

THE EXCESS: AN ADDED REMARK ON SEX, RUBBER, ETHICS, AND OTHER IMPURITIES

Sue Golding

[1.1] 'Supposing you find these fruits unpalatable? What concern is that of the trees, or of us – the philosophers?'¹

[1.2] I've always liked the term looking glass instead of mirror, though, for most intents and purposes they name exactly the same thing. But let us offer an imaginary difference, apart from the old slang connecting looking glasses with chamber-pots.²

Let us say, as one could easily do if in the grand company of an Alice: mirrors reflect what we already know about the surface of our selves (only backwards), whereas looking glasses have an ability – if you want to play the game (or, more to the point, if you know *that* there is one) – to pull you right through and into an abyss: the abyss of an/other self or (better put) the abyss of a quasi-self, reflection notwithstanding.

For its pretend surface lets you skim along the edges of a nothing whatsoever, inscribing you within and against a homeland for the not-quite-here/not-quite there(s) of this world.

It's a peculiar place of exile; a kind of distinct arena whose parameters can blur at the edges, bleed over into neighbouring yards, leave an unpleasant stain at the centre. Perhaps there's even a smell, though no sure-footed trace of its route seems ready to hand. And as often as not,

[1.2] So, the room was very dark, save for the small candle flickering quietly by the washroom door. Johnny was wearing her laced leather jeans – tight across the ass, thick cotton shirt, sleeves rolled up, buttons hanging lazily across an open chest. At a certain angle, you could see the harness, and if you smoothed your hand over her sleeve, an arm band with a 'small-bit' attachment could be felt. Next to the belt hung a lovely cat, splayed open and mimicking each drawn swagger of her step; a single weave of rope, partially hidden away in a pocket, could just be discerned ... In short, the butch was ready.

At first glance, it was just a group grope – though when she initially entered – to be completely accurate – girls hung together in pairs, not really doing anything – just waiting. Just waiting. 'Waiting for what?', Johnny laughed impatiently, and thought it high time for the party to begin.

In the darkness, she put her hand up to an open face and began to touch the skin ever so lightly. She touched it not unlike the way one might touch a porcelain object in the dark – curiously but not without some intelligence. She ran her

1. F. Nietzsche, *The Genealogy of Morals*, translated by Francis Golffing (New York: Anchor 1956) p.150.

2. Circa 1690-1870. Among many other books noting this connection is the delightful Eric Partridge (ed.), *A Dictionary of Slang and Unconventional English Colloquialisms and Catch Phrases, Fossilised Jokes and Puns, General Nicknames, Vulgarisms and such Americanism as has been Naturalised*, (London: Routledge and Kegan Paul, 1937/1984).

when it's gone, it's as though it never had been there, nor (just as likely) that it ever could have been any different – seamless nature often being what it is (or, for that matter, what it appears to be); that is, seamless: a vanishing horizon vaporised at the very moment it traverses the past and capitulates, as extant 'trace', into the as-yet-to-be-known future tense.

But what if the looking glass's other side operated in yet a different way, an additional way? What if our exiled wonderland, while not precisely 'real', was not precisely 'unreal' either? For we are not talking here of 'fantasy' or 'performance art/theatre' or, even 'make-believe'. Well, not exactly.

We are speaking of 'something' more (and less) than that; we are speaking of a time, a space, a homeland, a-thing, a quasi-location quite a bit stranger than fiction and infinitely more reliable than truth.

We might want to name this bizarre location (long version) 'the-impossible-but-actual-limit-to-the-outside/other-side-of-otherness'. Or we could call it, nodding to its more juicier, distinctly leather variant as simply (short version) 'clit-club'.

For bodies sheathed in leather or in lycra, not to mention PVC or simple lace, all rubbing up against or inside a club so named, become a little like the looking glass itself, slang included. And as with Alice, we go, quite willingly hand-in-hand, with them, through them, breathing them, possessing them, face-to-face confronting them; absolutely borrowing or stealing from them. Taking pleasure seriously or tossing

fingers around the nose, brows, hair – just 'taking in' the information, so to speak.

Someone grabbed her from behind – suddenly, violently – pulling on her shirt, and through it, grabbing the harness, pulling, pulling. And she probably would have fallen backwards had it not been for the third woman by her leg, fingers tangled in the laces, arms surrounding the leather.

More women came in – this much she saw before she became distracted by the wanderings of a hand that started at her nipple, and continued to pass over her stomach on the way down to the buckle of a thick leather belt. But as this unexpected guest reached a 'no-turning back spot', the fingers felt the top end of the whip, and stopped.

'So pretty boy,' a voice attached to the hand whispered, 'do you actually use this thing or is it just for show?'

Johnny turned to face her – and as this boy-girl turned round, the other woman, the one whose face she had so deliberately stroked, started to peel off Johnny's shirt and threw it somewhere amidst the other bodies, now swaying to the back beat of the music (barely discernable) outside this little sweat-box of perversion and grace. Johnny's tits stood erect, quite erect now, actually, bound as they were by the harness, and energized by the smells.

