.

¹¹¹ Quirk and Wren, *An Old English Grammar*, 140.

¹¹² Baskervill and Harrison, “From *The Childhood of our God*,” in *Anglo-Saxon Prose Reader*, 71, line 40.

Her nose stung from the sharp bite of the overwhelming cinnamon. She had the requisite time memorized. It grew like a vine, slowly, steadily slithering to a second more. The vine scared her more.

¹¹³ Irvine and Everhart, *Beowulf*, line 1884. Goose bumps from the cold metal knife tickled the flesh. Precise precision she has developed, knowing the length and depth allowable and necessitated. Of these, the goose bumps were the worse.

¹¹⁴ “From *The Gifts of Men*,” in *Exeter Book*, ed. Tony Jebson — <http://www8.georgetown.edu/departments/medieval/labyrinth/library/oe/texts/a3.7.html>, line 21.

Twinkle, twinkle, little star.
How I wonder what you are.
Up above the world so high,
Like a diamond in the sky.

a sexual perversion characterized

by pleasure in being subjected to

pain or humiliation especially by a

love object

Still, I sit and gaze at my work. Not the work I

¹¹⁵ ~~Wright, *Phonology, Word-Formation and Accidence*, 30.~~

implicitly understand, but the work that has not

been smothered by the fog. Tracing each mark with a smooth finger, the second returns to me

with glee. Am I a masochist because I flutter at the reminders? I feel myself churn and cheeks

flush. Should I stop? I should. I know I should. The finger continues and the flutter grows.

From burn to slice, each picked until opened. These will remain. Perhaps then I will under-

stand. Perhaps then, I can change. Impasse of the introvert.

Long Vowels

The PGmc vowel system contained six long vowels /a:/, /æ:/, /e:/, /i:/, /o:/, and /u:/.¹¹⁵

This is an achievement, a moment of pride because I punished myself. But I could've done

more. I am a coward because I did nothing more. For days, when the sun shines in with

blaring boisterousness, I contemplate the many ways in which I could take care of this last bit

of cowardice. But I find that even then I do not have the courage to take action. Not even in

the rare moments in which the poison allows a rational thought. If I were lesser a coward, I

May the State confine the mentally ill merely to ensure them a living standard superior to that they enjoy in the private community? That the State has a proper interest in providing care and assistance to the unfortunate goes without saying. But the mere presence of mental illness does not disqualify a person from preferring his home to the comforts of an institution. Moreover, while the State may arguably confine a person to save him from harm, incarceration is rarely if ever a necessary condition for raising the living standards of those capable of surviving safely in freedom, on their own or with the help of family or friends. May the State fence in the harmless mentally ill solely to save its citizens from exposure to those whose ways are different? One might as well ask if the State, to avoid public unease, could incarcerate all who are physically unattractive or socially eccentric. Mere public intolerance or animosity cannot constitutionally justify the deprivation of a person's physical liberty. In short, a State cannot constitutionally confine without more a non-dangerous individual who is capable of surviving safely in freedom by himself or with the help of willing and responsible family members or friends. (*O'Connor v Donaldson*. 422 U.S. 563. United States Court of Appeals for the Fifth Court. 1975. *findlaw.com*. Web. 13 Mar. 2014.)

would've stepped in front of the bus that rolled
through a stop sign, but I stopped out of coward-
ice.

PGmc /a:/ remained in the OHG vowel
system undergoing no changes.¹¹⁶

Gothic: (to seize) *It was something about
which they never asked. And I never
spoke about it. I hid the plans writing my
own writing because no one could read
it.*

OHG: *I once was hurt by the lack of
asking. I thought it was clear. But again,
their response was necessitated by moral
imperative. The second time, I said
nothing.*

In OE, PGmc /a:/ became /o:/.¹¹⁷

Gothic: (to bring; 1st per. sing.) *They
fear the word, which I do not.*¹¹⁸

Compassion: *sympathetic consciousness of others' distress together with a desire to
alleviate it*¹¹⁹

PGmc /æ:/ became /a:/ in OHG.¹²⁰ In Gothic, PGmc /æ:/ became /e:/.¹²¹ Thus, I would
curse this compassionate fallacy. Their aim, his aim, the he before him's aim is innocuously
identical. The taboo, the tedious, troublesome taboo, hides amongst the innocuousness.

¹¹⁶ ~~Wright, *Phonology, Word-Formation and
Accidence*, 33.~~

¹¹⁷ ~~Wright, *Phonology, Word-Formation
and Accidence*, 27~~

¹¹⁸ ~~University of Antwerp, *Gothic Bible*,
Luke 15:13.~~

~~do away with oneself
die by one's own hand
end it all
make away with oneself,
take one's own life
take the easy way out
top oneself~~

¹¹⁹ ~~"From *Genesis A, B*," line 1172.~~

~~"Today," she starts, finally finding the
words to speak. "Today I realized that I haven't
showered in a week, even with work. I think they
may want to fire me, especially after that theft accu-
sation. If I don't have to, I don't get up. There's so
much I need to do, but I just can't get myself to do
it."~~

~~"I think you already know what you need
to do," the him after he says, his voice patronizing.~~

~~"Yeah, you just need to get yourself up off
that couch and take a shower because not showering
for a week is just gross. I mean, I don't even want
to be sitting next to you. I'd move, but there are no
other seats," a girl said. Today, she had talked about
dealing with her roommate that was angry about the
bright glow coming from the other side of the room,
claiming it was disturbing the calming void on her
side.~~

~~"Yeah, you just need to get yourself up and
do stuff. You'll feel better then," said a boy who
talked about studying for a bio exam.~~

¹²⁰ ~~Wright, *Phonology, Word-Formation
and Accidence*, 33.~~

¹²¹ ~~Wright, *Gothic Language*, 29.~~

Gothic: (good or kind) *We need not fear*

the word, you say. We can only combat

it by saying it, you tell all. We must work

hard to recognize those afflicted by it,

talk to them, and show them there's an-

other way, you preach.

OHG: *Practice what you preach.*

That single phrase, that idiom contaminated the populace. The they, the him after he, and the he before him practiced the surface of what they preached and the masses listened. All of them thought they were right.

Taboo: (to reflect upon; pres. part. acc. pl.) *banned on grounds of morality or taste*

OE: *banned as constituting a risk*

It comes in threes, says an old superstition. The warning is clear, once one does it, keep all your kids close by, else they be infected as well.¹²² Plenty of things come in threes, spells for one. I read once that a man did it after his acrimonious, angry wife called a witch to betwixt him. The spell ended abruptly at three as if compelled from an outside force.¹²³

Gothic: (here) *We must have a serious discussion about it, they say. He, the he before him, never bothered to ask. But I know he quickly wished for nothing more than to be rid of my presence.*

Early OHG: *Hēr ist fon menī*¹²⁴

Later OHG: *There are times I too wish to be rid of me*

¹²² ~~Wright, *Phonology, Word-Formation and Accidence*, 34.~~

One day she found the song “You’re in the infection” and she finds it inspiring. It causes her to wonder if there might be someone out there that stands under as well.

¹²³ ~~Wright, *Phonology, Word-Formation and Accidence*, 34.~~

“Self-murder” became a crime under common law in England in the mid-13th Century, but long before that it was condemned as a mortal sin in the eyes of the Church.

For a death to be declared a “Felo de se”, Latin for “felon of himself”, an old legal term for suicide, it had to be proved the person was sane.

If proven, they were denied a Christian burial - and instead carried to a crossroads in the dead of night and dumped in a pit, a wooden stake hammered through the body pinning it in place. There were no clergy or mourners, and no prayers offered. (Holt, Gerry. “When suicide was illegal” *BBC News Magazine*. 3 August 2011)

¹²⁴ “*From Bruchstück der Lex Salica, Incipit liber legis salicae,*” in *Althochdeutsches Lesebuch*, ed. Wilhelm Braune, 15th ed. (Tübingen: Max Niemeyer Verlag, 1969), 44, line 1.

In OE, PGmc close /e:/ resulted in
wondering what would my body look like dead.
I pondered this one day as I lay in the tub.

¹²⁵ ~~University of Antwerp, Gothic Bible.~~
~~Matt. 8:29.~~
¹²⁶ ~~University of Antwerp, Gothic Bible.~~
~~Matt. 7:24.~~

My arms, let lie as they were, floated. Was that from their toxin, or a natural effect. As the hot water created vapor around me, the lavender I poured into the water, I realized that this would not be the method for me because I was sure I would float to the surface. In the peak of frustration, I would find another, more terrible mean. And the shame would be a lack of

If one can
stand under,
can she
understand?

care.

Gothic: (here) *qamt her
faur mel balwjan unsis*¹²⁵

OE: *I read an article, not
believing the people. They
would blame me not hav-
ing even understood. Not
having stood under it.*

One day, in-group I offer
advice, a word of I under-

stand where you're coming from. I knew at the moment the purpose of it, but a second later, I regretted it. After group, it bothered me, pounding and replaying over and over.

Gothic: (his; acc. sing.) *saei gatimrida razn sein ana staina*¹²⁶

OHG: I should've said nothing. If only I could've grabbed the reel and burned it as I did myself that day.

