Introduction: Love and Authority, Love Poetry and its Critics

I

The Poetry of Love

Love has always had its critics. They have ranged far and wide throughout history, from Plato and the Neoplatonists, to the Rabbinic and Christian interpreters of the *Song of Songs,* from the clerics behind the savage Albigensian Crusade, to the seventeenth-century English Puritan author William Prynne, who never met a human joy he failed to condemn. Love has never lacked for those who try to tame it for "higher" purposes, or those who would argue that it is potentially depraved and dangerous, for "some of the worst evils have been committed in the name of love."[1] At the same time, love has always had its passionate advocates and defenders, though these have more often tended to be poets—the Ovids, Shakespeares, and Donnes—than critics of poetry. The relationship between the two—poets and critics—will be one of the central concerns of this book.

This is a history of love—a story told through literature and its sometimes adversarial relationship to the laws and customs, the political and economic structures of the times and places in which that literature was produced. It is also a history of the way love has been treated, not by our poets, but by those our culture has entrusted with the "authority" to maintain and perpetuate the understanding, and even the memory, of poetry. In many cases, we will find that such authority has been abused, though poetry can and does transcend its critics. This is especially true of the poetry of love. What Shakespeare's Henry V claims for himself and Katharine—"we are the makers of manners […] and the liberty that follows our places stops the mouth of all find-faults"—is a claim made with equal strength by Dido to Aeneas, by Heloise

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[1] Aharon Ben-Ze'ev and Ruhama Goussinsky. *In the Name of Love: Romantic Ideology and Its Victims*. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2008, 63. Ben-Ze'ev and Goussinsky claim that a "Romantic Ideology" can usefully be analyzed "alongside a description of the attitude towards this love demonstrated by those who committed the most horrible crime connected with love: men who killed their wives (or partners) out of love" (1). According to the authors, "Romantic Ideology" is something that is "part and parcel of the education our children receive from a very early age, when they begin to watch Disney's movies and listen to fairy tales" (2). Ben-Ze'ev and Goussinsky strike a negative tone in describing the lover as someone who "desires the beloved's happiness only insofar as the lover is either a part or the cause of this happiness," and then going on to give an unattributed quote of Pablo Picasso, who is credited (or debited) with saying, "I would prefer to see a woman dead than see her happy with another man" (19-20)—a quote that Ben-Ze'ev also uses, unattributed, on page 414 of his book *The Subtlety of Emotions* (Cambridge, MA: MIT Press, 2001). The authors then make their stance toward the idea of romantic love clear when they argue that it functions as a kind of domination—"romantic love […] cancels the beloved's autonomy" (20), a definition that owes a debt to Dante and Petrarch and the duocento poets of the Italian *dolce stil novo* tradition.

to Abelard, by Beatriz de Dia and Raimbaut d'Aurenga, by the lovers in Shakespeare, and even Adam to Eve in Milton's *Paradise Lost*.

Love has been the subject of endless poems, songs, scenes in the world's literature, and though our ideas about love have changed many times down the millennia, one thing has remained consistent: love is a passion that accepts no restraint without resistance, and encounters no disapproval without an equal disdain of its own. As we will see frequently in the plays of Shakespeare, love stands against law, against a system of arranged marriages in which individual desires are subordinated to the rule of the Father, property, and inherited wealth. Sometimes, as in Milton's *Paradise Lost*, love stands against God himself. Though love may be patient, long-suffering, and kind, it is also defiant. As Dante demonstrates with his account of Paolo and Francesca, love lives the truth that Milton's Satan speaks: it is *better to reign in hell than serve in heaven*.

Ranging from the Ancients to the Early Moderns, from the Bible into Medieval literature, from Shakespeare and the poetry of the seventeenth century to the Romantic era and our own modern day, the love presented here is neither exclusively of the body, nor exclusively of the spirit; rather, this love is a middle path. Often marginalized by, and in opposition to Church and State and the institutions of marriage and law, it is what the troubadour poets of the eleventh and twelfth centuries referred to as *fin'amor*, which this book is defining, after the fashion of the Occitan troubadours, as pure love, love as an end in itself, love chosen in the face of resistance, restriction, and retribution. It is anarchic, threatening to the established order, and a great deal of cultural energy has gone into taming it.

Fin'amor has been invented and reinvented over the centuries. It appears in Hellenistic Jerusalem as a glimpse back into the age of Solomon, and then fades into the dim background of Rabbinical and Christian allegory. It is revived in France, in the eleventh and twelfth centuries, by poets *and* an unusual group of Rabbis, only to fade once again, betrayed by later poets writing under the twin spells of Neoplatonism and Christianizing allegory. These poets radically reshaped the ideas of love expressed in the poems of medieval Provence and the ancient Levant, writing in what Dante called the *dolce stil novo* (sweet new style) that turned love into worship, men into idolators, women into idols (even objects), and tried to turn all human passion toward God, a trend still observable in the English poetry of Wyatt, Howard, and Sidney two hundred years after the death of Petrarch, the *dolce stil novo*'s high priest. A later generation, Shakespeare and Marlowe, and such poets as Donne, Herrick, Marvell, and Milton re-invent the love that had almost been lost, putting a new version of *fin'amor* on the stage and on the page, pulling it back into the light and out of the shadows of theology, philosophy, and law. For better, or for worse, *fin'amor* has been with us ever since.

II

Love's Nemesis: Demands for Obedience

Running parallel with the tradition of love poetry is a tradition of thought which argues that obedience, rather than passion, is the prime virtue of humankind. Examples of obedience demanded and given are abundant in our scriptures, as in the injunction in Genesis against eating from the Tree of Knowledge; in our poetry, such as the *Aeneid*'s portrayal of Aeneas rejecting Dido in obedience to the gods; and even in our philosophy, as in Aristotle's distinction between those he regarded as being naturally free, and those he thought naturally slavish: "It is true, therefore, that there are by natural origin those who are truly free men, but also those who are visibly slavish, and for these slavery is both beneficial and just."[2] Such expectations for obedience and compliance are especially familiar features of the writing of those who argue that human law stands in a direct relation to divine law, much in the same way that many will argue that human love stands in a direct relation to divine love. Augustine of Hippo, in his *Civitate Dei* (*The City of God*) argues that though God did not intend that Man should have dominion over Man, it now exists because of sin:

> But by nature, as God first created us, no one was a slave either of man or of sin. In truth, our present servitude is penal, a penalty which is meant to preserve the natural order of law and forbids its disturbance; because, if nothing had been done contrary to that law, there would have been nothing to restrain by penal servitude.[3]

This slavery of Man to Man is a punishment, and Augustine goes on to cite the idea that the Biblical patriarchs had slaves as an example of the necessary order in a fallen world. Nearly a millennium later, Thomas Aquinas will argue much the same position: "The order of justice requires that inferiors obey their superiors, for otherwise the stability of human affairs could not be maintained."[4] Even a famous rebel like Martin Luther directs ordinary citizens to be obedient to the law that God himself has put in place:

> But no man is by nature Christian or religious, but all are sinful and evil, wherefore God restrains them all through the law, so that they do not dare to

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[2] "ὅτι μὲν τοίνυν εἰσὶ φύσει τινὲς οἱ μὲν ἐλεύθεροι οἱ δὲ δοῦλοι, φανερόν, οἷς καὶ συμφέρει τὸ δουλεύειν καὶ δίκαιόν ἐστιν"(Aristotle. *Politics*. Edited by Harris Rackham. [Cambridge: Loeb Classical Library, Harvard University Press], 1932, 1255a, pp. 22, 24). Unless otherwise noted, all translations are original.

[3] "Nullus autem natura, in qua prius Deus hominem condidit, seruus est hominis aut peccati. Verum et poenalis seruitus ea lege ordinatur, quae naturalem ordinem conseruari iubet, perturbari uetat; quia si contra eam legem non esset factum, nihil esset poenali seruitute cohercendum" (Augustine of Hippo. *De Civitate Dei*. [Paderborn: Ferdinand Schöningh, 1825], Book 19, Chapter 15, p. 254).

[4] "Ordo autem iustitiae requirit ut inferiores suis superioribus obediant, aliter enim non posset humanarum rerum status conservari" (Thomas Aquinas. *Summa Theologiae: Volume 41, Virtues of Justice in the Human Community*. Edited by T.C. O'Brien. [Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2006], 2a2ae. Q104, A6, p.72).

> practice their wickedness externally with works.[5]

And according to John Calvin, obedience is due even to unjust rulers. Calvin insists that absolute obedience is due not only to the benevolent ruler, but also to the tyrant. A wicked ruler can, in fact, be the judgment of God:

> Truthfully, if we look at the Word of God, this will lead us further. We are not only to be subject to their authority, who are honest, and rule by what ought to be the gift of God's love to us, but also to the authority of all those who in any way, have come into power, even if their rule is nothing less than that of the office of the princes of the blind. [...] at the same time he declares that, whatever they may be, they have their rule and authority from him.[6]

By such a definition, obedience is the prime duty of humankind, and even obedience paid to a tyrant is ultimately required, because all obedience to authority is obedience to the God who established all authority in the first place. To be obedient is to be pleasing to God (the very attitude Aeneas will exemplify as he chooses obedience over love).