The air was getting thicker, and even, I would dare say, 'hot'.

'Well?' she taunted. 'Well, pretty boy, what's your answer?'

The cowboy said nothing; just slowly began to pull out the rope. Its perfect whiteness glistened in the

it to the sea, or simply moving to a somewhere quite other than 'the where' we've just been.

In so doing, we pass into a place beyond a natural limit, pulled as it were, 'over there', over into the elsewhere of sexual mutation curiosity, and paradoxical decay.

Indeed, the 'we' and the 'them', the 'I' and the 'you', bleed into one another, stain at the centre, flicker in the distance without for a moment missing the beat, without for a moment missing the rhythm or the spaces in between this thing we have for so long called the Self.

[1.2.1] Gone are the old identities born of either/or distinctions, with their addenda: self-referential prophecies of a decidedly discrete Other. For it's a strange kind of spill over, this neither/nor transgression, one which escapes the usual Law of binary divisions like masculine/feminine, black/white, gay/straight, community/individual, public/private, life/death, truth/fiction, etc. and so forth. Simultaneously, it refuses any melted ambiguity between Self and the Other.

Indeed, it entails no (vague) sense of infinite unity, nor for that matter, does it operate from a shameful certainty arising from the (usually) vacuous details of a lack or a castration. It has even less to do with the reflexive relations of an ego/I.

For this exile is both the deep cut, the unrelenting (/), between the 'not' and its 'something', *as well as* their paradoxical and deadly unity. Indeed, it is a wonderland of extravagance in the best sense of the word: excess, and in the most

flickering light, in stark contrast from her own dark hands and mouth and eyes. Johnny cupped it deep in her left hand, and in one swift move, braced right up against her victim's throat ...

[1.2.1] 'MARY DRINKS WITH THE FARMBOYS ...' Did you come to have fun?' 'That's right,' said Mary. She tried to smile. Her smile seered through her. She took a seat next to the boy, pressed her leg against his and taking his hand put it between her thighs. When the farmhand touched her crack he moaned: 'Gawd!' The others, flushed, fell silent. One of the girls, getting up, pulled back a flap of the coat. 'Get an eyeful of this,' she said, 'she's stark naked.' Mary offered no resistance and emptied her glass. 'She likes her drink,' said the patron. Mary responded with a belch.

... MARY TAKES OUT A DRUNKARD'S COCK ... With sadness, Mary said: 'That's right!' Locks of wet black hair stuck to her face. She shook her pretty head, she got up and undid her coat. The empty coat dropped. A lout who was drinking at the back made a rush. He was bawling: 'Naked women for us!' The patron careered in on him: 'I'll get you by your snout ...' She caught

3. See for example Derrida's introduction to Lacoue-Labarthe, *Typography*, (Harvard University Press: Cambridge, 1989), p1, where, in pointing to the 'strangeness' of the verb, *desister*, he writes: 'Perhaps it doesn't mark anything negative. Perhaps the 'de' does not determine the *ister*, or rather, the *ester*. Perhaps the *de* dislodges it radically, in an uprooting that would gradually dislocate the whole series, which seemed merely to be modifying a common stem and assigning complementary attributes to it. A powerful meditation on the root, on the a-radicality of the *is*, *est*, *ister*, *ester* ...'

Those that suffer helplessly, those that dream confusedly, those that are entranced by the supernatural – these are the three divisions into which Raphael divided mankind. This is no longer how we see the world – and Raphael would no longer be able to see it as he did: he would behold a new transfiguration.' F. Nietzsche, *Daybreak: Thoughts on the Prejudices of Morality*, translated by R.J. Hollingdale, (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1982), p10.

4. In his *Daybreak: Thoughts on the Prejudices of Morality*, Nietzsche illustrated the implications of that paradigm shift like this: '8. *Transfiguration*:

reversed sense of the word: denial.

It has more to do with 'sampling': trying something on for size, seeing whether it 'fits', without ever (or only) cancelling out the relative processes of borrowing or digesting or inventing (and in any case as being a part of) the 'that' of life itself, in all its precarious imbalances and delicacies.

Nothing in this game can masquerade, in other words, above and beyond or apart from the real, itself multiple and contingently engaged. Nor is there a proclivity to elevate fiction as its new standard bearer, as its the 'new truth'.

[1.2.2] The claim is much more modest: at best, we are thieves, pure and simple, remaining, fundamentally, in the fractured land of a quasi-negation, the arena of a so-called 'desistance' or double {[de]de}-negation,³ with all its discretely ironic vaporizations, propertyless ownerships, and conflicts with the Law.

We are the thieves who play with and against that Law, who traverse it (if lucky), who get caught in it (if not). And in so doing, create, disrupt, invent, duplicate, a 'homeland' identity, an 'exiled' identity, precisely at the moment where the past and future meet; an identity, situated somewhere between the 'that' of *techné* and the 'not' of its other.