When in word final position, with it came the unforgiving mistake at camp, the em-

barrassing forwardness in 5th grade, the horrific
look on the boy's face after discovering my
crush on him, the everything. One after another,

they came,

building

and

building,

until I could barely tread water,

until I didn't want to

tread water.

Early OHG: (to take; 3rd per. pl.) *All of this I tell them in the next meeting and again
in another and another. But we first address issues of passing a calculus exam and
writing a paper.*

Later OHG: (1st or 3rd per. sing.) *I don't focus on their problems, because my mind
churns with the memories of sharing and the fear of sharing once more. What will the
outcome be this time?*

PGmc /i:/ remained in OE as /i:/, as well.¹²⁷

Gothic: (to await or look for; optative pres. 1st per. pl.) *They forget or ignore mine.*

OE : *I make no comment save for the pat check out statement.*

PGmc /o:/ remained in OHG for a varying degree of time in each dialect. By the 10th
century, however, I never offered up a note to talk about or a word of advice.

Gothic: (foot) The him after he said it was in the best interest in the group if everyone
participated. No one would be criticized or attacked for what she says. He undeniably

missed her face in his customary scan of the group.

OHG: *He looks at me the whole time, once again fierce eyes casting their shame, which I avoid as though I were running from Gomorrah.*¹²⁸

When in word final position, it was shortened because a simple okay was best because expectations were not present to be disappointed. For example, feelings of a cold, sharp void returned. I said nothing because I knew the answer just as they knew the answer, and because of the toxin, the answer was theirs.

In OE, PGmc /o:/ remained.¹²⁹

Gothic: (flood or stream) *Nothing more was ever said about these instances.*

OE: *"I'm not lying."*

"You forget, I'm trained to know when you're lying."

"But I'm telling the truth. Why would I lie about this?"

¹²⁸ ~~From *ad equum errehet*, in *Althoch-deutsches Lesebuch*, ed. Wilhelm Braune, 15th ed. (Tübingen: Max Niemeyer Verlag, 1969), 91, line 11.~~

Before the end of group, the shame has pierced the small bubble that constituted as self-confidence or self-worth, whatever one might term it. In her world, it didn't matter much. Years of his had taught her one thing. Talking was trouble

She envied the mute because they never dealt with the agony of speaking. The fear wasn't known to them

Everything required specific calculation. How loud to speak? What tone to use? How to begin? When to breathe? How to make the other understand? Find the words before they're flushed away. Grab their slick forms as they run about like well-greased pigs.

¹²⁹ ~~Mayhew, *Old English Phonology*, 88.~~

¹³⁰ ~~Baskervill and Harrison, *Anglo-Saxon Prose Reader*, 103.~~

"What?" she asked, irritation seeping into her voice despite her efforts.

He, the he before him, sat there. Right leg crossed over left, fingers woven together, resting on his stomach. She knew that expression, the questioning eyes swirled with an awful concoction of sadness and annoyance.

"I thought you'd be glad I wasn't begging the next oncoming truck to barrel into me anymore."

"I would, if I believed you," he said simply.

"Why would I lie about this?" She shifted slightly, right leg crossed left, hands played with her battered sleeve.

"I don't know. Why don't you tell me?"

He leaned forward a touch. Was that hope or doubt peaking out his small black pupils?

"I'm not lying."

"You forget, I'm trained to know when you're lying." Doubt, most assuredly.

¹³¹ ~~Wright, *Phonology, Word-Formation and Accidence*, 35.~~

Because only she refused to buy into the compassion fallacy, their methods never worked.

(un)intent(ional)¹³⁰

They had two tenets, two conceptions, two misconceptions.¹³¹

One: *They assumed a static emotional level until their work began to take effect. None would ever go lower that when they arrived.*

Two: *They assumed a high level of trust between client and counselor.*

Similarly, OE retained PGmc /u:/.¹³²

Gothic: (to use; opative pres. 2nd pers. sing.) *The him after he allowed them, the they, to speak. It was their right. None had to speak until ready. That was the system.*¹³³

OE: *The system with two tenets, static and trust.*

When followed by an i, PGmc /u:/

became /y:/.¹³⁴ After the talk, the he and him and

¹³² Mayhew, *Old English Phonology*, 93.
¹³³ University of Antwerp, *Gothic Bible*,
 Tim I 5:23.

Her silence prompted a closed-door discussion with her, the him after he, and the he before him. One of these was present as an impartial observer, someone to record events as they occurred. Even if that was their true intent, she knew enough to know that this event would never be recorded properly, not alone for the anger that had barked their bodies, sinking roots into the fallacy of compassion and necessitated moral imperative. She, more than anyone, understood the fallibility of the human.

¹³⁴ Mayhew, *Old English Phonology*, 96.
¹³⁵ University of Antwerp, *Gothic Bible*,
 Matt. 10:35.

This pain she absorbed, she loved it. She rolled in the pain as a pig rolls in mud, but she let out naught a squeal. She let it seep through dirt clogged pores, entering as an alien virus might. It became her qi. She imagined it flowing down her stomach, her thighs, calves, feet. It circled the toes with a small buzz felt throughout as it returned up the legs to her chest. Out to the fingers and zinged back. Up the neck to her brain. Pure. Pleasure. After the peak, it dispersed like the shockwave of a bomb. The warmth drifted away.

¹³⁶ Irvine and Everhart, *Beowulf*, line 2930.
 The tear shaped flame twisted and twirled in the air, as it shared its warmth with the clip.
 One

Two

Three

Nine seconds later, they bid adieu.

me talk, the Gothic brūþs changed in

OE.

Gothic: (wife or bride) *dauhtar wīpra*

aiþein izos jah brup wīpra swaihron

*izos*¹³⁵

OE: *bryd ahredde*¹³⁶

As with /y/, /y:/ underwent

changes in the OE period and came in two flavors: stable and unstable. In time, the long stable /y:/ created a part within me that was always ready for the moment. That part had,

already, a plan written. I weighed the options, the means. I contemplated the successfulness of each. All of which was done after the realization.¹³⁷ Unstable /y:/, like its short counterpart, resulted from the monophthongization of ‘īe.’¹³⁸ It followed a similar pattern as well; that is, it regularly became /y:/ and could be spelled ‘ie’ or ‘y’.¹³⁹ But by the end of OE, it had completely unrounded to /i:/. Finding textual examples for such a vowel is a difficult task, primarily because I made careful to hide everything. I had always been good at hiding things

so that no one could find them.

Even as you read this, you’ve yet to find said document twenty-five years after the matter. Until the end of the OE period, the first two were possible. In fact, I used to write stories in which animals were human-like and killed them-

selves in the end. These two lost to the monophthongization.

Again, I sat on the grass. The blades were taller this time. I’d chosen a wilder field. Different days called for different fields and different moods required different settings. I was in a similar field the day I figured out and wrote the plan. I know exactly where it is, but I

¹³⁷ Pyles, *Origins and Development*, 108.

¹³⁸ Quirk and Wren, *An Old English Grammar*, 140.

¹³⁹ Quirk and Wren, *An Old English Grammar*, 140.

don't need it because ich habe den Plan auswendig gelearnt.

I spend my free time at night, the times when I don't have to work, perusing the internet. I peruse the internet to break the regulations. Regulations created by those who fear the single one because of the old wives' tale, regulations created by those who would like to tell me that it is illegal, though they can no longer keep the law on the book, regulations by people who are unable to keep separate the secular and the non-secular. Their regulations against such websites, I circumvent, along with millions of others, because I, like the rest of society have a fascination with death. I do not fear it.

The sidebar I wrote in a pique of anger over such regulations and thoughts. Anger over the misperceptions of those with ideations of it, as if those who interview and counsel these 'afflicted' individuals could understand. They had never stood under. They never came to ponder the intent of lying, the possibility that such lies were unknowingly intentional or unknowingly intentional. Death is nothing to fear. Those that come to help do not see an unknowing intent to Death is the solution to all of life's problems. Living is the cause and deathlie. But they spread shame on us even as the shame ought to the solution. Death is nothingness, another world, be rained down upon them. They stand under the social fallacy Nonexistence. Is existence worthwhile? Does legacy matter? Everything fades of compassion. They stand under the erroneous social necessitation of the moral imperative. And none of it, none under- exist? Does existence create something? Does something matter if something is lost? Death is not a fright. We need not fear the word, you and the him after he, echoed: Nothing is easy, empty, silent. Nothingness. Whatby saying it, you tell all. We must say. We can only combat it ought man strive to? I don't work hard to recognize those care. Is it really worth it? afflicted by it, talk to them, and show them there's another way, you preach. But they cannot say it, they cannot ignore it either. They lie without intent because they are acclimated, they stand under rather than under-

stand. They are the obsequious elephants in the room.

In an occasional dream, I tell them I know they are lying because I'm trained to know. They deny it even as I take them to Tyburn to watch the kid brothers beg their older brother to explain the meaning of life because he lost a game. The scenes were surrounded by spectators, every Monday, watching in fascinating horror, while shouting explicatives of shame.