Such demands for obedience are ancient, and widespread. But some have raised their voices to sound their objections to such demands. Étienne de La Boétie, the sixteenth-century author, judge, and friend to Michel Montaigne, argues that human beings have long become so used to servitude that they no longer know how to be free:

> It is incredible how a people, when it becomes subject, falls so suddenly and profoundly into forgetfulness of its freedom, so that it is not possible for them to win it back, serving so frankly and so happily that it seems, at a glance, that they have not lost their freedom but won their servitude.[7]

La Boétie maintains that submission has become engrained in the mass of humanity, to the point that the subjected both regard their subjection as normal and offer perfectly plausible-sounding explanations for its necessity:

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[5] "Nun aber kein Mensch von Natur Christ oder fromm ist, sondern sie allzumal Sünder und böse sind, wehret ihnen Gott allen durchs Gesetz, daß sie ihre Bosheit nicht äußerlich mit Werken nach ihrem Mutwillen zu üben wagen" (Martin Luther. *Von Weltlicher Obrigkeit*. [Berlin: Tredition Classics, 2012]. 10).

[6] "Verùm si in Dei verbum respicimus, longius nos deducet, ut non eorum modò principú imperio subditi simus, qui probè, & qua debét fide munere suo erga nos defungútur: sed omnium qui quoquo modo rerum potiuntur, etiamsi nihil minus praestét quàm quod ex officio principum. [...] simul tamen declarat, qualescunque sint, nonnisi à se habere imperium." (Jean Calvin. *Institutio Christianae Religionis*. [Genevae: Oliua Roberti Stephani, 1559], 559).

[7] "Il n'est pas croyable comme le peuple, dès lors qu'il est assujetti, tombe si soudain en un tel et si profond oubli de la franchise, qu'il n'est pas possible qu'il se réveille pour la ravoir, servant si franchement et tant volontiers qu'on dirait, à le voir, qu'il a non pas perdu sa liberté, mais gagné sa servitude" (Étienne de La Boétie. *Discours de la Servitude Volontaire* [1576]. [Paris: Editions Bossard, 1922], 67).

> They will say they have always been subjects, and their fathers lived the same way; they will think they are obliged to endure the evil, and they demonstrate this to themselves by examples, and find themselves in the length of time to be the possessions of those who lord it over them; but in reality, the years never gave any the right to do them wrong, and this magnifies the injury.[8]

This "injury" leads La Boétie to reject the notion that obedience was natural, and instead propose a model through which he accuses "les tyrans"—"the tyrants" of carefully inculcating the idea of submission into the populations they dominate:

> the first reason why men willingly serve, is that they are born serfs and are nurtured as such. From this comes another easy conclusion: people become cowardly and effeminate under tyrants.[9] […] It has never been but that tyrants, for their own assurance, have made great efforts to accustom their people to them, [training them] not only in obedience and servitude, but also in devotion.[10]

Two centuries later, another such voice raised against the authority of "les tyrans" belongs to Jean-Jacques Rousseau, who argues that liberty is a necessary precondition for being truly human:

> To renounce liberty is to renounce being a man, the rights of humanity, even its duties. […] Such a renunciation is incompatible with the nature of man, and to remove all liberty from his will is to remove all morality from his actions. Finally, it is a vain and contradictory convention to stipulate on the one hand an absolute authority, and on the other an unlimited obedience.[11]

But what Rousseau calls a renunciation of liberty, framing it as a conscious act, La Boétie presents as something that is *done to* rather than *done by* the average man and woman: "they are born as serfs and nurtured as such." In the latter's view, it is those in authority who "nurture" (raise, nourish, even instruct) their populations into the necessary attitudes of what Rousseau will later call *une obéissance sans bornes*.

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[8] "Ils disent qu'ils ont été toujours sujets, que leurs pères ont ainsi vécu; ils pensent qu'ils sont tenus d'endurer le mal et se font accroire par exemple, et fondent eux-mêmes sous la longueur du temps la possession de ceux qui les tyrannisent; mais pour vrai, les ans ne donnent jamais droit de mal faire, ains agrandissent l'injure" (Ibid., 74-75).

[9] "la première raison pourquoi les hommes servent volontiers, est pour ce qu'ils naissent serfs et sont nourris tels. De celle-ci en vient une autre, qu'aisément les gens deviennent, sous les tyrans, lâches et efféminés" (Ibid., 77-78).

[10] "il n'a jamais été que les tyrans, pour s'assurer, ne se soient efforcés d'accoutumer le peuple envers eux, non seulement à obéissance et servitude, mais encore à dévotion" (Ibid., 89).

[11] "Renoncer à sa liberté, c'est renoncer à sa qualité d'homme, aux droits de l'humanité, même à ses devoirs. […] Une telle renonciation est incompatible avec la nature de l'homme, et c'est ôter toute moralité à ses actions que d'ôter toute liberté à sa volonté. Enfin c'est une convention vaine et contradictoire de stipuler d'une part une autorité absolue et de l'autre une obéissance sans bornes." (Jean-Jacques Rousseau. *Contrat Social*. In *The Political Writings of Jean-Jacques Rosseau*, Volume 2, edited by C.E Vaughan. [Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1915], 28).

Such "nurture" or "instruction" leads men and women to regard their servitude as customary: for La Boétie, "it is certain that custom, which in all things has great power over us, has no greater strength than this, to teach us how to serve."[12] Some seventy years later, the English revolutionary John Milton makes a similar argument, describing "custom" as part of the double tyranny that keeps mankind in subjection:

> If men within themselves would be govern'd by reason and not generally give up their understanding to a double tyrannie, of custome from without and blind affections within, they would discerne better what it is to favour and uphold the Tyrant of a Nation.[13]

Milton elsewhere—in pamphlets designed to ridicule the pro-monarchical propaganda of his day—berates what he calls "the easy literature of custom and opinion,"[14] the kind of authoritative-sounding, but empty writing and speaking[15]

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[12] "Mais certes la coutume, qui a en toutes choses grand pouvoir sur nous, n'a en aucun endroit si grande vertu qu'en ceci, de nous enseigner à servir" (La Boétie, 68).

[13] John Milton. *The Tenure of Kings and Magistrates*. (London, 1649), p. 1, Sig. A2r.

[14] John Milton. *Eikonoklastes*. (London, 1650), p. 3, Sig. A3r.

[15] A twentieth-century thinker like Martin Heidegger, though he is writing in the context of the philosophical question of Being, berates both what he calls "Tradition" and "Gerede" (idle talk). Each interferes with thought and knowledge—the first by rendering it difficult (or nearly impossible) to understand the source of ideas:

> Die hierbei zur Herrschaft kommende Tradition macht zunächst und zumeist das, was sie »übergibt«, so wenig zugänglich, daß sie es vielmehr verdeckt. Sie überantwortet das Überkommene der Selbstverständlichkeit und verlegt den Zugang zu den ursprünglichen »Quellen«, daraus die überlieferten Kategorien und Begriffe z. T. in echter Weise geschöpft wurden. Die Tradition macht sogar eine solche Herkunft überhaupt vergessen. (*Sein und Zeit*. [Tübingen: Max Niemeyer Verlag, 1967], 21)
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> [The tradition that becomes dominant hereby makes what it "transmits" so inaccessible that at first, and for the most part, it obscures it instead. It hands over to the self-evident and obvious what has come down to us, and blocks access to the original "sources," from which the traditional categories and concepts in part were actually drawn. The tradition even makes us forget there ever was such an origin.]

And second, by rendering people unable to tell the difference between grounded and groundless ideas:

> Das Geredete als solches zieht weitere Kreise und übernimmt autoritativen Charakter. Die Sache ist so, weil man es sagt. In solchem Nach- und Weiterreden, dadurch sich das schon anfängliche Fehlen der Bodenständigkeit zur völligen Bodenlosigkeit steigert, konstituiert sich das Gerede. Und zwar bleibt dieses nicht eingeschränkt auf das lautliche Nachreden, sondern breitet sich aus im Geschriebenen als das »Geschreibe«. Das Nachreden gründet hier nicht so sehr in einem Hörensagen. Es speist sich aus dem Angelesenen. Das durchschnittliche Verständnis des Lesers wird nie entscheiden können, was ursprünglich geschöpft und errungen und was nachgeredet ist. Noch mehr, durchschnittliches Verständnis wird ein solches Unterscheiden gar nicht wollen, seiner nicht bedürfen, weil es ja alles versteht. (168-69)
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> [Speaking as such also affects and takes on an authoritative character. The thing is so because one says it. Idle talk is constituted by such gossip and incessant speaking, a process which can make the already initial lack of ground to stand on increase to complete groundlessness. And this remains not limited to vocal gossip, but spreads

that teaches "the most Disciples" and is "silently receiv'd for the best instructer," despite the fact that it offers nothing but a "swoln visage of counterfeit knowledge and literature."[16] David Hume later notes "the easiness with which the many are governed by the few; and the implicit submission, with which men resign their own sentiments and passions to those of their rulers." Hume explains this submission as a function of "opinion," or a "sense" that is inculcated into the many "of the general advantage" to be had by obeying "the particular government which is established."[17] Such manipulation of opinion is identified by Edward Bernays—a member of the Committee on Public Information, or Creel Committee, which was formed in 1917 to influence American public opinion in favor of participation in WWI—as necessary in order to ensure the obedience of a population:

> The conscious and intelligent manipulation of the organized habits and opinions of the masses is an important element in democratic society. Those who manipulate this unseen mechanism of society constitute an invisible government which is the true ruling power of our country. We are governed, our minds are molded, our tastes formed, our ideas suggested, largely by men we have never heard of.[18]

And though Bernays thinks of such techniques as a good thing (foreshadowing developments elsewhere in the twentieth century),[19] for such thinkers as La

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> through the written word as "scribblings." This idle talk is based not so much in hearsay. It feeds on superficial reading. The average understanding of the reader will never be able to decide what has been drawn up and obtained with difficulty from original sources and what is empty blathering. Still more, the average understanding neither wants nor needs such distinctions, because it already understands everything.]