This is a peculiar identity: one that must always bear an excess, the excessiveness of the game itself, the perverse and excessive game of self, of mastery and of submission, all up for negotiation and reformulation, often, though not only, fitted somewhere along the actualities of a sexed pleasure-play.

him by the nose and twisted. 'No, here's where,' said Mary, 'it's better.' She approached the drunkard and unbuttoned him: the cock she took from his pants was floppy. The object provoked much laughter. In a stroke of rage, Mary, red as a mad person, knocked back another glass. The patron slowly opened her eyes up like headlights. She touched between her buttocks. 'Good enough to eat,' she said. Once again Mary filled her glass. She gulped as if dying, and the glass fell from her hands. The crack of her arse lit up the room.⁵

[1.2.2] Did I tell you how your hair floated on the black satin pillow case? It was after you had arched your back so full and wide; it was after the sweat began to pour from your shoulders; it was after you let out the violent gasp, the scream which cut across whatever was left of our gestured civility. I watched you, from behind, I watched your hair begin its weightless adventure; I watched, as it began to crawl, despite its drenched state, over the black satin pillow case. I watched you heave, and moan, and collapse, only to feel wave after wave of cunt muscles close in upon my fist ... and I dug up hard against you, feeling you, watching you, feeling you cum. Wet and wild, and infinite.

'We finally got past foreplay,' I laughed to myself. Finally got right past it.

Your hair: as if trying to escape in ten different directions at once, with nowhere to go, nowhere to hide; wildly spilling from your head, now slayed in mid-run. Utterly still, as if permanently burned into its now

We have here, in other words, an impossible identity (and indeed, an impossible law): impossible not because it does not exist (or, conversely, that it must exist only at the level of a contingent fiction). Rather, it is impossible because it must (of necessity) exist and not exist, exactly at the same time, creating in its wake a not-space of the other; an impossible, perverse sense of temporal/spatial reality, transacted, in part, at the level of blood and skin and teeth and hair.

[1.3] This fleeting, pulsating arena of excess, pleasurable in the most corrupting sense of the term: erotic, is a re-inscription of the political itself. And as such, it demands not so much that we abandon the question of identities, and with it the problem of law, or the problem of rights, or even, for that matter, the problem of ethics. But rather, that we acknowledge, and indeed, (re)cognize the fundamental paradigm shift an 'impossible-but-actual-limit-to-the-outside/otherside-of-otherness' – that is to say, what a 'clit club' – can imply.⁴

In its most focussed sense, this 'otherside of otherness', this excess, has to do with re/membering the very notion of radical pluralism and the democracy to which it points. For it is one rooted in and expressing the multiplicity of *strategies* necessary to create who we are, and what we can become, in all our fluid – and very real – impossibilities.

Indeed, and more than that, this radical democracy is one whose 'root' no longer fits so neatly under the canopy of a so-called 'community' or

demented state: emitting, if you listened close, a strange tight hum; the kind of hum one cannot hear before it is seen; the kind of humming vision/noise most often associated with the relentless beatings of desert sun, crashing hard against – and sometimes piercing – its target skin. Like a spell. Hot. Bold. Held.

[1.3] So did you know that when you fell back against me, passing in and out of life with that special kind of desperation and utter sense of joy – the kind that mingles best in one's memory as it dances past the eyes; well, did you know that your hair floated once again, though this time, around my cheeks, and nose and lashes, alighting, finally somewhere atop my cap, all leather and sweaty and worn, now pulled down a bit more severe than the occasion required, blocking some of my vision ... and yet not so much that I could not see how red and swollen and soft your lips had grown; nor how preciously subtle the hair on your breasts appeared, still able to reflect whatever light was left in the twilight hours of our romp; nor was the cap so low that I could not see all the vague candle wax drippings flagging the best parts of your thighs, nor the tiny whip bumps reaching over and above the limits of your skin.

You hair covered me. It swept over me, like your breathing and your sighs and your ejaculations and your pissings and your convulsions and

5. Excerpt from Georges Bataille, *The Deadman*, in Paul Buck (ed.), *Violent Silence*, (London: The Georges Bataille Event, 1984), p13.

'coalition' politic; rather, the 'root' is itself 'strategy' and multiple, in the most *profane* and *sweaty* sense of the term plural.

your heat. An intense and fiercely wild heat.

But most of all, it was your hair; it was your hair I remember floating over my mouth. This is what I remember best; this is the last thing I remember as I slid somewhere past the innocent, the corrupt, and the sublime.

[1.4] Or excess: indundated with power; profusely traversing, creating, informing, flailing against, or getting bound up in between, the 'that which lies around of us.'

[1.4] 'During this agony,' Saint Teresa of Avila was known to have murmured, 'the soul is inundated with inexpressible delights.'

[1.5] Liberty. Freedom. Possibility. Uncertainty. Agony. Curiosity. And a small gesture of appreciation to Blake: '7. In her trembling hand she took the new born terror, howling.'⁶

6. William Blake, 'A Song of Liberty,' in the *Complete Prose and Poetry of William Blake*, edited by Geoffrey Keynes (1927), (London: The Nonesuch Press, 1989), p192.