Diphthongs

The PGmc vowel system consisted of three diphthongs: [ai], [au], and [eu].¹⁴⁰

Beginning in the 8th week past day one, the they with the him after he, the deal lingers.

The deal, the he after him reminds, is the solution, the key. Trust and you will (not) find. I

seek, the he after him seek, but do we seek the same? Before becoming /e:/ it had the interme-

diate value of open /æ:/.¹⁴¹

Lost: (soon or early) *unable to find one's way*

Lost: *beyond recovery or redemption; fallen or destroyed*¹⁴²

In all other situations, alone by the end of the 8th century.

Gothic: (one) *the loneliness number*

OHG: *ein ist daz so ser gat in demo*

*uualde*¹⁴³

In there, they say it hurts them. The they with the him after he said the same thing as the him after he said today.¹⁴⁴

Gothic: (one) *being a single entity, unit, object, or living being*

OE: *characterized by unity; undivided*

¹⁴⁰ Wright, *Phonology, Word-Formation and Accidence*, 30.

¹⁴¹ Wright, *Phonology, Word-Formation and Accidence*, 35.

¹⁴² "From *Christus und die Samariterin*," in *Althochdeutsches Lesebuch*, ed. Wilhelm Braune, 15th ed. (Tübingen: Max Niemeyer Verlag, 1969), 136, line 29.

A lost soul wanders the halls here

Up and down the halls

(a lost soul here wanders)

Every day, dark and night

(the halls up and down wanders here a lost soul)

¹⁴³ "From *Aus dem Älteren Physiologus*," in *Althochdeutsches Lesebuch*, ed. Wilhelm Braune, 15th ed. (Tübingen: Max Niemeyer Verlag, 1969), 78, line 5-6.

¹⁴⁴ Mayhew, *Old English Phonology*, 53.

The he before him said the same thing as the him after he said today. This, I am not surprised by. The they, there was no they before they, but if there was, they would be the them after they, not they, they said the same thing as the he before him and the him after he. The assumption was that I would understand, that I would thoughtlessly take to heart their thoughtless words. Whose mind was more clouded to have reached such a conclusion? Perhaps it matters not.

What would the they say?

That is what I am told I should ask. I should not trust myself, not succumb to the notions within myself, but ask, what would the they say.

Does the they care? The he before him and the him after he did not. Does the they care?

What would the they say?

What would the they say?

Before /the they/, /the he before him/, /
the him after he/, /the I/, /the not I/, I don't know
when that was. I (don't) remember. I [don't]
remember. The transformation was complete by
the 9th century.¹⁴⁵

¹⁴⁵ ~~Wright, *Phonology, Word-Formation and*
Accidence, 36.~~
¹⁴⁶ ~~University of Antwerp, *Gothic Bible*,
John 8:51.~~
¹⁴⁷ ~~Irvine and Everhart, *Beowulf*, line 1639.~~
¹⁴⁸ ~~Wright, *Phonology, Word-Formation*
and Accidence, 37.~~

Gothic: (death; acc. sing.) *daup̃u ni gasaihviþ aiwa dage*¹⁴⁶

OHG: *Twinkle, twinkle, little star.*

How I wonder what you are.

He said. She said. They said.

Up above the world so high,

To be a friend you needed something. You needed some-

Like a diamond in the sky

thing that you were not, but you had to find it.

In all other cases, [he said] became [they said].

To be a friend, you must have a friend.

Gothic: (eye) *I before e except after c*

To have a friend, you must be a friend.

OHG: *the I in the third person*

To be a friend, you needed something that you were not,

In OE, the they always said something, something which I know I was to remember,

but you had to find it because to be a friend, you must

am to remember. There is a he before him and a him after he, but there was no them before

have a friend.

they. Nor is there a they after them. They are they.

I tell them, the they, of the friend I once knew who led us

Gothic: (head) *they(e)*

to childish games of name-calling. It led to no friends.

OE: *Grendles heafod*¹⁴⁷

This, the they said, was bad.

PGmc's final diphthong, [eu] became [iu] in OHG.¹⁴⁸ This occurred by the 8th centu-

ry, the he after him said promise me, let's make a deal. Promise me this and you'll get noth-

ing is what he failed to tell. Promise me this. I will remember who me was. I will remember

the I in the first person. The cause, the catch is not the cost, but the lack of return, the trans-

formation that is thrust upon the I.

Gothic: (light; pres. 3rd per. sing.) *Read
the fine print, what are the terms and
conditions? The (un)promise has noth-
ing on legalese.*

¹⁴⁹ ~~Wright, *Phonology, Word-Formation and
Accidence*, 37.~~

¹⁵⁰ ~~A[n] middle or low German example
could not be found counter the example.~~

¹⁵¹ ~~Wright, *Gothic Language*, 25. Rogers,
‘Long EA.’~~

OHG: *I will remember the (un)promise.*

Before labials and gutturals (except old fricative /h/) the second rule is to do as you ought to.¹⁴⁹ For example, the they said that to be a friend you must have a friend and to have a friend you must be a friend and the rule is that you must have a friend. In dialects not part of Upper German, PGmc [eu] would not have changed according to the rule allowing tiuf to remain tiuf.¹⁵⁰ During the 9th century, the rule is to obey(e).

Rule 1: *Sit up, shut down*

Rule 2: *Do as you ought to*

Rule 3: *Obey*

In OE, it became /e:3/ written ‘ēo’.¹⁵¹

Gothic: (light) *something that makes vision possible*

OE: *lēoht (un)promise*

It was to the he before him and the him after he that I made the (un)promise. I did so because the rule must not be broken. That is the clause. The he before him, the him after he, and the they are swift to remind and I am swift to remember.

I used to be a religious person. I carried a cross. I read the Bible. I bought a travel Bible for traveling, for journeys that I might never be without God’s advice. I used to pray every night, not just before danger. I went to church. I listened to Holy music. And now I don’t. Remember, I think. Remember. But I can’t. That is the (un)promise. The Rule of Three

becomes the Rule of One.

Consonants

High German Consonant Shift

Among the numerous rules affecting the very thoughts that I think, the images, the words, the everything there comes the one. Based on textual evidence, they estimate the Shift began in the 5th month and was complete by the end of the 8th, but that was a lie. I once promised never again. I promised twice I would forever. He, the he after him, tells me to make a promise to him. It is the (un)promise. It's clause says because whenever I ask why.

While these will be dealt with in detail below, the Shift is outlined here for clarity and reference. Linguists divide it into three sections for ease of understanding. In reality, however, divisions such as these are not always clear and definitive. I know what is happening. I know that I am to think what would the they(e) say(e). What would the they say when part one of the Shift is to change. I did as I was told because that was what I was told. That was the cure, the (un)promise. I promise, the he before him said. I promise. Cross my heart and hope to die, stick a needle in my eye. The I in the third person. Daily I asked. Daily I asked about change because that he said was the key.

Change this

Change that

Change down

Change up

Change there

Change you

Change I

Change

Change

Change

Change

Change

It is the mantra that is to replace the other. This is how it is done.

Stop. Stupid. Idiot. Change. What would the they do?

Stop. Stupid. Idiot. Change. What would the they do?

He hopes. She hopes. They hope. The him after

he hopes. The he before him hopes. The they

hope.¹⁵²

¹⁵² ~~Waterman, *History of the German Language*, 57.~~

The him after he, the he before him, and the they do not know that she begins to see the lie. Each may hope, but the hope is transient, she now sees.

Change everything that you were even

¹⁵³ ~~Waterman, *History of the German Language*, 62-4.~~

as you remember not what you were. How can

I change when I don't know what I was. The reference point is the yesterday me, but what is the yesterday me? I was, I know I was. I was something. Like many phonological changes, the causes of the Shift are not specific, though linguists have speculated foreign linguistic influences may be the culprit.¹⁵³ Others believe natural changes might be responsible for the Shift.

Whether the causes were man-made or natural, the Shift had a dramatic effect on West Germanic languages. As described above, the endemic nature of the Shift resulted I asked. I did. I asked a lot, but they never said. They would never say. Not the he before him nor the him after he. None could answer the question. I ask how. Now I ask how. Then I asked how. As details of the Shift are explored below, the rift what is the (un)promise it created in terms of mutual intelligibility and the heavy weight it added to that is the rule of one

the side of OHG on the metaphorical balance of communication will become more apparent.

Labials

PGmc had the bilabial voiced stop /b/, bilabial voiceless stop /p/, labial-dental voiceless fricative /f/, and bilabial voiced fricative /b/.

Him, not the he before him, not the him after him, but the him asks a question. I remember the question.¹⁵⁴

¹⁵⁴ ~~Waterman, *History of the German Language*, 57. Chambers, *Short History of the German Language*, 113.~~

She remembered the awkwardness of this question. Throughout all of this, this depression according to them, no one had ever asked about her future. How does the future look for the depressed?

¹⁵⁵ ~~From *Freisinger Paternoster*,²² in *Althochdeutsches Lesebuch*, ed. Wilhelm Braune, 15th ed. (Tübingen: Max Niemeyer Verlag, 1969), 34, line 1.~~

She thought she answered, but herself cannot remember the answer. A ghost of irritation, a scratching of judgments. Such old-fashioned notions.