[16] John Milton. *The Doctrine and Discipline of Divorce*. London, 1644, Sig. A2r.

[17] "Of the First Principles of Government." In *Essays, Literary, Moral, and Political*. (London: Ward, Lock and Tyler, 1870), 23.

[18] Edward Bernays. *Propaganda*. (New York: Horace Liveright, 1928), 9.

[19] "It was, of course, the astounding success of propaganda during the war that opened the eyes of the intelligent few in all departments of life to the possibilities of regimenting the public mind. […] If we understand the mechanism and motives of the group mind, is it not possible to control and regiment the masses according to our will without them knowing it?" (Bernays, 27, 47). This desire seems to be what lies behind the infamous Trilateral Commission report in 1975 bemoaning the "Crisis of Democracy" (a crisis, in the view of the report's authors, not of *too little*, but of *too much* democracy):

> Authority has been challenged not only in government, but in trade unions, business enterprises, schools and universities, professional associations, churches, and civic groups. In the past, those institutions which have played the major role in the indoctrination of the young in their rights and obligations as members of society have been the family, the church, the school, and the army. The effectiveness of all these institutions as a means of socialization has declined severely. The stress has been increasingly on individuals and their rights, interests, and needs, and not on the community and its rights, interests, and needs. These attitudes have been particularly prevalent in the young, but they have also appeared in other age groups, especially among those who have achieved professional, white-collar, and middle-class status. (Michael J. Crozier, Samuel P. Huntington, and Joji Watanuki. *The Crisis of Democracy: Report on the*

Boétie and Milton and Hume, it is crucial to keep a watchful eye on those who draw "the most Disciples" after them, for what they are teaching may well be the lessons of obedience and genuflection to what the Russian Romantic poet Pushkin calls "Custom, despot between the people."[20]

Alongside the long narrative of demands for obedience and its techniques for instruction, stands a counter-narrative and counter-instruction in our poetry. From Dido and Aeneas to Hero and Leander, from Romeo and Juliet to Milton's Adam and Eve, this counter-narrative has often been framed in terms of love and desire forbidden by those in authority who demand obedience. Love stands as the challenger to obedience; a challenger sometimes co-opted, tamed, redirected, and even made to serve as a prop *for* obedience, love is nonetheless portrayed in our poetry as among the precious few—perhaps only—forces with sufficient power to enable its adherents to transcend themselves, their fears, and their isolation to such a degree that renders it possible to stand up and say "no" to the demands of power and authority.

Love does not always succeed. In fact, it often fails—a reacquaintance with Chaucer's *Troilus and Crysede* is enough to confirm that. But for its more radical devotees—the Dido of Ovid's *Heroides,* the troubadour poets of the eleventh and twelfth centuries in Occitania, the famous lovers of Shakespeare,

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Governability of Democracies to the Trilateral Commission. [New York: New York University Press, 1975], 162)

Bernays' ideas are also not far removed from those being promulgated on the other side of the Atlantic ocean:

> Denn Propaganda ist nicht Selbstzweck, sondern Mittel zum Zweck. [...] Der Zweck unserer Bewegung war, Menschen zu mobilisieren, Menschen zu organisieren und für die nationalrevolutionäre Idee zu gewinnen. [...] Die wichtigsten Aufgaben dieses Ministeriums müssen folgende sein: Zunächst müssen alle propagandistischen Unternehmungen und alle volksaufklärenden Institutionen des Reiches und der Länder zentral in einer Hand vereinigt werden. [...] Die modernen Volksführer müssen moderne Volkskönige sein, sie müssen die Masse verstehen, brauchen der Masse aber nicht nach dem Munde zu reden. Sie haben die Pflicht, der Masse zu sagen, was sie wollen, und der Masse das so klarzumachen, daß diese es auch versteht. ("Rede vor der Presse über die Errichtung des Reichspropagandaministeriums" [March 15, 1933). In Joseph Goebbels, *Revolution der Deutschen: 14 Jahre Nationalsozialismus*. [Oldenburg: Gerhard Stalling, 1933, 139, 140, 141)
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> [Propaganda is not an end in itself, but a means to an end. […] The end of our movement was to mobilize the people, to organize the people, and win them for the idea of national revolution. […] The primary duties of this new Ministry must be as follows: first, all propagandistic undertakings and all popular education institutions must be centralized and brought under the control of a single hand. […] Modern popular leaders must be modern folk-kings, and they must understand the masses, but not speak with the voice of the masses. They have a duty to the masses to speak as they wish, and make things clear to the masses, so that they understand.]

[20] "Обычай деспот меж людей." (Евге́ний Оне́гин [*Evgeny Onegin*], 1.25.4. In Alexander Sergeyevich Pushkin. Собрание сочинений/Sobraniye Sochinenyi. *Collected Works*: in Ten Volumes. Edited by D. D. Blagogo, S. M. Bondi, V. V. Vinogradova, Yu. G. [Oksmana. State Publishing House: Moscow, 1959], Volume 4, 20).

and even Milton's Adam and Eve—love is revolutionary, an attempt to tear down the world and rebuild it anew, not in the image of power, authority, and demands for obedience, but in the image of a love that is freely chosen, freely given, and freely received. Such love rejects the claims of law, property, money, social custom, and provincial rules. Such love opposes the claims of determinism—whether theological (Augustine, Luther, and Calvin, and the notions of original sin and predestination), philosophical (Foucault, and the idea that impersonal systems of power create the "subject" in their image[21]), or biological (as in the recent work of Sam Harris, who argues for the biological, and therefore *unwilled* basis of human decision-making in his book *Free Will*,[22] an argument that has roots in Baron d'Holbach's 1770 work *Système de la Nature*, in

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[21] For Foucault, the relation between power and freedom, power and the subject, is mutually determinative: "La relation de pouvoir et l'insoumission de la liberté ne peuvent donc être séparées"—"The relationship of power and the rebelliousness of freedom cannot be separated." This relationship is characterized by a mutual dependence in which the subject's "freedom" is the necessary ground for the very exercises of power that aim to destroy that freedom and subjugate the individual will:

> Le pouvoir ne s'exerce que sur des «sujets libres», et en tant qu'ils sont «libres»—entendons par là des sujets individuels ou collectifs qui ont devant eux un champ de possibilité où plusieurs conduites, plusieurs réactions et divers modes de comportement peuvent prendre place. Là où les déterminations sont saturées, il n'y a pas de relation de pouvoir: l'esclavage n'est pas un rapport de pouvoir lorsque l'homme est aux fers (il s'agit alors d'un rapport physique de contrainte), mais justement lorsqu'il peut se déplacer et à la limite s'échapper. Il n'y a donc pas un face-à-face de pouvoir et de liberté, avec entre eux un rapport d'exclusion (partout où le pouvoir s'exerce, la liberté disparaît); mais un jeu beaucoup plus complexe: dans ce jeu la liberté va bien apparaître comme condition d'existence du pouvoir (à la fois son préalable, puisqu'il faut qu'il y ait de la liberté pour que le pouvoir s'exerce, et aussi son support permanent puisque, si elle se dérobait entièrement au pouvoir qui s'exerce sur elle, celui-ci disparaîtrait du fait même et devrait se trouver un substitut dans la coercition pure et simple de la violence); mais elle apparaît aussi comme ce qui ne pourra que s'opposer à un exercice du pouvoir qui tend en fin de compte à la déterminer entièrement. ("Le Sujet e le Pouvoir." *Dits et Écrits, 1954-1988*. IV *1980-1988*. [Paris: Éditions Gallimard, 1994], 237-38)
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> [Power is exercised only on "free subjects," and only so far as they are "free"—meaning by this individual or collective subjects that face a field of possibilities where several passages, several reactions, and various modes of behavior can take place. Where the determinations are saturated there is no power relationship: slavery is not a power relationship where man is in chains (then it is a relation of physical constraint) but precisely when it can move and ultimately escape. So there is not a face-to-face, mutually exclusive, relation between power and freedom (wherever power is exercised, freedom disappears); but a much more complex game: in this game, freedom well appears as a condition of the existence of power (both its prior condition, since it is necessary that there be freedom for power to be exercised, and as its permanent support, because if it is fully subsumed by the power that is exerted on it, it will disappear, and find a substitute in outright coercive violence); but it also appears that such freedom will only oppose an exercise of power that tends in the end to be fully determinative.]

[22] Sam Harris. *Free Will*. (New York: Free Press, 2012).

which he maintains that all things in the universe can be explained in terms of material causes and effects, including human thought and action[23]).