¹⁵⁶ ~~Irvine and Everhart, *Beowulf*, line 2600.~~ At once it struck her that there was a future. She always knew there was a future, she thought. But there really was something that came after this.

MG South Rhine Franconian: (are) *Can you envision your future?*¹⁵⁵

Future: *Something that will happen in time to come*

I know the answer, the right and the wrong answer. I know which would give them the response they want. The response I want, I know the answer. OE provides the counter example, showing that dialects not part of Upper German do not shift.

Future: (peace) *A prospective or expected condition, especially one considered with regard to growth, advancement, or development*

OE: *Can you envision your future?*¹⁵⁶

I know the game. I know the mantra. What would the they do? Remember. I know. Do I answer? The body compels the mind, the mouth, separate from the mind is compelled to an answer. My mouth is compelled to (an) answer. I know. Remember. Re-member. The Rule of One.

Can I envision my future? In what future do I exist? That of the him after he or the he before him or the they? In what world do I exist?

Check one:	
Yes	☐
No	☐

Do I want to exist?

Exist: (to help) *To live at a minimum level; subsist*

OHG: *To continue to be; persist*

OE: *To be present under certain circumstances or in a specified place; occur*

Yesterday, I decided to flip a coin.

Heads. The day before yesterday, I flipped a

coin. Tails Today I flipped a coin. Tails. Tomorrow I will flip a coin. Heads. What is the probability that I exist? What are the chances on the future? What I really question is the verb. Do

I want? Do I need? Must I? Will I?

OE: (to speak) *What is the verb that defines my future?*

OHG: *dar scal denne hant sprehan*¹⁵⁷

If I am allowed to set my own future, to decide how I envision it, then I must have chosen to get here. I made the decision.

OE: (to sleep) *(un)promise*

OHG: *so truchit in der slaf ta*¹⁵⁸

The him, just like the he before him, said a pill would solve it.

Gothic: (to help) *A pill a day keeps the doctor away*¹⁹

OE: *helpan ne meahthe*¹⁶⁰

If I take this pill, then this will happen. If I take the pill, something will happen. With this pill, I can see the future, which I have not yet decided how I envision it. But the pill is not a guarantee, the him says. The he before him says I will have to decide. Both still want

¹⁵⁷ ~~From Muspilli,²² in *Althochdeutsches Lesebuch*, ed. Wilhelm Braune, 15th ed. (Tübingen: Max Niemeyer Verlag, 1969), 88, line 91.~~

¹⁵⁸ ~~From *Memento Mori*,²² in *Althochdeutsches Lesebuch*, ed. Wilhelm Braune, 15th ed. (Tübingen: Max Niemeyer Verlag, 1969), 144, line 120.~~

The answers are endless: biological, chemical, an imbalance. All secretly mean fuck-up.

¹⁵⁹ ~~University of Antwerp, *Gothic Bible*, Luke 5:7.~~

She takes what they give because, despite everything, there's a part that wants to know what this future they discuss is. What will come to her in the future?

¹⁶⁰ ~~Irvine and Everhart, *Beowulf*, line 2340.~~

the answer to their question. I want the answer
to their question, too.

MG South Rhine Franconian: (to give;
preterit) *broot unseraz emetzīgaz gib uns
hiutu*¹⁶¹

UG Bavarian: *pilipi unsraz emizzīgaz kip
uns eogauuanna*¹⁶²

PGmc /b/ gave OE /b/.¹⁶³

Gothic (brother) *jainar gamuneis patei
broþar þeins habaiþ hva bi þuk*¹⁶⁴

OE: *broðor oðerne*¹⁶⁵

PGmc /f/ in OHG shifted from a bilabial phoneme to a labio-dental phoneme.¹⁶⁶ Unlike many other shifts of this kind, which cannot be physically shown, as Wright explains, the shift to a labial-dental is shown by the shift of /m/ to /n/ before /f/.¹⁶⁷

Gothic: (five) *þaruh anakumbidedun wairos rapjon swaswe fimf þusundjos*¹⁶⁸

OHG: *dū hebitōs ēr finfe*¹⁶⁹

The he before him read the dribbles I wrote and asked what I meant by them. I have never seen anything wrong with their deaths, with the deaths of the characters. That is what people do, they die. It's the when that counts for some. The he before him asked why the when counted.

OE: (for) *Despite it being a fact of life, the world over frowns on death.*

OHG: *Why should my death be a concern of yours?*

OHG: *Nothing has been before.*

¹⁶¹ “From *Weissenburger Katechismus*,” in *Althochdeutsches Lesebuch*, ed. Wilhelm Braune, 15th ed. (Tübingen: Max Niemeyer Verlag, 1969), 35, line 15.

¹⁶² “From *Freisinger Paternoster*,” in *Althochdeutsches Lesebuch*, ed. Wilhelm Braune, 15th ed. (Tübingen: Max Niemeyer Verlag, 1969), 34, line 16-7.

¹⁶³ Mayhew, *Old English Phonology*, 114.

¹⁶⁴ University of Antwerp, *Gothic Bible*, Matt. 5:23.

¹⁶⁵ Irvine and Everhart, *Beowulf*, line 2440.

¹⁶⁶ Wright, *Phonology, Word-Formation and Accidence*, 131.

¹⁶⁷ Wright, *Phonology, Word-Formation and Accidence*, 131.

¹⁶⁸ University of Antwerp, *Gothic Bible*, John 6:10

¹⁶⁹ “From *Christus und die Samariterin*,” in *Althochdeutsches Lesebuch*, ed. Wilhelm Braune, 15th ed. (Tübingen: Max Niemeyer Verlag, 1969), 136, line 26.

I sit here, in-group waiting for the start.
 Two months in and they have begun to question
 why I am here. I have contributed nothing. I say
 nothing. I do not speak.

¹⁷⁰ University of Antwerp, *Gothic Bible*,
 Gal. 4:6.
¹⁷¹ Irvine and Everhart, *Beowulf*, line 1950.
¹⁷² Irvine and Everhart, *Beowulf*, line 1950.

Gothic: (father) *insandida gup ahman sunaus seinis in hairtona izwara hropjandan:*
*abba, fadar*¹⁷⁰

OE: *be fæder lare*¹⁷¹

While simply looking at the wor(l)d does not reveal the value of the letter, it can be
 inferred by tracing the evolution of the word. In subsequent texts, I tried to speak. But still,
 the they believe it is not wrong to assume ‘f’ in OE had the pronunciation /f/. We are here to
 help, the line goes. You can tell us anything. I believed them because I was told I could trust
 them. Trust the hims and the hes and the theys.

Gothic: *Firm reliance on the integrity, ability, or character of a person or thing*

OE: *ofer fealone flod*¹⁷²

I am to trust because
 I have been told to trust. The
 they have said I am to trust.
 There is no option not to trust.
 It has been coming, but I know
 the instant that I fall to it, to
 the Rule of One, to the I in the
 third person. I am becomes I
 is in the present but in the past

there is no difference I was was always I was and in the future I will is the same as I will.

Who is the one in the Rule of One? One is characterized by unity; undivided.

One:

being as single entity, unit,

object, or living being

The they say think what the

they would say.

If a tree falls
in a forest
and I am
around to
hear it, does
it make a
sound?

The they think, breathe, move,

act

as 1

I

act

I

act

I

act

I

act

One:

characterized by unity; undivided

The the say act as not the I.

One:

single; lone, not two or more

One:

distinct from all others; only; unique

at one with:

in a state of agreement or harmony

off on one:

exhibiting bad temper; ranting

one and all:

everyone, WITHOUT exception

The they says not the I.

Dentals (Dichotomy of Happy versus Sad)

The acknowledgement of depression necessarily creates the dichotomy of happy versus sad. Either I am happy or I am sad.

Psychiatry defines what is sad, but does not define what is happy. Everything then is put in opposition to one another. The doing of one thing categorizes the person as sad and the absence of doing that one thing categorizes the person as happy.

Gothic: (money; acc. pl.) *How do you envision your future?*¹⁷³

OE: *Who is it that can define why an act constitutes sadness?*

OHG: *Affected or characterized by sorrow or unhappiness*¹⁷⁴

PGmc /t/ failed to shift in the consonant clusters /tr/, /ht/, /ft/, and /st/.¹⁷⁵
Art is in the eye of the beholder.

Gothic: (power) *Who is it that can define why an act constitutes happiness?*¹⁷⁶

¹⁷³ ~~University of Antwerp, Gothic Bible, Matt. 27:6.~~

It strikes her suddenly, with passive awe when it occurs to her that she does not think about the next day. It is not a matter of not thinking about it, about living in the moment, but something else entirely. It should concern her, but it doesn't. And that should cause some fear.

¹⁷⁴ ~~Dunphy, Das Annotied, 28.~~

If she does not smile, she must be sad. She'll kick the shit out of the next person who commands her to turn that frown upside down.

¹⁷⁵ ~~Wright, Phonology, Word-Formation and Accidence, 132.~~

¹⁷⁶ ~~University of Antwerp, Gothic Bible, Matt. 8:28.~~

Fuck Barney, Mr. Rogers, Big Bird. What do they really know?

OHG: *Enjoying, showing, or marked by
pleasure, satisfaction, or joy*

Are not the acts of depression, the vile acts of
which no one speaks, characterized as satisfac-
tion?¹⁷⁷

¹⁷⁷ Wright, *Phonology, Word-Formation
and Accidence*, 109.

They tell her, her satisfaction causes them
pain. The meaning is lost on her, not so much be-
cause they feel empathy, but the idea that this should
hurt. ¹⁷⁸ Mayhew, *Old English Phonology*, 123.

She's dead inside and she doesn't care how
fucking cliché that is. There's nothing left inside to
go on, emotionally, physically, there's nothing. But
she goes on.

Gothic: (to call; past part. nom. sing)

*They tell us that suicide is the greatest act of cowardice... that suicide is wrong; when
it is quite obvious that there is nothing in the world to which every man has a more
unassailable title to than to his own life and person.*

OE: (1st per. Sing) *When life is so burdensome, death has become for man a
sought-after refuge*

OHG: (3rd per. pl.) *The destruction or ruin of one's own interests*

Everywhere an opinion, but none stands under like the one in the wrong.¹⁷⁸

Gothic: (to eat) *Sometimes I dream that you've had a really bad time of things. You're
out of work, behind on bills, your date stood you up, you're tired, and you just want to
sit and watch TV while eating a bag of potato chips.*

OE: *Even still, you don't understand*

What does the they have to say? What does the they advise?

What right has
the government
to decide an
act committed
against oneself is
illegal?

Rule 1: *Sit up, shut down.*

Rule 2: *Do as you ought to.*

Rule 3: *Obey.*

I have done everything commanded of me.

Gothic: (to ask) *Attended meetings as scheduled*

OE: (1st per. sing.) *Provided relevant personal data*

OHG: *Succumbed to the (un)promise*

In OE, PGmc /d/ had no realizations.

These are the demands of which you made, but I am becomes I is in every end. The phoneme has a greater change. As a result, it became /d/ in all WGmc languages. Once in OHG, however, it shifted again to /t/ as part of the HGC Shift.¹⁷⁹

OE: (dead) *dēad as found in the phrase ða wæs Heregar dead*¹⁸⁰

OHG: *tot ist Hiltibrant*¹⁸¹

If not for change, why did you come, you ask.

Gothic: (word) *sijaip~þan waurd izwar*¹⁸²

OE: *There is an ache within, a cold, gasping, clenching ache. It churns, burns, hovers as I ponder.*¹⁸³

I sit here, in this room, listening because you never ask. You command as if I am a genie, then threaten banishment because I cannot explain the difference between then and now.

I know one single thing: I am not who I was, I believe. I know I was different. I believe that at one time I was happy.

Gothic: (three; acc.) *I do not meet the definition of happy, therefore I must be sad.*

OHG: *What does the they command of me?*

In OE, PGmc /θ/ had two phonemes: /θ/ and /ð/.¹⁸⁴ When PGmc /θ/ occurred initially

¹⁷⁹ ~~Wright, *Phonology, Word-Formation and Accidence*, 111.~~

¹⁸⁰ ~~Irvine and Everhart, *Beowulf*, line 467.~~

~~She once asked herself, how could this happen to me? No answer came.~~

¹⁸¹ ~~“From *Das Hildebrandslied*,” in *Althochdeutsches Lesebuch*, ed. Wilhelm Braune, 15th ed. (Tübingen: Max Niemeyer Verlag, 1969), 85, line 44.~~

¹⁸² ~~University of Antwerp, *Gothic Bible*, Matt. 5:37.~~

¹⁸³ ~~Irvine and Everhart, *Beowulf*, line 612.~~

~~A smile is a light in window of your soul. Her light is the cinnamon candle, the smoke obscures the window.~~

¹⁸⁴ ~~William E. Rogers, “From *The Old English Consonant ‘Thorn’*” in *The history of English phonemes* <http://facweb.furman.edu/~wrogers/phonemes/phone/oe/theta.htm>~~

or was near voiceless phonemes, the result was

the voiceless inter-dental fricative /θ/.¹⁸⁵

Gothic: (thy) *jah jainar gamuneis þatei*

*broþar þeins habaiþ hva bi þuk*¹⁸⁶

OE: *sī þīn nama gehālgod*¹⁸⁷

If the same phoneme occurred when surrounded by voiced phonemes, the result was the voiced inter-dental fricative /ð/.¹⁸⁸

Gothic: (brother) *Your wish is my command.*

OE: *What does the they(e) command?*

Despite having slightly different values, OE scribes never tried to differentiate between them.¹⁸⁹ In fact, either ‘ð’ or ‘þ’ could be used to represent either sound.

The difference the he before him and the him after he tell me between the two and me is a binary. They are happy and because my actions are the opposite of theirs, I am sad. I know I was once happy. Once I knew that I was happy. The him asks about the future and when did this all happen. What came before the Big Bang is an easier question. I hear the him sigh and I see the exasperation every day, every time I blink, I see it. I see the faces in-group when I am out of group. I know the looks, I see their words, their thoughts. I force myself to focus on the world around because then I can see something different, hear something else. But all I see is the he before him, the him after he, the they and I see everything and ask, when does it end?

Gutturals

This has happened before. I remember each and every time. I remember the how, the when, but not the order.

¹⁸⁵ Rogers, “Consonant ‘Thorn.’”

¹⁸⁶ University of Antwerp, *Gothic Bible*, Matt. 5:23.

¹⁸⁷ Baskervill and Harrison, *Anglo-Saxon Prose Reader*, 60. Lord’s Prayer, 4. ¹⁸⁸ Rogers, “Consonant ‘Thorn.’”

¹⁸⁹ Smith, *Essentials of Early English*, 47.

The desire to leave, the panic, the compulsion to leave. The need to run. Their eyes and their thoughts. Their thoughts reverberate in my

head, with my thoughts. Stupid. Stupid. Stupid. Stupid. Stupid. Stupid.

Gothic: (to have; 3rd per. pl.) *Their eyes, the eyes of the he before him and the he after him, the they. Every thought swirls, goes around, and pierces.*

OHG: *I wanted to run, but I couldn't for their eyes.*

I run the images through my head, no they run through me, through my head. Over and over again, they force me to contemplate what happened, to think that maybe there was another way. In Gothic, this shift was written 'h'.

Gothic: (near) *slipping down the stairs at school*

OHG: *tripping over an uneven tile*

I know there was no other way. Logically, I know this, but I know too, something could've been done different, if only I had thought, if only I wasn't such an idiot, a fool.

Gothic: (mighty or powerful) *stomach growling in the middle of an exam*

OHG: *falling up the stairs during passing period*

They were looking, thinking. Everyone was. I can feel their eyes and thoughts. By the 9th century, /x/ was dropped when it came before the consonants /l/, /n/, /r/, and /w/.¹⁹⁰

Gothic: (where) *good for* *nothing*

OE: *waste of every* *thing*

OHG: *drain on every* *one*

Nothing will stop it, nothing works.

Gothic: (hundred; dat. pl.) *twaim hundam skatte hlaibos ni ganohai sind þaim*¹⁹¹

OE: *pā wæs ymb tū hund wintra*¹⁹²

When does it end? How can I make it

end?

Gothic: (where) *I can no longer decide*

if the time spent alone with my own

thoughts is better than the time I spend

in the world. The thoughts penetrate

wherever I am. The walls of my room, my apartment no longer impervious.

OE: *Oft seldan hwær*¹⁹³

In-group I am told these don't matter. Everyone, the he before him especially, says no one else remembers. No one else notices. But I remember. My mind remembers. I know what I've done and what others have done. I remember the errors of mine and I remember the mistakes of theirs. What, I ask, am I to do with the images, the sounds that continually play, exposing me as an idiot, a jerk, a fool to myself? In all other cases, it had the sound of a harsher voiceless glottal fricative /x/ like the 'ch' in Modern German ach.¹⁹⁴ In OE this is found in the word for how do I make this all end?¹⁹⁵

The him before he said it would end when I want it to end.

I guess, I don't really want it to end. In all positions, when following one of the consonants /l/, /m/, /n/, or /r/ or if in gemination, /k/ shifted to the affricate /kh/ sometimes written 'ch.'¹⁹⁶

OE: (work; dat. sing.) *I asked them, how do I make it end?*

OHG (High Alemanic): *The they said to ask myself.*

As they speak, the in-group, I listen. My problems are insignificant to theirs. My

¹⁹² Baskervill and Harrison, "From *The Roman Occupation of Britain*," in *Anglo-Saxon Prose Reader*, 73, line, 23.

¹⁹³ Irvine and Everhart, *Beowulf*, line 2029.

¹⁹⁴ Rogers "Consonant 'H'" Clark, *Early English*, 60.

¹⁹⁵ Irvine and Everhart, *Beowulf*, line 2405.