As we will see in much of what follows, such deterministic claims are sometimes even sustained by a corrupted form of love, when love is sublimated into its more religious forms: worship, admiration of power, and the urge to self-effacement before the constant demands for obedience by those in authority. The purpose of such sublimated portraits of love is pedagogical, the inculcation of desired attitudes into readers who are taught to look to a greater "love" (that of God, the State, the Church, etc.). One recently re-discovered and particularly interesting example of this treatment of love is in the 1891 novel *True Love* by the African-American writer Sarah E. Farro. Calling her work "a domestic romance that tends toward melodrama," Gretchen Gerzina concludes that "many of Farro's readers must have been white women," suggesting that a taming of

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[23] As Holbach contends, our "free will" is not free, being wholly determined by involuntary reactions to material causes:

> La volonté, comme on l'a dit ailleurs, est une modification dans le cerveau, par laquelle il est disposé à l'action, ou préparé à mettre en jeu les organes qu'il peut mouvoir. Cette volonté est nécessairement déterminée par la qualité bonne ou mauvaise, agréable ou désagréable de l'objet ou du motif qui agit sur nos sens, ou dont l'idée nous reste et nous est fournie par la mémoire. En conséquence, nous agissons nécessairement, notre action est une suite de l'impulsion que nous avons reçue de ce motif, de cet objet ou de celte idée, qui ont modifié notre cerveau, ou disposé notre volonté; lorsque nous n'agissons point, c'est qu'il survient quelque nouvelle cause, quelque nouveau motif, quelque nouvelle idée qui modifie notre cerveau d'une manière différente, qui lui donne une nouvelle impulsion, une nouvelle volonté, d'après laquelle ou elle agit, ou sou action est suspendue. C'est ainsi que la vue d'un objet agréable ou son idée, déterminent notre volonté à agir pour nous le procurer; mais un nouvel objet ou une nouvelle idée anéantissent l'effet des premiers, et empêchent que nous n'agissions pour nous le procurer. Voilà comme la réflexion, l'expérience, la raison arrêtent ou suspendent nécessairement les actes de notre volonté; sans cela, elle eût nécessairement suivi les premières impulsions qui la portoient vers un objet désirable. En tout cela, nous agissons toujours suivant des lois nécessaires. (Paul Henri Thiry Holbach. *System de la Nature*. Vol. 2. [Leipsick, 1780], 53-54)
>
> [The will, as has been said elsewhere, is a change in the brain, by which it is disposed to action, or prepared to give way to the movement and play of the organs. This will is necessarily determined by the good or bad, pleasant or unpleasant object or pattern that affects our senses, or whose idea remains and is provided by the memory. Consequently, we act from necessity, our action is a continuation of the momentum we have received from this reason, object, or idea which modified our brain, or disposed our will; when we do not act accordingly, this occurs because of something new, some new ground, some new idea that alters our brain in a different way, giving it a new impetus, a new will, according to which the former impulse and former action is suspended. Thus the sight of a pleasant object or idea determines our will to act to procure it; but a new object or a new idea destroys the effect of the first, and prevents us from acting to procure it. Thus it comes that thinking, experience, and reason necessarily stop or suspend the acts of our will; without this, it would necessarily follow that we would follow the first impulses toward a desirable object. In all this, we always act according to necessary laws.]

female desire may have been among the novel's purposes.[24] A story told, as the author puts it in her preface, "within the bounds of proper romance," the main plot of Farro's novel tells the story of two deaths—those of Janey Brewster and Charles Taylor, who are engaged to be married. While Janey attends upon her thoroughly-unpleasant sister, who is sick with a malaria-like fever, Charles wishes to move Janey out of the house in order to protect her health. He does not do so, however, for fear of violating social propriety and custom. Janey, of course, becomes sick and dies, and Charles is berated by the attending physician for his inaction:

> "I should have done it in your place," said the doctor; "if her mother had said no, I would have carried her away in front of her face. 'Not married,' you say. Rubbish to that; everybody knows she would have been safe with you, and you would have been married as soon as you could. What are forms and ceremonies and long tongues in comparison with a life like Janey's?" Charles Taylor leaned his head upon his hand, lost in the retrospect. Oh that he had taken her, that he had set at naught what he had then bowed to, the conventionalities of society, she might have been by his side now in health and life to bless him.[25]

But rather than being a story of regret over not valuing "True Love" over the "forms and ceremonies and long tongues" of society, Farro's novel travels down the path of religion. Bernice E. Gallagher observes that "Charles says very little about how he feels concerning life or death, except that he is not afraid to leave this world because Janey waits for him in the next." He "has a dream that God is reaching out His hand; and dies at forty with the word *Jesus* on his lips."[26] As Farro sums up the life and death of her protagonist, it becomes apparent that the "True Love" of her novel's title is the love of God: "Charles Taylor, aged 40 years. Only forty years, a period at which some men think they are beginning life, it seemed to be an untimely death, and it would have been, after all his pain and sorrow, but that he had entered upon a better life."[27] While neither Janey nor Charles consummate their love for each other in life—having exchanged a single passionate kiss—"He held her face close to him and took from it his farewell kiss [...] and for the first time in her life his kiss was returned, then they parted"[28]—their truest love is evidently to be fulfilled only after death. As Charles reflects, "were the world made too pleasant for us, we might be

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[24] Gretchen Gerzina. "After the Rediscovery of a 19th-Century Novel, Our View of Black Female Writers is Transformed." *The Conversation*. May 25, 2016. https://theconversation.com/after-the-rediscovery-of-a-19th-century-novel-our-view-of-black-female-writers-is-transformed-60016

[25] Sarah E. Farro. *True Love: A Story of English Domestic Life*. (Chicago: Donohue & Henneberry, 1891), 60-61.

[26] Bernice E. Gallagher. *Illinois Women Novelists in the Nineteenth Century: An Analysis and Annotated Bibliography*. (Urbana and Chicago: University of Illinois Press, 1994), 107.

[27] Farro 120-21.

[28] Ibid., 38.

wishing it was our permanent home; few weary of it, whatever may be their care, until they have learned to look for a better."[29]

Such love- and life-denying points of view can be found all too frequently in literature and the scholarship that surrounds it, often dressed in the robes of what John Milton calls "a certaine big face of pretended learning, mistaken among credulous men [...] filling each estate of life and profession, with abject and servil principles."[30] But in the more radical examples of our poetry, plays, and other literature, love—chosen in the face of such individual and/or institutional power—does not "look for a better" world, but celebrates the possibilities of this world. Love defies "servil[e] principles," and is unbowed before and uncowed by the "big face of pretended learning." Love—passion, desire, mutual choice and support—is not merely a Romantic construct, a product of what Simon May calls "the long nineteenth century [that extends] well into the twenty-first."[31] Nor is it properly understood as a kind of secular replacement for fading religious traditions. As May points out, "[b]y imputing to human love features properly reserved for divine love [a move that we will see made by many of those who would tame love—from the Rabbis and Church Fathers, to the Neoplatonists and Petrarchan sonneteers], such as the unconditional and the eternal, we falsify the nature of this most conditional and time-bound and earthly emotion, and force it to labor under intolerable expectations."[32] It is precisely "time-bound and earthly" love—a passion that always brings an awareness of time running out, and the concomitant urge to fight to extend that time even by the merest moments in the otherwise too-short hours, days, and years—precisely this conditional and temporal affection that is the alternative, the powerful counterforce to the "servil[e] principles" that would be forced upon us by the never-ending stream of those individuals and institutions that demand our obedience. And it is the poetry written about this "time-bound and earthly" love that, too often, has been ill-served by its ancient and modern critics. In fact, one of the troubling realizations that comes from reading the theological and academic critics and interpreters of poetry, is that many of them are part of the very system of authority and demands for obedience[33] which La

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[29] Ibid., 98.

[30] John Milton. *The Doctrine and Discipline of Divorce*. London, 1644, Sig. A2r.

[31] Simon May. *Love: A History*. (New Haven: Yale UP, 2011), xii.

[32] Ibid., 4-5. This is a phenomenon well-illustrated by the bizarre practice of reading Shakespeare's sonnet 116 at weddings.

[33] Perhaps this should not be a surprise, since demands for obedience form the soil in which the institutions we call universities were first rooted. The German Emperor Frederick I (Barbarossa), issued a decree (the "Authentica Habita") in 1158 ("anno domini MCLVIII mense Novembri") which, in granting special privileges to teachers and students of the still-forming University of Bologna in order that "scholaribus, et maxime divinarum atque sacrarum legum professoribus, [...] veniant, et in eis secure habitient"—"students, and divine teachers of the sacred law, [...] may come and live in security," also outlined what he saw as the essential purpose of education: "scientia mundus illuminatur ad obediendum deo et nobis, eius ministris, vita subjectorum informatur"—"knowledge of the world is to illuminate and inform the lives of our subjects, to obey God, and ourself, his minister" (Paul Krueger, Theodor Mommsen, Rudolf Schoell, and Whilhelm Kroll, eds.

Boétie identifies as working to accustom people to tyrants, and against which the poetry itself protests.[34]

III

Love's Critics: The Hermeneutics of Suspicion

How does this alignment between literary criticism and repressive authority function? By denying poetry—particularly love poetry—the ability to serve as a challenge to the structures of authority in the societies in which it is written. As we will see throughout this book, there is a vast output of criticism

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Corpus Iuris Civilis, vol. 2. [Berlin: Apud Weidmannos, 1892], 511). In their beginnings, universities were training grounds for service in the church or at court (for those students who took degrees), and obedience-inculcation institutions for a wider population. The subversiveness of an Abelard (at Paris) or a Wycliffe (at Oxford)—which in each case came at a far greater cost than any paid, or even contemplated by the academic critic today—is most clearly understood in that context.