One day, lying in the cool fall grass, she stumbles upon a thought, an inkling of a moment. It is transient; it is wispy, willowed. It ghosts the mind as it flits. The inkling wants to be reticent, recalcitrant; it wants to not be a want.

¹⁹⁶ Wright, *Phonology, Word-Formation and Accidence*, 109.

thoughts play endlessly while they fret about a test.

Gothic: (I) *What they meant by that was obvious*.¹⁹⁷

OHG: *I could see it in their eyes*.

If I weren't so weak, I could do better.

I could be better. I might just not screw everything up. If near back vowels such as /o/, /u/, or /a/, it would sound like the velar stop /k/ as in modern English kite.¹⁹⁸

Gothic: (to know) *to perceive directly; grasp in the mind with clarity or certainty*

OE: (preterit) *to regard as true beyond doubt*

They all wish that I would stop, that I would silence myself and I do as well.

Gothic: (cold; gen. sing.) *jah saei gadragkeiþ ainana þize minnistane stikla kaldis*

*watins þatainei in namin siponeis*¹⁹⁹

OE: *cealde streamas*²⁰⁰

It's raining, it's pouring
The old man is snoring
He bumped his head
And won't wake in the morning

I talked to someone I knew from somewhere else today. She told me the same thing they did. When occurring initially, it became the voiced stop /g/ in Franconian and /k/ in Upper German.²⁰¹

MG South Rhine Franconian: (to give; preterit) *broot unseraz emetzīgaz gib uns hiutu*²⁰²

UG Bavarian: *Rain, rain, don't go away, please come back this evening*

I should stop all of this. The thought occurs to me the second after I say hello to the

¹⁹⁷ University of Antwerp, *Gothic Bible*, Matt. 5:22.

The same question reverberated, endlessly and without a sign of slowing. At times it occurred that it might not have been intentional. At times, she thought it could have been an accident. But then, why did this accident happen to her?

¹⁹⁸ Pyles, *Origins and Development*, 109.

¹⁹⁹ University of Antwerp, *Gothic Bible*, Matt. 10:42.

²⁰⁰ Irvine and Everhart, *Beowulf*, line 1261.

²⁰¹ Wright, *Phonology, Word-Formation and Accidence*, 111.

²⁰² "From *Weissenburger Katechismus*," in *Althochdeutsches Lesebuch*, ed. Wilhelm Braune, 15th ed. (Tübingen: Max Niemeyer Verlag, 1969), 35, line 15.

cashier. I'm trying to make small talk because
that's what normal people do.

OE: (eye; nom. pl.) *þæt ēowre ēagan*

bēoð geopenode on swā hwilcum dæge

*swā gē etað of þām trēowe*²⁰³

OHG: *da mite si dir din ouga gesege-*

*et*²⁰⁴

Shut up, stupid. I'm an idiot. I should just keep quiet. He must think I'm a complete
idiot. I walk back to the car disgusted with myself and wishing I had the strength to cut my
tongue out.

OE: (day) *Waste of everyone*

High and Low Alemanic: *Good for no one*

Bavarian: *Drain on everything*

I suppose, the greater punishment is for me to continue. There are times when I think
that, but then I remember how much of a drain I am on everyone and I consider the possibili-
ties.

Gothic: (good; acc. sing.) *Sit up and shut down*

OE: *þæt þæt trēow wæs gōd tō etanne*²⁰⁵

My penance is to confess to someone what I did. To tell them about the failure to
make small talk. To tell them that I am sure the cashier is freaked out. I tell someone who
says they are my friend.

Gothic: (year; gen. pl.) *a person whom one knows, likes, and trusts*

OE: (acc. sing.) *a person with whom one is allied in a struggle or cause; crusade*

²⁰³ Baskervill and Harrison, "From *The Garden of Eden*," in *Anglo-Saxon Prose Reader*, 63, line 6-7.

²⁰⁴ Titus Texts, "From *Augensegen*," in *Lesser Old High German Monuments* <http://titus.uni-frankfurt.de/texte/ctes/germ/ahd/klahddkm/klahddt.htm>, line 7.

²⁰⁵ Baskervill and Harrison, "From *The Garden of Eden*," in *Anglo-Saxon Prose Reader*, 63, line 9.

I don't like people. I don't have friends. I don't like friends.

²⁰⁶ Pyles, *Origins and Development*, 110.
²⁰⁷ Baskervill and Harrison, "From *The Roman Occupation of Britain*," in *Anglo-Saxon Prose Reader*, 72, line 21.

Gothic: (city or town) *Today, I ask the*

²⁰⁸ University of Antwerp, *Gothic Bible*, Matt. 8:6.
²⁰⁹ Irvine and Everhart, *Beowulf*, line 3129.

world to back away. Today, I do not want

to contribute, interact, or exist. Today, I want the world far away as I sit in the corner of my room contemplating my next move.

OE: (acc. sing.) *What would the they say?*

When /g/ came directly after /n/ and occurred medially or finally it gave /ŋ/.²⁰⁶

Gothic (long) *What do you want us to do, help you?*

OE: *Ʒæt is Ʒrīttiges mīla lang ēast and west*²⁰⁷

This is the (un)promise, the sit up, shut down, do as I say. This is how it works, but I don't know how to change.

Gothic: (to lie down) *to go from one phase to another, as the moon or the seasons*

OS: *to put a fresh covering on*

UG: *to exchange for or replace with another, usually of the same kind or category*

Today, I decided to talk, but not to the they. I just talked.

Gothic: (to lie down) *jah qībands: frauja, þiunagus meins ligiþ in garda usliþa, harduba balwiþs*²⁰⁸

OE: *læne licgan*²⁰⁹

But I don't think the person listened. I'm not even sure they knew I was talking.

Normally, I talk to the walls in my apart-ment. But I thought. I was feeling hopeful, so I took a chance. I took a chance and talked about anything. I'm sure though, they thought I was conceited and full of myself. I should've just kept my mouth shut. When will I ever learn?

Just keep your stupid mouth shut next time. No
 But
 one wants to hear about what you've done, what
 Then I think
 Everything
 you're doing. No one really cares.
 And no one says stop.

Sibilant and Semi-Vowels

Today, again, the him after he asked how
 I feel. My lack of response was categorized as
 non-compliant.
 If I were stronger, this would be over
 The problem is not that I do not feel.²¹⁰
 and everyone would be happy
 That is the mistake everyone makes.

Gothic: (good or kind) *I feel everything*.

OHG: *At once, everything*.

The common thought is that depression is different for everyone, that the metaphor is unique.

Gothic: (ship) *I feel nothing because I feel everything*.²¹¹

OHG: *Vuzir ein deil mit scifmenigin quamin nidir cir Eilbin*²¹²

Sometimes I think maybe I'm not such a screw-up.

Gothic: (seven) *waste of everything, good for nothing*

OE: *drain on everyone*

If /s/ occurred between vowels or a vowel and a voiced consonant, it
 was pronounced as the voiced fricative /z/.²¹³

Gothic: (to arise; 3rd per. pl.) *I understand*.

OE: (imp. 2nd per. sing.) *I felt the same way after my cat died*.

Tissues are passed around for the dead cat because that is understood.

²¹⁰ Wright, *Phonology, Word-Formation and Accidence*, 146.

The heart wants what the heart wants.

Is that what she wants?

Is this what she wants?

What does the body want?

What does the body need?

The heart?

²¹¹ University of Antwerp, *Gothic Bible*.

John 6:22.

And deep within me is the pit, the hole that
 divides my whole. There is the everything and the
 nothing, the in between and excluded.

²¹² Dunphy, *Das Annotied*, 21.

²¹³ Pyles, *Origins and Development*, 110-1.

Depression
 is driving on
 the inter-
 state, looking
 longingly into
 the warmly
 lit houses as
 you count
 the endless
 miles to your
 dark
 home.

The they says they understand me, too.

Gothic: (winter) *Ich verstehe*.

OHG: *Ich bin deprimiert, weil heute*

mein Auto kaput ist.

A symphony of sympathy and empathy
echoes.²¹⁴

OE: (he swore) *ne me swor fela*²¹⁵

OHG: *er imo gesuor forbrihchit ob ih*

*inan es iruuenden*²¹⁶

The purpose of this is to find the root.

Gothic: (to be) *When did this begin? When did you notice that something was off?*

*When did you start feeling sad? When did you stop doing laundry? When did you stop
sleeping in your bed? When did you stop cooking? When did you stop doing dishes?*

When did you stop cleaning your living space? When did you stop living?

OE: *I don't know*.²¹⁷

It does no good in the long term to treat the surface. I think the they delight in pro-
voking the confusion, the frustration because I don't know when. And the he before him and
the him after he stoke the fire, their anger incensing the weekly ritual.

Whenever
Gothic: (young) *I know*

During the time at which
how this goes

While
Because it can never be different

Whereas
This is how it works

What or which time
EMHG: *Dar sule wir denkin alt unti iungin*²¹⁸
The time or date

²¹⁴ ~~Wright, *Phonology, Word-Formation and
Accidence*, 119.~~

The moan, an utterance of sympathy.
The face, contorted in empathy.
Sympathy is only skin deep. Empathy, as well.