[34] As Elisabeth Strowick maintains, critics often "act as agents of the micro-physics of power" ("Comparative Epistemology of Suspicion: Psychoanalysis, Literature, and the Human Sciences." *Science in Context* 18.4 [2005], 654.). This also recalls a point frequently made by Noam Chomsky. In an interview with Donaldo Macedo, Chomsky is asked how "intellectuals [...] get away with their complicity [with and] service of the powerful interests," to which his response is telling: "They are not getting away with anything. They are, in fact, performing a service that is expected of them by the institutions for which they work, and they willingly, perhaps unconsciously, fulfill the requirements of the doctrinal system" ("Beyond a Domesticating Education: A Dialogue." In Noam Chomsky, *Chomsky on Miseducation*. [Lanham, MD: Rowman & Littlefield, 2004], 17). The authoritarian nature of academia (at least in the United States) is an open secret. Eric Anthony Grollman recently addressed the problem from the perspective of gender norms in the academy, arguing that "academic training is about beating graduate students into submission and conformity," especially over the issue of self-presentation:

> [The] professional (re)socialization of graduate school is centrally a task of eliminating passion, love, creativity and originality from would-be scholars' lives—or at least presenting ourselves as detached, subdued, conforming […]. In our writing, we were discouraged from "flowery," verbose and creative prose, instead getting to the point concisely and speaking with unwavering authority. In fact, it is best to avoid writing in the first person at all costs so as to present arguments as taken-for-granted truths, rather than offered by an individual scholar. […] To my surprise, the devaluation of femininity is not limited to the erasure of feminine expressions in academics who were assigned male at birth. I have witnessed the policing of femininity in cisgender women academics, even those who are femme presenting. […] I have heard women friends and colleagues note the related practice of rewarding masculinity in women in academe. Short hairstyles and masculine attire appeared to be much more common among my grad department's most successful women faculty. The more assertive you could be, the better. The more you could do to reject your femaleness and femininity, the more successful you could be in the academy. Women who insisted on having children should calculate pregnancy just right so that they could "pop one out" during a break in the school year. I am often shocked by how openly academics and academic institutions attempt to regulate women scholars' reproductive choices and sex lives. Some women academics are complicit, unapologetically giving advice to "keep your legs closed," delay motherhood as long as possible or forgo it all together. (Eric Anthony Grollman. "Gender Policing in Academe." *Inside Higher Ed*, 7/26/2016. https://www.insidehighered.com/advice/2016/07/29/academy-polices-gender-presentation-scholars-essay)

that serves not only to undermine poetry's potential for political, theological, and even aesthetic resistance, but to restrict the manner in which readers encounter and understand such poetry. From the beginning, together with the tradition of love poetry, has grown a tradition of criticism that tends to subordinate human passion and desire to the demands of theological, philosophical, and political considerations, often arguing that what merely *seems* to be passionate love poetry is actually properly understood as something else (worship of God, subordination to Empire, entanglement within the structures of language itself). The pattern of such criticism—from the earliest readings of the *Song of Songs* to contemporary articles written about a *carpe diem* poem like Robert Herrick's "To the Virgins to Make Much of Time"—is to argue that the surface or exterior of a poem hides a "real" or "deeper" meaning that undermines the apparent one, and that it is the critic's job to pull back or tear away the misleading surface in order to expose the "truth" that lies beneath it. Frederic Jameson exemplifies this technique in his argument that the true function of the critic is to analyze texts and culture through "a vast interpretive allegory in which a sequence of historical events or texts and artifacts is rewritten in terms of some deeper, underlying, and more 'fundamental' narrative."[35] Louis Althusser describes interpretation similarly, as "detecting the undetected in the very same text it reads, and relating it to another text, present as a necessary absence in the first."[36]

We can trace this particular trend in literary criticism even further back than the rabbinic and patristic readings of the *Song of Songs*, all the way back to the sixth-century BCE controversies over Homer and Hesiod:

> The Homeric representations of the gods roused a protest on the part of the founder of the Eleatics, Xenophanes of Colophon (fl. 540-500 B.C), who says that "Homer and Hesiod have imputed to the gods all that is blame and shame for men." [...] In reply to protests such as these, some of the defenders of Homer maintained that the superficial meaning of his myths was not the true one, and that there was a deeper sense lying below the surface. This deeper sense was, in the Athenian age, called the ὑπόνοια [hyponoia - suspicion], and the ὑπόνοια of this age assumed the name of "allegories" in the times of Plutarch. […] Anaxagoras [...] is said (whether truly or not) to have found in the web of Penelope an emblem of the rules of dialectic, the warp being the premises, the woof the conclusion, and the flame of the torches, by which she executed her task, being none other than the light of reason. […] But no apologetic interpretation of the Homeric mythology was of any avail to save Homer from being expelled with all the other poets from Plato's ideal Republic.[37]

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[35] Frederic Jameson. *The Political Unconscious: Narrative as a Socially Symbolic Act.* (Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press, 1981), 13.

[36] "décèle l'indécelé dans le texte même qu'elle lit, et le rapporte à un autre texte, présent d'une absence nécessaire dans le premier" (Louis Althusser. *Lire le Capital*, one-volume edition. [Paris: Presses Universitaires de France, 1996], 23).

[37] Sir John Edwin Sandys. *A History of Classical Scholarship Vol. I: From the Sixth century B.C. to the End of the Middle Ages.* [Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1903], 29-31.

But in its origins, such a method of reading—a hermeneutics of hyponoia, if you will—seems to have had in mind a defense of poetry, though in a rather different sense than found in the insistence of Eratosthenes, the third-century BCE librarian of Alexandria, who held that Ποιητὴν […] "πάντα στοχάζεσθαι ψυχαγωγίας, οὐ διδασκαλίας or" [poets … in all things aim to persuade and delight, not instruct],[38] or the later work of Philip Sidney, for whom "the Poet, he nothing affirmeth, and therefore never lieth,"[39] while the current suspicion-based methods of reading seem to constitute an attack, rather more in the spirit of Plato than in the spirit of Sidney, or those early defenders of Homer and Hesiod.

Employing a method Paul Ricoeur calls *les herméneutiques du soupçon* (the hermeneutics of suspicion), such a modern reading strategy is a matter of cunning (falsification) encountering an even greater cunning (suspicion), as the lies and false consciousness of a text are systematically exposed by the critic:

> Three masters, who appear exclusive from each other, are dominant: Marx, Nietzsche, and Freud. […] The fundamental category of consciousness, for the three of them, is the relation between hidden-shown or, if one prefers, simulated-manifest. […] What they have all three tried, by different routes, is to align their "conscious" methods of decryption with the "unconscious" work of encryption they attributed to the will to power, to social being, to the unconscious psyche. […] What then distinguishes Marx, Freud and Nietzsche is the general hypothesis concerning both the process of "false" consciousness and the decryption method. The two go together, since the man of suspicion reverses the work of falsification of the man of cunning.[40]

In Ricoeur's view, the hermeneutics of suspicion is not something that is simply borrowed from the "three masters;" rather, it is modern literature itself (though his focus seems to be on prose, rather than poetry) that teaches a reader to *read suspiciously*:

> It may be the function of literature that is more corrosive to contribute to making a new type of reader appear, a suspicious reader, because the reading ceases to be a confident journey made in the company of a trustworthy narrator,

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[38] Strabo, *Geography*, 1.2.3. In *Strabo, Geography. Volume I: Books 1-2*. Edited by Horace Leonard Jones. Cambridge: Loeb Classical Library, Harvard University Press, 1917, 54.

[39] Philip Sidney. *The Defence of Poesie*. In *The Complete Works of Sir Philip Sidney Vol. II*. Edited by Albert Feuillerat. (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1923), 29.

[40] "Troi maîtres en apperance exclusifs l'un de l'autre la dominent, Marx, Nietzsche et Freud. […] La catégorie fondamentale de la conscience, pour eux trois, c'est le rapport caché-montré ou, si l'on préfére, simulé-manifesté. […] Ce qu'ils ont tenté tous trois, sur des voies différentes, ce'st de faire coïncider leurs methods <<conscientes>> de déchiffrage avec le travail <<inconscient>> du chiffrage qu'ils attribuaient à la volonté de puissance, à l'être social, au psychisme inconscient. […] Ce qui distingue alors Marx, Freud et Nietzsche, c'est l'hypothèse gènèrale concernant à la fois le processus de la conscience <<fausse>> et la méthode de déchiffrage. Les deux vont de pair, puisque l'homme du soupçon fait en sens inverse le travail de falsification de l'homme de la ruse" (Paul Ricoeur. *De l'interprétation. Essai sur Freud.* [Paris: Éditions du Seuil, 1965], 32, 33-34).

> but reading becomes a fight with the author involved, a struggle that brings the reader back to himself.[41]

The issue goes deeper still. Suspicion, for Ricoeur, seems more fundamental, more deeply rooted than can be explained by the lessons learned through reading. It seems to be part of his view of human consciousness itself. Not long after outlining his analysis of the "three masters," Ricoeur makes an even starker and more dramatic statement: "A new problem has emerged: that of the lie of consciousness, and of consciousness as a lie."[42] Here, if one desires it, is a warrant to regard all apparent meaning (indeed, all appearance of any kind) as a lie in need of being dismantled and exposed. Such ideas, which Bruce Fleming locates "at the basis of literary studies," and the reading strategies they have inspired, have done yeoman's work in literary and historical scholarship over the last several decades.[43] But as with so many useful tools, this one can be, and has been overused. As Rita Felski notes, this approach has become increasingly common for many critics today, and she asks a series of pointed questions about a kind of reading she describes as "the default option":

> Why is it that critics are so quick off the mark to interrogate, unmask, expose, subvert, unravel, demystify, destabilize, take issue, and take umbrage? What sustains their assurance that a text is withholding something of vital importance, that their task is to ferret out what lies concealed in its recesses and margins?[44]

Maintaining that "suspicious reading has settled into a mandatory method rather than one approach among others," Felski describes this method as "[i]ncreasingly prescriptive as well as excruciatingly predictable," portraying its influence as one that "can be stultifying, pushing thought down predetermined paths and closing our minds to the play of detail, nuance, quirkiness, contradiction, happenstance." Literary criticism that leans heavily on this method can lend itself to an

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[41] "Ce peut être la fonction de la littérature la plus corrosive de contribuer à faire apparaître un lecteur d'un nouveau genre, un lecteur lui-même soupçonneux, parce que la lecture cesse d'être un voyage confiant fait en compagnie d'un narrateur digne de confiance, mais devient un combat avec l'auteur impliqué, un combat qui le reconduit à lui-même" (Paul Ricoeur. *Temps et Récit*, vol. 3: *Le Temps Raconté*. [Paris: Éditions du Seuil, 1985], 238).