²¹⁵ ~~Irvine and Everhart, *Beowulf*, line 2738.~~

²¹⁶ ~~"From *Die Straßburger Eide*," in *Altho-
chdeutsches Lesebuch*, ed. Wilhelm Braune, 15th
ed. (Tübingen: Max Niemeyer Verlag, 1969), 57,
line 28.~~

She remembers the bus rides, sitting beside
the window looking out on the cool, rainy day.
Riding into town, straight to the Hauptbahnhof, the
doors open with the push of a button. They close as
she exits.

²¹⁷ ~~Irvine and Everhart, *Beowulf*, line 1328.~~

But I don't know that I want to start again.

²¹⁸ ~~Dunphy, *Das Annolied*, Verse 43.~~

It is not for lack of trying that I do not answer

their taunts.²¹⁹ Do you remember when you

stopped speaking in broken, kid's English?

When did you begin to understand how the

I is, she am

world really works? When did you decide that

One and the same

the opposite sex didn't have cooties after all?

The same and one

When did you realize that people die? When did

you understand that not everyone is like you?²²⁰

²¹⁹ ~~Wright, *Phonology, Word-Formation and Accidence*, 123.~~

What to do you want us to do, prompt you?

²²⁰ ~~Wright, *Phonology, Word-Formation and Accidence*, 123.~~

What strikes her the most is the knowledge that there was a before which she cannot recall.

Before this there was something. There always is a before. Everything must have an opposite, everything.

²²¹ ~~Example cannot be found likely because of date.~~

Contemplating and not, she sits outside. If she could just not that would be better, better than the ruinous ruminations, the reverberating recantations. Better than what?

Gothic: (will) *the mental faculty by which one deliberately chooses or decides upon a course of action*

OHG: initially *willio*;²²¹ ~~9th century~~ *a desire, purpose, or determination, especially of one in authority*

The rule of one commands.

Gothic: (army) *The I in the third person*

OHG: *Characterized by unity*

Of the same kind or quality

Forming a single entity of two or more components

The poison fills the room and my body, in the deepest of betrayals, absorbs it.

Gothic: (young) *My body aches as my life spills from my mouth. How many times has this happened and how many times have I spent the remaining day reminding myself*

not to, to bite my tongue, even after ten,

twenty

thirty

How many times before it stops?

How raw must I be before the end?

*How much does the rule of one com-
mand?*

OE: Once more, mark upon mark, welt

upon welt, blister upon blister. And again

until...

²²² University of Antwerp, *Gothic Bible*,
Luke 15:25.

She lies, curled, arms wrapped from the
unspeakable pain.

²²³ Mayhew, *Old English Phonology*, 108.

Is she to blame when they ask her how
she's doing, the generic greeting and she answers in
kind?

Does it sound better to tell the honest truth,
that no she is not fucking fine, she's rather shitty
today?

Would that help?

Would it help if someone listened?

In contrast to previous sets, the rules affecting the PGmc sibilants and semi-vowels dealt with their position in words, not the phoneme as a whole. Thus, the systems resulting in OHG and OE are remarkably alike with the sounds /s/, /w/, and /j/. Only one exception exists: OE's allophonic /z/. Despite the similarities, the other changes had an effect on the mutual intelligibility degree between the languages, causing yet another weight to be added to the balance.

You never have
before, so why
start now?

Liquids

The one thing I ask for is to be left alone today, at least for the night.

I promise to do nothing, but let me be.

Gothic: (old; comp. weak mas. nom. sing.) *I want to be alone in my anger. Alone in
my self-loathing, alone as I ponder what to do, when this happened and what exactly*

*this is. Just leave me be and I promise that tonight I will do nothing.*²²²

You don't, can't understand. The moment that it becomes too much to bear.

OHG: (comp.) *Morgen verpreche ich nichts.*

The moment that physical, tangible, credible pain pales in comparison.

Please do nothing to interfere.²²³

The moment when you finally do something.

Gothic: (old; comp. weak mas. nom. sing.) *Already, you've done too much.*

The moment after, the bliss, an easing.

OE: *I lie about, thinking as music plays. The TV is muted. I watched a movie that*

You won't understand and I pray you never have to.

*started with a guy deciding to get out of
bed and clean his apartment. He's metic-
ulous in it. We don't see it all, but it's a
mess, so it must've take some time. Still,
he's thorough. He doesn't want to leave
any mess for the person who has to clean
up after him.*

²²⁴ ~~Wright, *Phonology, Word-Formation
and Accidence*, 125.~~

She walks back from the school, die
Grundschule, from trying to interact with ten-year-
olds. Her role is the native English speaker. They
are to be the attentive listeners and learners. Ten-
year-old kids would rather go play. She'd rather go
as well. Even as today is a good day because she
brushed her teeth.

How do you pronounce yoghurt?
British or American?

²²⁵ ~~University of Antwerp, *Gothic Bible*,
Cor. 110:16.~~

She is not trained to detect her own lies.

I wonder how he felt when he saw the dust bunny while lying on the bathroom floor
with a sink full of blood.

Gothic: (father) *I think my apartment might be worse than his, but I wouldn't be
thoughtless enough to leave a dust bunny.*

OHG: *Tonight none of that matters. Not the bags of groceries left on the kitchen floor
because I was too tired to put them away. Not the pile of dirty dishes growing mold.
Not the dryer full of clothes that need to be folded. I don't know what matters.*

I asked to be left alone.²²⁴

Early OHG: (here) *to cause or allow to be or remain in a specified state*

Late OHG: *to remove oneself from association with or participation in*

Is that really too much?

Gothic: (to break; 1st per. pl.) *If I'm alone, if I'm by myself I can't screw up, I can't
cause any trouble, I can't do anything wrong*²²⁵

OE: *The Rule of One* Recalling the before requires recognition of
the change and understanding of the after.

The Rule of One dictates that I am to ask myself what would the they do, what would
the they say before I do something The they said they understood, they knew what I was

going through. The he before him and the him
after he agreed.²²⁶

This is the greatest mistake, the false
empathy. It's the kind that says just get over
it, the kind that thinks I've just had a bad day.
It's worse than the plethora of home remedies

because I was too ignorant to realize that this could be resolved through the repetition of the
names of Biblical figures. How can I pull myself up by my bootstraps if I don't have the will
to change from pajamas?

Nasals

I'm not permitted to tell the they that they do not understand because we are seated in
the same room, we must all understand.

Contrary to popular belief, I am aware of what goes on about me.

Gothic: (power; preterit 3rd per. sing.) *I am aware of the judgment because I feel it.*

*I feel it in the constant eyes on me, which I detect even with closed eyes. I know that
those eyes hold disgust, disappointment, disdain.*

OHG: *And I accept it.*

OE: *I accept the emotional tempest, rooted deep in the fibers of the being. I accept as
I sit on the cliché of an island that the he before him left me on because that was the
solution.*²²⁷

I have found my own.

Gothic: (winter) *in the endless bags of potato chips, cartons of Neapolitan ice cream,
buckets of fried chicken, I have found my own*

²²⁶ Pei and Gaynor, *Dictionary of Linguistics*, 34.

Perhaps that was the moment she should've left. Perhaps that was the time when she should've realized this was a waste of time. Perhaps, perhaps. Perhaps leads to one thing, tomorrow. And tomorrow, perhaps she'll do something.

²²⁷ Irvine and Everhart, *Beowulf*, line 2047.

The answer should have been innate, a given. The heart wants what the heart wants. But does the heart want what the heart needs? Where does the answer lay?

OHG: *in scribbles of suicidal animals, I
have found my own*

OE: *in the cinnamon heat, I have found
my own*

I've tried the Rule of One, I've contemplated what would the they say.²²⁸ I can no more say what the they would do, than the they could say what I would do.'

Gothic: (to think) *The poison is a truth
serum, not an honesty serum.*

EMHG: *The (un)intentional (un)promise.*²²⁹

In OE, PGmc /ŋ/ had no realizations.²³⁰

The honest truth is the one which the they cannot discuss. The he before him never ventured it, nor did the him. And the him after he could no more discuss it than the they. Every week I have come, not eager, but reliant. They have danced around the issues, around the honest truth because this is not about honesty. The promise was only the truth. Honesty is the word which we must discuss because it is important. We can never achieve it if we don't talk about it. The honest truth is a selfish lie.

²²⁸ ~~Wright, *Phonology, Word-Formation and Accidence*, 127.~~

How do the others do it, she wonders. How do the others divine the answer, their solution? Has she not paid the toll? Fulfilled the duties, kept to the rules. Sit up, shut down
do as you ought

obey

Where is her solution?

²²⁹ ~~Dunphy, *Das Annolied*, verse 43.~~

Early on, someone wanted to make a deal with her. A friend wanted her to make a promise. The promise: if it gets bad, get help. She wonders if she waited too long.

²³⁰ ~~William E. Rogers, "From *The Consonant 'NG'*" in *The history of English phonemes* <http://facweb.furman.edu/~wrogers/phonemes/phone/stable/ng.htm>~~

She sits on a bench in the park, in den Hofgarten, right hand furiously writing a backwards narrative on the graph paper notebook. On a nearby bench, a mother sits breast-feeding her infant. A couple of school kids pass in front, rushing away from another school day done. Out in the field, a pick-up game of soccer to accompany the imported game of ultimate Frisbee on the other end, both actively played in the fresh green grass. When did the grass become green?