[42] "Une problème nouveau est né: celui du monsonge de la conscience, de la conscience comme mensonge" (Paul Ricoeur. *Le Conflit des Interprétations: Essais D'Herméneutique*. [Paris: Éditions du Seuil, 1969], 101).

[43] These readings are based on what Fleming describes as "the thought pattern that's at the basis of literary studies, and of any self-enclosed hermetically sealed sub-world that seeks to assert theoretical hegemony over the rest of the world. The pattern of thought […] is this. The individual is not the measure of all things: I, the commentator, am the measure of all things. You always have to wait for me, the academic or theoretician, to explain it to you. For example, you're *really* doing A or B because you're a member of a certain class and accept its presuppositions. Or you're *really* doing C and D because of now-inaccessible events in your childhood. What you personally think about this doesn't matter. […] Your sin is structural, not one of content" (Bruce Fleming. *What Literary Studies Could Be, And What It Is*. [Lanham, MD: University Press of America, 2008], 100).

[44] Rita Felski. *The Limits of Critique*. (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2015), 5.

authoritarian approach to reading, as "the critic conjures up ever more paralyzing scenarios of coercion and control,"[45] while readers "have to appeal to the priestly class that alone can explain"[46] the text. Such criticism treats texts as "imaginary opponents to be bested,"[47] and this is done in service of an accusatory, prosecutorial agenda, as "[s]omething, somewhere—a text, an author, a reader, a genre, a discourse, a discipline—is always already guilty of some crime."[48] And the trials have become both zealous and overwhelmingly numerous. In fact, at this point, prosecutorial readings have become so numerous that they have long since become formulaic, products of a template-driven approach[49] whose verdicts can be anticipated at the beginning of the essays and books that use this method. The overuse of this method is perhaps due to a phenomenon best described by Karl Popper: "I found that those of my friends who were admirers of Marx, Freud, and Adler, were impressed by a number of points common to these theories, and especially by their apparent *explanatory power*. These theories appear to be able to explain practically everything that happened within the fields to which they referred. The study of any of them seemed to have the effect of an intellectual conversion or revelation, opening your eyes to a new truth hidden from those not yet initiated. Once your eyes were thus opened you saw confirmed instances everywhere: the world was full of verifications of the theory. Whatever happened always confirmed it. Thus its truth appeared manifest; and unbelievers were clearly people who did not want to see the manifest truth; who refuse to see it." [50]

Even before Ricoeur, however, we can trace this kind of reading in our day back to a (mis)use of the work of the German philosopher Martin Heidegger, especially his ongoing engagement with the meaning of "truth" or *Wahrheit*. As Mark A. Wrathall notes, "[f]or Heidegger, the essence of truth is always understood in terms of unconcealment,"[51] a notion derived from Heidegger's reading of the Greek term ἀλήθεια (*aletheia*—discovered or uncovered truth) in the extant texts of the pre-Socratic philosophers Parmenides and Heraclitus. In essence, Heidegger divides the concept of "truth" (*Wahrheit*) into correctness or

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[45] Ibid., 34.
[46] Fleming, 100.
[47] Felski, 111.
[48] Ibid., 39.
[49] As Feslki goes on to argue: "Anyone who attends academic talks has learned to expect the inevitable question: 'But what about power?' Perhaps it is time to start asking different questions: 'But what about love?' Or: 'Where is your theory of attachment?' To ask such questions is not to abandon politics for aesthetics. It is, rather, to contend that both art and politics are also a matter of connecting, composing, creating, coproducing, inventing, imagining, making possible: that neither is reducible to the piercing but one-eyed gaze of critique" (17-18).
[50] Karl Popper. *Conjectures and Refutations: The Growth of Scientific Knowledge*. (New York: Basic Books, 1963), 34.
[51] Mark A. Wrathall. *Heidegger and Unconcealment: Truth, Language, and History*. (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2010), 12.

accurate correspondence of propositions with things as they presently are in the world (*Richtigkeit*) and the unconcealedness or discoveredness (*Unverborgenheit* or *Entdecktheit*) of entities. The first is necessarily grounded in, and dependent upon the second, for there can be no truth about things in the world without *things in the world*. As Heidegger explains it, truth as correctness "has its basis in the truth as unconcealedness,"[52] while "the unconcealment of Being as such is the basis for the possibility of correctness."[53] Thus, for Heidegger, *Wahrheit* is the surface truth of *what exists* and the deeper truth that *existence itself exists*. Heidegger views the process of understanding truth in roughly two-stages of developing awareness of: 1) the *Ontic* truth, or the truth of propositions about what exists, and 2) the *Ontological* truth, or the truth and meaning of Being itself.

But what has any of this to do with the reading of literature? Heidegger's thought proposes a kind of two-level structure, much like that found in Parmenides (who argued that τὸ ἐὸν—*to eon*, or What Is—should be understood in terms of an unchanging reality behind the world of flux and change and appearances), and found in the paradoxes of Zeno (designed, as in the famous example of Achilles and the Tortoise,[54] to demonstrate the unreality of the world of motion and change and appearance[55]), and finally in the dialogues of Plato (for whom the *eidos* or Idea is the ultimate reality that the world of growth and decay merely exemplifies or participates in—μέθεξις/*methexis*—in an incomplete

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[52] "hat ihren Grund in der Wahrheit als Unverborgenheit" (Martin Heidegger. *Grundfragen der Philosophie. Ausgewählte "Probleme" der "Logik." Gesamtausgabe*. II. *Abteilung: Vorlesungen 1923-1944*. Band 45. [Frankfurt am Main: Vittorio Klostermann Verlag, 1984], 97-98).

[53] "Die Unverborgenheit des Seienden als solchen ist der Grund der Möglichkeit der Richtigkeit" (Ibid., 102).

[54] According to Aristotle's summary of Zeno's arguments regarding motion, "Δεύτερος δ' ὁ καλούμενος Ἀχιλλεύς. ἔστι δ' οὗτος ὅτι τὸ βραδύτατον οὐδέποτε καταληφθήσεται θέον ὑπὸ τοῦ ταχίστου· ἔμπροσθεν γὰρ ἀναγκαῖον ἐλθεῖν τὸ διῶκον, ὅθεν ὥρμησε τὸ φεῦγον, ὥστ' ἀεί τι προέχειν ἀναγκαῖον τὸ βραδύτερον" (Aristotle. *Physics, Volume II, Books 5-8*. Edited by P. H. Wicksteed and F. M. Cornford. [Cambridge: Loeb Classical Library, Harvard University Press, 1934], 180, 182)—"The second of these [arguments] is called 'Achilles.' It is this [argument] in which the slowest runner is never overtaken by the fastest; because since the swifter runner in the chase is always, at any given moment, first forced to reach the point where the fleeing runner set into motion, of necessity the slowest runner, who had the headstart, will always be in the lead."

[55] In the extant fragments, Parmenides describes τὸ ἐὸν as the kind of eternal, unchanging whole that later Christian theologians will use as a basis for their understandings of the divine:

ἔστιν ἄναρχον ἄπαυστον...	It exists without beginning or ending
[...]	[...]
Ταὐτόν τ' ἐν ταὐτῷ τε μένον καθ' ἑαυτό τε κεῖται	Identical in its sameness, it remains itself and standing
χοὔτως ἔμπεδον αὖθι μένει· κρατερὴ γὰρ Ἀνάγκη	Thus firmly-set there, for strong and mighty necessity
πείρατος ἐν δεσμοῖσιν ἔχει, τό μιν ἀμφὶς ἐέργει,	Limits it, holds it in chains, and shuts it in on both sides.
οὕνεκεν οὐκ ἀτελεύτητον τὸ ἐὸν θέμις εἶναι·	Because of this, it is right *what is* should not be incomplete.

(Greek text from Fragment 8, ll.26, 29-32, *Die Fragmente der Vorsokratiker*. Edited by Hermann Diels. [Berlin: Weidmannsche Buchhandlung, 1903], 124)

and shadowy way[56]). Heidegger argues, much like the classical forbears about whose ideas he so often lectured and wrote, that to get at truth not merely in its surface, concrete, or *ontic* sense, but in its deeper, structural, *ontological* sense, the seeker must go through a process of unveiling or uncovering, reaching a state he called *Erschslossenheit* or disclosedness, accompanied by a process of *Lichtung*, clearing away what is inessential and shining a light (*Licht*) on the core that remains.

The basic working method of much (if not all) literary criticism in its modern European and American forms owes a great debt, for better or for worse, to Heidegger's recovery and reformulation of this pre-Socratic notion of truth as something that is disguised, hidden away, and obscured by a layer of what one might call "lesser truth" or even illusion. Heidegger's influence on French thinkers like Ricoeur and Jacques Derrida is profound,[57] and its traces work their way through American work like that of "Deconstructionists" like Paul de Man,[58] and even the "New-Historicist" work of Stephen Greenblatt (through Foucault[59]) and the innumerable scholars/critics who have followed in his wake in recent decades. Much of the criticism we encounter in this book operates on the assumption that a poem, for example, has a surface (the actual words and relationships between them) that must be cleared away in order to reach the revealed or unhidden truth. The complexity of Heidegger's argument is often left behind in such a process,[60] but what remains is the very basic notion

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[56] As John Niemeyer Findlay explains it, the Instance (or the Particular) shares in the nature of the Eidos (or form/idea), though imperfectly: "The term Methexis, Participation [...] connote[s] a closer relation of the Instance to the Eidos [...]: the Instance really has something of the Eidos in it, if not the Eidos in its full purity, or as it is in and for itself" (*Plato: The Written and Unwritten Doctrines*. [New York: Routledge, 1974], 37).

[57] Walter A. Brogan refers to Derrida's thought, especially his concept of différance, as "a radical and liberated affirmation of Heidegger's thought" ("The Original Difference." *Derrida and Différance.* Edited by David Wood and Robert Bernasconi. [Evanston: Northwestern University Press, 1985], 32). And as Andre Gingrich notes, "Heidegger's own phenomenological appreciation of literature influenced Ricouer's hermeneutic approach," and "[b]oth Ricouer and Derrida acknowledged Heidegger's strong influence upon major areas of their respective works" ("Conceptualising Identities: Anthropological Alternatives to Essentialising Difference and Moralizing about Othering." *Grammars of Identity/Alterity: A Structural Approach*. Edited by Gerd Baumann and Andre Gingrich. (New York: Berghahn Books, 2004), 6-7. For a comprehensive account of Heidegger's influence on French intellectuals of the mid-twentieth century, see Dominique Janicaud's *Heidegger in France,* Indiana University Press, 2015.

[58] Joshua Kates observes that "De Man's relation to Heidegger is especially contorted. De Man from the start contests Heidegger's signature notion of Being, but does so in an authentically deconstructive fashion, such that de Man's own counter-notion of 'language' cannot be grasped apart from an appreciation of Heidegger's project" ("Literary Criticism." *The Routledge Companion to Phenomenology*. [New York: Routledge, 2012], 650-51).

[59] In Foucault's account, "Heidegger a toujours été pour moi le philosophe essential"—"Heidegger has always, for me, been the essential philosopher" ("Le Retour de la Morale." *Dits et Écrits, 1954-1988*. IV *1980-1988*. [Paris: Éditions Gallimard, 1994], 703).

[60] Heidegger's own own observation that "das volle Wesen der Wahrheit das Unwesen einschließt und allem zuvor als Verbergung waltet"—"the full essence of truth includes non-essence [or

that the truth of a poem is concealed by its words, and by its writer, and that the job of the critic is to pull back the curtains, to clear away the illusions, and to reveal the hidden truth.

Some critics argue, however, that "truth" is a naïve concept, especially where the interpretation of poetry is concerned.[61] In Felski's terms, though such critics are also adherents to a suspicion-based hermeneutic, they argue that "to impute a hidden core of meaning [is] to subscribe to a metaphysics of presence, a retrograde desire for origins, a belief in an ultimate or foundational reality."[62] Richard Rorty addresses the seeming split between the two camps that Felski calls "Digging Down" and "Standing Back"[63] by first emphasizing their

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"chaos" or "havoc"], and above all holds sway as concealment" argues against so simple a procedure as stripping away an illusory surface in order to reveal the "real" "truth" of a poem (or any other object of analysis, for that matter). *Wesen* and *Unwesen*—essence and non-essence, order and chaos (in the sense of a pre-essence of essence like that found in Genesis 1:2, what Heidegger calls a "vor-wesende Wesen" or a "pre-essence Essence") are inseparable, each a part of the other: "Das Un-wesen bleibt allerdings in jeder dieser Bedeutungen je in seiner Weise dem Wesen wesentlich und wird niemals unwesentlich im Sinne des Gleichgültigen"—"The non-essence remains certainly always in its own way essential to the essence, and will never be irrelevant in the sense of the superficial or indifferent" (Martin Heidegger. *Vom Wesen der Wahrheit*. [Franfurt: Vittorio Klostermann, 1954], 27, 22).

[61] For Roland Barthes, the critical search for "truth" is quite useless, as there is no "truth," nor even any operant factor in a text, except language itself:

> L'Auteur une fois éloigné, la prétention de «déchiffrer» un texte devient tout à fait inutile. Donner un Auteur à un texte, c'est imposer à ce texte un cran d'arrêt, c'est le pourvoir d'un signifié dernier, c'est fermer l'écriture. Cette conception convient très bien à la critique, qui veut alors se donner pour tâche importante de découvrir l'Auteur (ou ses hypostases : la société, l'histoire, la psyché, la liberté) sous l'œuvre : l'Auteur trouvé, le texte est «expliqué», le critique a vaincu ; il n'y a donc rien d'étonnant à ce que, historiquement, le règne de l'Auteur ait été aussi celui du Critique, mais aussi à ce que la critique (fût-elle nouvelle) soit aujourd'hui ébranlée en même temps que l'Auteur. ("La mort de l'auteur." *In Le Bruissement de la Langue. Essais Critiques IV*. Paris: Éditions de Seuil, 1984, 65-66)
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> [Once the author is removed, the claim to "decipher" a text becomes quite useless. To give an Author to a text is to impose a knife's limit on the text, to provide it a final signification, to close the writing. This design is well suited to criticism, which then wants to give itself the important task of discovering the Author (or his hypostases: society, history, the psyche, liberty) beneath the work: the Author found, the text is "explained," the critic has conquered; so there is nothing surprising that, historically, the reign of the Author has also been that of the Critic, but also that criticism (even if it be new) should on this day be shaken off at the same time as the Author.]

[62] Felski, 69.

[63] "The first pivots on a division between manifest and latent, overt and covert, what is revealed and what is concealed. Reading is imagined as an act of digging down to arrive at a repressed or otherwise obscured reality," while the second works by "distancing rather than by digging, by the corrosive force of ironic detachment rather than intensive interpretation. The goal is now to 'denaturalize' the text, to expose its social construction by expounding on the conditions in which it is embedded" (Ibid., 53, 54).

similarity, arguing that "they both start from the pragmatist refusal to think of truth as correspondance to reality,"[64] before outlining the crucial difference:

> the first kind of critic [...] thinks that there really is a secret code and that once it's discovered we shall have gotten the text right. He believes that criticism is discovery rather than creation. [The other kind of critic] doesn't care about the distinction between discovery and creation [...] He is in it for what he can get out of it, not for the satisfaction of getting something right.[65]

Though Rorty might be accused of cynicism here, there is an identifiable split between the kinds of critics who apply a hermeneutics of suspicion in what might be called a "Freudian" sense—digging down through the layers and strata of a culture or text as a psychoanalyst would dig through the manifest content of a patient's dreams in search of a deeper, but hidden, latent content (or truth)—and those who apply a hermeneutics of suspicion in what might be called a "Nietzschean" sense, stripping away the pretenses and postures of a culture or text in order to demonstrate that it is pretenses and postures all the way down (that there is no truth but the provisional one we create, dismantle, modify, destroy, etc.).[66] But as Felski points out, "[in] spite of the theoretical and political disagreements between styles of criticism, there is a striking resemblance at the level of ethos—one that is nicely captured by François Cusset in his phrase 'suspicion without limits'."[67] Each kind of criticism is in the business of near-perpetual *unveiling*: where they differ is that one school seeks to reveal what they believe lies behind the veils, while the other school seeks to reveal the "fact" that there are *only veils* with nothing behind them.[68]

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[64] Richard Rorty. *The Consequences of Pragmatism*. (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1982), 151.
[65] Ibid., 152.
[66] Such a "Nietzschean" reading can be seen in J. Hillis Miller's deconstructive reading of Percy Shelley's "The Triumph of Life," in which Miller claims that Shelley's poem, "like all texts, is 'unreadable,' if by 'readable' one means open to a single, definitive, univocal interpretation" (J. Hillis Miller. "The Critic as Host." *Critical Inquiry*, Vol. 3, No. 3 [Spring, 1977], 447). For a critic like Miller, the basic mechanism of suspicious reading is turned (as in Barthes) against the idea that there is any one reading of a text that can be credibly presented as in any way authoritative. Such a critical position rejects the Heideggerian notion of *aletheia*—revealed or uncovered truth—but still engages in a hermeneutics of suspicion in that it practices an unveiling or revealing of what it regards as the *illusion* of truth, or the *illusion* of the possibility that any such truth can be found.
[67] Felski, 20.
[68] The so-called New Historicism may fairly be described as falling into the first camp. New Historicism—which is neither particularly new, nor particularly attuned to historical concerns—is perpetually in a state of high alert for the operations of power, and it is constantly on the lookout for what Vincent Picora describes as "complicity with structures of power in whose language [knowledge] would have no choice but to speak" (Vincent P. Pecora. "The Limits of Local Knowledge." In *The New Historicism*. Edited by Harold Aram Veeser. [New York: Routledge, 1989], 267). As Foucault—in many ways, the "godfather" of New Historicism—puts it: "qu'il n'y a pas de relation de pouvoir sans constitution corrélative d'un champ de savoir, ni de savoir qui ne suppose et ne constitue en même temps des relations de pouvoir" (*Surveiller et Punir: Naissance de la Prison*. [Paris: Éditions Gallimard, 1975], 32)—"there is no power relationship without a correlative constitution of a field of knowledge, nor any field of knowledge that does not presuppose and