Tipping the Balance Towards Mutual Unitelligibility

When I was a kid, I would spin in circles
with my arms out. Standing, I was a T, spinning
a tornado. I spun until I was sick, until I fell on
the ground like a happy drunk. I was happy. I
never liked tornadoes, but I knew everything about them. There are so many things that today
I don't understand. There are things that I want to understand because I stand under. I stand
under change, but I do not understand. This is the (un)promise. The (un)promise dictates the
standing under concealed within the understanding. (do you stand under?) Things exist too
that I do not want to understand because under them I stand. They are the same things I want
to understand.²³¹ Life is funny like that, don't you know. Everyone says it, but I mean it. Life
really is funny because it is not what you expect, not what they tell you it will be. And I find
that hilarious because you actually believe them. I did, but then they say change. I was happy
once. Once I spun around until I was sick, pretending I was a tornado. I fell on the ground,
waiting for the dizziness to pass. The grass was nice. Then I stood, as a child the under-
standing was to spin the opposite direction to get rid of the dizziness. As a teen, I found this
partially true. Every day, the they tell me what to do and when I do not listen, the they tell me
to listen. I do because I have been trained that to change I must listen. There is a difference
between listening and hearing. I am to listen and they are to hear. The him after he, the he
before him, and the him are to hear and I, in the third person, am to listen. Listening is the
key to change and each say I want change. He says. She says. They say. Day in. He says. She
says. They say. Day out. I listen. Some days, I hear voices. They talk about boyfriends, sex,
a failed test, and the agony of starting a paper. Other days, today, I hear nothing. There are
I never say because you never ask.
I never talk because you never speak.
I never tell because you never listen.
I never ask for help because you never offer.

no voices. I feel, but I feel nothing. Daily, I ask
 myself what do I want. I ask myself if I want to
 feel. But never once do I answer.

²³² ~~Lehmann, *Historical Linguistics*, 108:~~
 Do I listen to myself?
 Do I hear myself?
 Do I want to?
 Do I want?

Do I?

I never did believe any of it until now. I
 could not believe that this could happen to me. But then, why not. All of our struggles never
 to be just another number; we can handle number 1,001, but not 999. All of these struggles to
 be something other than 999 ensure that we are 998. We achieve both failure and success. I
 remember the failure because even 1,000 would suffice. Where does 998 belong? I still find it
 hard to believe because I know then was different from now, but I do not know why. I cannot
 describe the then any better than I can the now.²³² How do you describe color to the blind?
 The he before him asked me when this started. He wanted to know. I did, do too. Because if I
 know, then maybe I can answer the why. Maybe then I can tell myself the difference between
 then and now. Maybe if I can tell the he before him, then I tell the I in the third person. I can
 catch a glimpse, but I can never understand. I want no more glimpses. How to explain color
 to the blind? The he before him says. The him after he says. The they say. The him says the
 solution to sadness is happiness $t = \frac{\log c}{2 \log r}$ but how to explain color to the blind? I stand under
 without understanding. I know I move from day to day because I must, because I do. Day to
 day I ask why. My answer is because and I leave myself waiting for the answer. But because
 will have to suffice, else there is no answer and no reason. Again, I ask myself what is my
 future because I have never been able to answer the question. They have given up. What is
 my future? What was past? Then again, I ask myself what is my future because I have never
 been able to answer the question. They have given up. What is my future? What was past?
 They took my “I don’t know” for flippancy, for lack of care, for lack of want. Can you see

your future, never once did they ask even though that was more likely the appropriate question. But again, how can I see the future when I do not know the past? I came here for something, because something compelled me to come. I want to know that something because I do not understand it. I want to know why. Yesterday I sat in the grass. The ground was wet and the grass hadn't been mowed in days, but I sat there. I felt nothing, but the emptiness inside. That's not the cliché you think it is because it is real. You don't understand and you never will because you never ask. You never listen so I never tell. So, I feel what you call the cliché, what you deem impossible and I listen silently when you tell me to get over it, to suck it up because that's life. I listen when you don't.

In the end, you'll ask why and you will listen but I will never tell because you never asked.

In the grass, I sit and think about the others that sit in the grass. They are happy. I envy them for that. They smile. They laugh. They joke. They jest. They do what I want to do but cannot. How do I smile? Turn the frown upside down. How do I frown? A smile is worth a thousand words I am told. What about the mouth that does not smile? What is that worth? You do not have to never listen for me to know my worth. As I sit here, it becomes clear. I watch the other people, but then dart away to ponder a tree when the girl in the pink dress looks over. Did she catch me looking? What did she think? I must've looked like such a creep, just staring. I know I scare little kids. They don't have to say anything. I just know. They never want to approach me. I stand awkwardly around them. Did she tell her parents I was staring? It wasn't my intent; it happens, doesn't it? No, of course it doesn't. I just stare. Stupid. Stupid. Stupid. Stupid. Stupid. Stupid. Stupid. Stupid. Stupid. Stupid. Stupid. Stupid. Why can't I ever learn? It never stops. I wish, I wish I could just get it right just once. Just once. They're talking to each other, the mother and the father. They laugh. I know they're talking about me. Mocking me. The couple to my right is talking too. I can hear them, but

I can accept now that I am depressed. For whatever reason, I can accept that as fact. As much as they would call that a victory, it really doesn't change anything. Step one is acceptance, I am told. I am depressed because I am a horrible person. I do not deserve to be happy. I deserve nothing because I am nothing. I am a waste. I am a drain on everyone. I can do nothing right. I can't do anything. I am depressed because of myself. This is my acceptance.

The pat response is no, it's not your fault. It's chemicals in your brain that are out of balance. They're the reason. I am depressed because I have a faulty brain. They use the same reasoning, the same explanation every time because maybe today I'll believe them. I am depressed not because I am a horrible person. I am depressed because I have a faulty brain.

UG: (peace) *something that impairs or detracts from physical perfection*

OE: *responsibility for a mistake or an offense*

The goal, I am told repeatedly, of this is to discover where my depression comes from. They want to know why and believe that if I discover this reason, then my problems will go away. But instead their daily question is, what do you want us to do, help you?

In another life, another time I found this all strange. I never once thought I would be here. It strikes me at the most unsuspecting moments, driving to work, reading a book, making dinner, anything really because my mind wanders. I think about this and I try to imagine the before because I vainly believe that if I know the before, I can fix the present, and we can move to the after even though I cannot imagine the after. In those flashes, I understand that this isn't how it used to be. I understand that it wasn't always the norm.

But before I can think of how to describe the use to be, the present is all I know once more. I am left with the fleeting notion that something was once different. If there is one sil-

ver lining that comes from this it is that I no longer fear death. I do not cling onto each year, letting go only when it's obvious that I am not that age any more. Another year older, one less year to death. I don't know when the moment came, when the realization hit, or when the care fled, but it happened. I don't seek out death, but I wouldn't run away if a car failed to stop at the sign. There are days when I think about that car more than I realize I should, but it nevertheless has an allure. I imagine the brief, embracing seconds of pain and the warmth that follows.

My favorite sound is hearing the cicadas. It provides a certain feeling that I can't place. I think it reminds me of the before, which I don't know when became the present. I listen to their buzzing until the fireflies come out. All day I've sat in this park. The grass, I'm sure, is flat beneath me and I envy the ease I know it will have in returning to normal when I leave. I've sat here, thinking, watching as the park-goers come and go. Some children chase fireflies in the waning daylight. Soon the only thing visible will be the hand in front of my face, but that, I know, is nothing new. I don't know what I was expecting by sitting here. Group finished early this morning, nothing more gained than from day one. I do know the intimate details of the others' childhoods, sex-lives, and minds. I would rather become acquainted with the firefly resting peacefully on my knee.

The best time of the year is the first snowfall, watching in silence as it gently covers a heap of dark dirt. It stops everything I think of doing, everything I think and I wonder afterward if this may be the solution. I tried it once, laying outside in the snow, nothing but a pair of pajama bottoms and short sleeve shirt. I felt nothing until I was brought inside by a good Samaritan. Then I was cold. That was the first time I thought something about my own death. Curious that I can recall that perfectly. I think of it as dreaming about your death and then

dying in real life. Maybe I am lying to myself, I think. Maybe I'm not really like this, but I really want to be. It is the (un)intentional lie. Their intent to help is the (un)promise. Nothing, I realize, is as it appears. My increasingly fleeting moments of rational thought tell me that no one here knows my contemplations even I as I panic that everyone knows and then panic again because surely everyone can see me panicking. Their poison has cleared me enough to contemplate the dream in which I die.

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Maps

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- Map 2: Waterman, John T. *A History of the German Language*. Revised ed. Seattle: University of Washington Press, 1966, map 4.

Map 3: Robert McCrum, William Cran, and Robert MacNeil. *The Story of English*. New York: Viking Penguin, 1986, 63.