This kind of skeptical criticism, whose two branches are more alike than different, "thinks of itself as battling orthodoxy yet it is now the reigning orthodoxy, no longer oppositional but obligatory."[69] But this "obligatory" stance is quite frequently taken up in service of what its practitioners claim is an "oppositional" agenda, a way of reading texts that resists the ideologies and practices of power by revealing or unveiling them. It is in such criticism that we will encounter terms like *interrogation* used to describe the reading method of the critic, with all of its none-too-subliminal suggestions of violence, a kind of fire-against-fire use of violent analysis to uncover or reveal (or fabricate) a "violence" inherent in the text. As Kate McGowan describes the idea, "[t]he value of *unrelenting interrogation* is the value of *resistance*."[70] But it is often "far from evident,"

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constitute power relations at the same time." The New Historicist critic looks to unveil or reveal the operations (and cooperations) of power and knowledge, all the while risking being complicit with the very structures of power he or she seeks to unmask: as Harold Veeser formulates the idea, "every act of unmasking, critique, and opposition uses the tools it condemns and risks falling prey to the practice it exposes" (Harold Aram Veeser. "Introduction." In *The New Historicism*. Edited by Harold Aram Veeser. [New York: Routledge, 1989], xi). The second camp is typically associated with deconstructive readings. For a critic like Paul de Man, literature obsessively points to "a nothingness," while "[p]oetic language names this void […] and never tires of naming it again." For de Man, "[t]his persistant naming is what we call literature" (*Blindness and Insight*, 18). For J.Hillis Miller, the works of Walter Pater, as well as other "major authors in the Occidental tradition, are at once open to interpretation and ultimately indecipherable, unreadable. His texts lead the critic deeper and deeper into a labyrinth until he confronts a final aporia." The critic delves deeper and deeper beneath the veils of surface appearances only to find unresolvability, an impasse, which leads us to understand that "personification" in literature (though the arguments stops *just short* of extending this same observation to extra-textual life) "will always be divided against itself, folded, manifold, dialogical rather than monological." The final assertion/unveiling of the essay that literature is best understood through "multiple contradictory readings in a perpetual fleeing away from any fixed sense" (J. Hillis Miller. "Walter Pater: A Partial Portrait." *Daedalus*, Vol. 105, No. 1, In Praise of Books [Winter, 1976], 112). However, it is not difficult to find a view of deconstructive criticism that is quite different from Miller's idea above, in this case, one that frames deconstruction in terms of revealing the actual truth of a text. Richard Rorty, describing the views of deconstructionist critics like Gayatri Spivak and Jonathan Culler, argues that "deconstruction is […] a way of getting at what is *really going on*. Deconstruction takes you inside the text, in a way that Marxist or Freudian criticism does not" ("Deconstruction." *The Cambridge History of Literary Criticism, Volume 8. From Formalism to Poststructuralism*. Edited by Raman Selden and George Alexander Kennedy. [Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2005], 190, emphasis added). Oddly, Culler in particular seems to upend deconstruction's signature form of suspicion—the suspicion of binaries like appearance-reality or essence-accident—when he writes of "the truths derived from the work," and "the necessity that makes the truth hold for all language," and posits that "the blindness that makes possible the insights of deconstructive criticism" is "a certain faith in the text and truth of its most fundamental and surprising implications" (*On Deconstruction: Theory and Criticism After Structuralism*. [Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press, 1982], 280). Turning suspicion against suspicion yields some interesting results.

[69] Felski, 148. A similar idea is expressed by Bruce Fleming, when he writes that "[t]he people in charge of contemporary classrooms see themselves as overthrowing prejudices, fiercely challenging the status quo. In fact, for the purposes of literary studies, they *are* the status quo" (27).

[70] Kate McGowan. *Key Issues in Critical and Cultural Theory*. (Buckingham: Open University Press, 2007), 26. Emphasis added.

as Felski notes, how interrogations of poems, plays, and novels "published in […] undersubscribed academic journal[s]"[71] serve as any kind of effective resistance to *anything*.[72] In fact, it is easy to view the situation from quite the opposite angle, as criticism of this kind and its "close ties to modes of professionalization and scholarly gatekeeping make it hard to sustain the claim that there is something intrinsically radical or resistant"[73] about either its style or its substance. Such unlimited suspicion seems to become its own point, perpetuating itself *for* itself, operating as a kind of tribal *shibboleth*[74] that allows members of an in-group to recognize one another. In Eve Sedgewick's view, readings that stem from this method seem to engage in a struggle with poetry, as the readings they generate "grow like a crystal in a hypersaturated solution, blotting out any sense of the possibility of alternative ways of understanding or things to understand."[75] As these alternative ways of understanding are blotted out, poetry, and its readers, are reshaped into a desired ideological form—a process we can see at work in the long history of the relation between literature and criticism, beginning with the allegorical readings of the *Song of Songs*.

What a consideration of the *Song of Songs* and its interpretive history reveals, is that the criticism which claims to reveal the hidden is not, in fact,

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[71] Felski, 143.

[72] In Noam Chomsky's view, such interrogations are *impediments* to meaningful resistance:

> In the United States, for example, it's mostly confined to Comparative Literature departments. If they talk to each other in incomprehensible rhetoric, nobody cares. The place where it's been really harmful is in the Third World, because Third World intellectuals are badly needed in the popular movements. They can make contributions, and a lot of them are just drawn away from this—anthropologists, sociologists, and others—they're drawn away into these arcane, and in my view mostly meaningless discourses, and are dissociated from popular struggles. ("Noam Chomsky on French Intellectual Culture & Post-Modernism [3/8]." Interview conducted at Leiden University, in March of 2011. Posted [March, 15, 2012]. https://www.youtube.com/v/2cqTE_bPh7M&feature=youtu.be&start=409&end=451 [6:49-7:31])

[73] Felski, 138.

[74] This term, from Judges 12:5-6, comes out of a context of war and violence, in which one tribe needed a quick and easy way of identifying infiltrators from the enemy side:

> וַיִּלְכֹּד גִּלְעָד אֶת־מַעְבְּרוֹת הַיַּרְדֵּן לְאֶפְרָיִם וְהָיָה כִּי יֹאמְרוּ פְלִיטֵי אֶפְרַיִם אֶעֱבְרָה וַיֹּאמְרוּ לוֹ אַנְשֵׁי־גִלְעָד הַאֶפְרָתִי אַתָּה וַיֹּאמֶר ו לֹא: וַיֹּאמְרוּ לוֹ אֱמָר־נָא שִׁבֹּלֶת וַיֹּאמֶר סִבֹּלֶת וְלֹא יָכִין לְדַבֵּר כֵּן וַיֹּאחֲזוּ אֹותֹו וַיִּשְׁחָטוּהוּ אֶל־מַעְבְּרוֹת הַיַּרְדֵּן וַיִּפֹּל בָּעֵת הַהִיא מֵאֶפְרַיִם אַרְבָּעִים וּשְׁנַיִם אָלֶף:
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> And the Gileadites captured the passages of the Jordan to Ephraim, and it happened that when the fugitive Ephraimites said "let me cross over," the men of Gilead said to them "are you an Ephraimite?" And if he said, "no," then they said, "say Shibboleth," and if he said "Sibboleth," because he could not pronounce it right, then they took him and slew him at the passages of the Jordan, and there fell at that time forty two thousand Ephraimites. (Unless otherwise noted, all Hebrew Biblical text is quoted from *Biblia Hebraica Stuttgartensia*. Edited by Karl Elliger and Willhelm Rudolph. [Stuttgart: Deutsche Bibelgesellschaft, 1983]. All Greek Biblical text is quoted from *The Greek New Testament*. Edited by Barbara Aland. [Stuttgart: Deutsche Bibelgesellschaft, 2014]).

[75] Eve Kosofsky Sedgwick. *Touching Feeling: Affect, Pedagogy, Performativity*. (Durham and London: Duke University Press, 2003), 131.

especially new, but has a very long history, going back quite nearly to the era of Heidegger's beloved pre-Socratics, shaping the way we have been taught to read and understand poetry and other literary forms for two thousand years. The earliest examples are not rooted merely in *suspicion*, but in the openly-expressed desire to control, to exercise authority over the hearts and minds of others, and many modern examples of suspicion-based criticism retain more than a trace of that original impulse. But if we can learn to hear their voices once again, the poems, plays, and novels considered here have more than enough power to fight back against such long-entrenched ways of reading—not merely through the brilliance of their surfaces,[76] but through the passionate depths of their engagements with the kind of love that was once called *fin'amor*. Such love—often forbidden by those who would be obeyed—is presented by the poets as a temptation, a seduction, a siren's call to the too-easily missed experience of being truly and fully alive. As Goethe's Mephistopheles slyly observes: "Gray, dear Friend, is all theory, / And green is life's golden tree,"[77] and in such beautifully mortal seductions lies the heart of love's response to its critics.

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[76] Though Stephen Best and Sharon Marcus, in their 2009 piece, "Surface Reading: An Introduction" (in *Representations*, Vol. 108, No. 1 [Fall 2009], pp. 1-21), claim that "[i]n the last decade or so, we have been drawn to modes of reading that attend to the surfaces of texts rather than plumb their depths" (1-2), and further claim that the type of interpretation "that took meaning to be hidden, repressed, deep, and in need of detection and disclosure by an interpreter" (1), has gone out of fashion (especially reflected in the authors' apparent, and laudable, desire to find a way "to move past the impasses created by what has become an excessive emphasis on ideological demystification" [18]), the trends of the last decade and a half seem much less influential and important in terms of the history of the reception of poetry than does a style of reading and interpretation that has held sway for two millennia.

[77] "Grau, teurer Freund, ist alle Theorie, / Und grün des Lebens goldner Baum" (Johann Wolfgang Von Goethe. *Faust*, Part One. Edited by Walter Kaufmann. [New York: Anchor Books, 1990], p.206, ll.2038-39).